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# HISTORY OF CHINESE TAOISM

Li Yangzheng

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# History of Chinese Taoism

*Written by* Li Yangzheng
*Compiled and translated by* Yan Zhonghu

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# Contents

# Preface

The study of Taoism is growing stronger everyday both in East and West. Taoist-related ideas and practices are becoming more common and tend to transform our lifestyles and world views. Scores of Western scholars have contributed to this new stream of inspiration, but pioneering work has also been initiated in China and Japan, although their work is more rarely known by Westerners.

Here, for the first time, we have a scholarly work on Taoism written in English by a Chinese scholar. It is based on Chinese source materials and reflects a Chinese understanding of the Taoist tradition.

I have been invited by the compiler Yan Zhonghu to write this preface and was happy to comply. This book contains much information that is missing in comparable Western works. At this moment there is no complete treatment of Taoism in the West, and the time is ripe for such a project to be undertaken. The present work is a positive step in that direction, although it cannot yet be regarded as complete in all its aspects.

Moreover, despite my high regard for this new volume, I must also make clear that I do not agree with all the viewpoints expressed in it. I have my doubts about the relationship between the philosophical tradition of the *Dao De Jing* and *The Book of Zhuang Zi* and the later development of the Taoist religion. One cannot call it a "unified body": their origins and intentions are very different. It must, however, be admitted that the later religious movement has

incorporated many aspects of the philosophical stream into its own, often transforming the original ideas to suit their own needs.

This is the author's own insight and deserves our attention. Although I tend to disagree, many Chinese scholars as well as a growing number of Westerners tend to look at the overall Taoist tradition as a more or less unified system.

But overall, I am pleased that this new work is appearing and hope it will be well received by the Western public.

November 27, 1996

Julian F. Pas
Saskatoon, Canada

# Foreword

Whenever the term "Taoism" is mentioned, more often than not, Westerners will associate it only with *Dao De Jing,* a work of Lao Zi on esoteric philosophy from ancient China. It is certainly true that Taoism incorporates this element, but the richness of Taoism is far beyond their imaginations and the imaginations of many of us Chinese.

About ten years ago, the Beijing Foreign Languages Press first entertained an idea of publishing a book in English on Taoism, a Chinese religious and cultural tradition which has shaped the lifestyle of many ordinary Chinese people, but was little known to the Western world. They attempted unsuccessfully to translate into English a book on Taoism originally written in Chinese. The failure, I speculate, was due to the fact that the translators had little knowledge of Taoism and the original book was not quite readable. The enthusiasm of the publisher was rekindled only three years ago when Wu Canfei, an editor of the press, learned that Professor Li Yangzheng, former director of the Institute of Taoist Culture under the Chinese Taoist Association, had published several books on Taoism and that I, as an adjunct lecturer of the Chinese Taoist College, had already translated part of his works, which had been polished by Professor Michael Saso, a world-renowned scholar in Taoist studies.

Professor Li and I considered it a great honor as well as a challenge to prepare the first English book on Taoism for publication in

China. And we had many discussions between us and with the editor Wu before we decided on the structure of the present work. We decided to take as a framework the "Outline of Taoist History," an essay which was formerly written as part of a research project by the researchers of the Chinese Taoist Association. The English translation of the essay had already appeared in No. 15 of the *Journal of Chinese Religion* in 1987. The initial goal of the research project undertaken by the Chinese Taoist Association was to write an elaborate Taoist history based on the outline mentioned above, but the whole plan was aborted because of the "cultural revolution."

It has been our wish that our new book will fulfill part of the project goal. So we abandoned our original plan of merely translating one of Li's works and decided to compile a new book based on the outline and some of Li's publications. Professor Li was kind enough to entrust me with the whole compilation work and to encourage me to assimilate the findings made by other Chinese scholars in this field with good understanding, while he himself retired as a consultant. Needless to say, I had much more workload on me, as besides translation I had to do a lot of rewriting and rethinking, so that the new book would have its own structure, themes and contents and contexts, different from any existing work. Professor Li has been very helpful in providing me with the source materials needed and answering my many questions encountered throughout my work.

We envisage a book of such nature may not claim to itself much original academic contribution, nevertheless we are able to present a rather complete picture of Taoism and Chinese scholars' reflections on this tradition. This presentation and reflection will no doubt be valuable for Western scholars and non-scholars alike. In the bibliography at the end of the book we have listed the major sources utilized which could be useful for further research.

I would like to acknowledge my special gratitude to Professor

Julian Pas of the University of Saskatchewan, Canada, who in spite of his own tight schedules, read through all my manuscript. He not only took much time and effort to polish my language, but also raised many good questions, which further provoked my thinking and ultimately improved the quality of the book. Additionally, he wrote a preface to the book on our behalf, which we believe will help Western people better appreciate our work. My thanks should also go to my wife Liu Wei, who has taken over most of my share of housework and a large part of typing during the past three years of my dedicated work. I am also indebted to Ms. Liu Ruilan, who was generous enough to lend her computer when mine went on the blink. Finally I should thank the editor (Mr) Wu Canfei, who was engaged in the discussion of the book framework and who has been always ready to kindly consider my suggestions concerning the book publication.

Throughout this book we have adopted Pinyin Romanization system for the Chinese terms except for a few cases such as Confucius for Kong Zi. In this way, it will not only help us achieve a large degree of consistence in our spelling, but also help popularize what is typically Chinese, as this book is intended to. It is our sincere wish that the book, thus prepared, will not only help general English reading public gain some idea of how Taoism has evolved and become what it is today, but will also provide Western students a good guide to the research into this most fascinating tradition in the world.

March 17, 1997
Yan Zhonghu
Beijing, China

# Introduction: What Is Tao?

To most of Westerners, *Tao* (spelled as *Dao* according to the scheme for the phonetic annotation of Chinese characters currently used in China) may no longer be an exotic word, for recent publications include many works bearing the name of "Tao," such as the *Tao of Politics*, the *Tao of Physics* and the *Tao of Pooh*, etc. However, when they are asked what Taoism really is, they perhaps can only mention one or two of its elements. When they are asked to tell the differences between *Daojia* 道家, Taoist philosophy and *Daojiao* 道教, Taoist religion, they are even more confused. This is understandable, considering the fact that in Western languages "Taoism" encompasses the meanings of both *Daojia* and *Daojiao*. Even many Chinese themselves are confused about their differences. They often use these two terms interchangeably, which in fact in both history and reality have different dimensions of meanings. In the following passages, we will first discuss the relationship between *Daojia* and *Daojiao* and the different followers of the Tao to show what we are to talk about in this book, and then discuss the structure of this book to show how we are to talk about it.

## The Concept of Tao and Evolution of the Terms *Daojia* and *Daojiao*

In Chinese language, *Daojiao* literally means "Taoist religion," and *Daojia* "Taoist philosophy." Generally speaking, as a philoso-

phy, Taoism came well before Taoism as an organized religion, though their teachings came partially from the same sources in primitive Chinese society. The distinction of these two terms can be explained through etymological study of their evolution.

As a Chinese pictograph, Tao 道 is made up of a "head" and a radical symbolizing "going." The most common meaning of the word Tao is "road." For instance, we have the following sentence from *Shi Jing* (*The Book of Odes*), one of the most ancient literary works in China:

(1) "The Tao (roads) in (the state) of Zhou are like whetstones, they are as straight as arrows." (Part II, Set 43)

The word *Tao* also takes up several other meanings:

(2) A method, a technique, an art: "Petty Tao (techniques) as they were, they did demonstrate something." (*Lun Yu*, or *The Analects of Confucius*, Chapter 19)

(3) The law, the way: "Therefore, Yin and Yang are the Tao (law) governing heaven firmness and softness are the Tao (law) governing the earth; benevolence and righteousness are the Tao (law) governing human behavior." (*Zhou Yi*, or *The Book of Changes*, Chapter. Shuogui.) Also we find the meaning of *Tao* as the law in: "What your servant loves is the *Tao*, which is more advanced than art." (*Zhuang Zi*, or *The Book of Zhuang Zi*, Chapter 3)

(4) School of thought: "My Tao (thought) is linked together by one" (*The Analects*, Chapter 4); "Following Master Xu's Tao and we will find no treachery in our merchants, no hypocrisy in our country." (*Mencius*, Chapter 5)

(5) Say, remark, mention: "Confucius' disciples did not *tao* (mention) about Duke Huan and Duke Wen, therefore, their stories are unknown to us now." (*Mencius,* Chapter 1)

As we can see, *Tao* was a fairly common word used by various schools of thought. There was no exclusive connotation whatsoever to Taoism. The earliest attachment of the connotation to Taoist philosophy can be very well dated back to around the first century

B.C. when Sima Qian (c. 145-86 B.C.) and Liu Xun (c. 46 B.C.-A.D. 30) both linked the word *Tao* to *Jia* (school). This set the philosophical school of Taoism apart from other schools of thought. At the last chapter of his monumental work *Shi Ji* (*Records of the Historian*), Sima Qian quoted his father by classifying the "hundred schools of thought" which flourished one after another around the fifth or the sixth century B.C. Coming to philosophical school of thought, Sima Qian used the term *Dao De Jia* (School of Tao and Virtue) saying:

> The School of Tao and Virtue emphasizes *wuwei* (non-action, which will ultimately leave nothing undone. It is more difficult to understand than to practice what it teaches. Its practical methods are based on its own understanding of the universe which is believed to be *xu* (void) and *wu* (emptiness), therefore what one should do is to follow a natural course of action." (*Records of the Historian* ["Preface to the Author's Autobiography."])

Liu Xun made the term of the school even more distinctive. In the *History of the Former Han Dynasty* (*Qian Han Shu*), he said:

> Those of the Taoist school had their origin in the official historians. By studying the historical examples of success and failure, preservation and destruction, calamity and prosperity, from ancient to recent times, they learned how to hold what is essential and to grasp the fundamental. They guarded themselves with purity and emptiness and with humbleness and meekness maintained themselves.... Herein lies the strong point of this school. (Quoted from Fung Yu-lan, *Selected Philosophical Writings of Fung Yu-lan*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1991, p. 22.)

Like the word *Tao*, the compound word *Daojia* originally was a common noun used by people of different schools of thought. The earliest Chinese literature where the compound *Daojia* appeared so far as we know is *The Book of Mo Zi* (*Mo Zi*), probably written in the 4th century B.C. or some time later. In the chapter entitled

"Negation of Confucianism" we read: "The Confucianists believe that their teachings are *Daojiao* (the true teachings of Tao)."

What the Confucianists termed as *Daojiao* here referred to the teachings of the ancient sage kings and the Confucian classics. Later Mohists, Yin-Yangists, Immortalists and Taoists all proclaimed their own teachings as *Daojiao* (the true teachings of Tao). Even Buddhism was referred to as *Daojiao*, when it first came to China in the first century A.D., and *bodhi* was then translated into Chinese as *Tao*. The earliest Taoist movement characterized as "Five Bushels of Rice Taoism" (Wudoumi Tao), flourished in Sichuan in the second century, A.D. It considered its teachings such as shamanism, the words of the Yellow Emperor and Lao Zi and the arts of the immortalists as the true *Daojiao*. However, this term seems not to have been accepted by the intellectuals of the time, who often used the terms *Wu Tao* or *Mi Tao* in their official historical records.

Parallel to the evolution of the Taoist religion from the earliest Five Bushels of Rice Movement, the term *Daojiao* was more and more frequently linked to the religious tradition we now understand as Taoism. The movement led by Kou Qianzhi in about the fifth century A.D., which intended to reform the original "Five Bushels of Rice," linked its teachings and practices even closer to the term *Daojiao*. Kou Qianzhi spoke as a mouthpiece for the deified Lao Zi as follows:

> I am, therefore, here to see you, granting you the position of Celestial Master. ... You should preach my new teachings, and reestablish *Daojiao*. Do away with the malpractices as taught by the three Zhangs, such as offering rice in lieu of taxation, and sexual techniques as a way of longevity. ("Shi Lao Zhi," *History of the Wei Dynasty*)

Finally in the fifth century in the book *Nan Qi Shu* (*History of the Southern Qi Dynasty*) (479-502), the term *Daojiao* was used in contrast to *Fojiao* (Buddhism). The fact that distinctions between

Buddhism and *Daojiao* were made in official history suggests a general acceptance of Taoism as a religious tradition. Here is what the book said about the distinctions:

> The teachings of Buddhism are rich and attractive, while the teachings of Taoism are refined and get to the fundamentals.... Taoism grasps the roots of things, from which their branches stem, while Buddhism saves the branches of things in order to preserve their roots." (*History of the Southern Qi Dynasty* 54th *Juan**)

We hold that the time when *Daojiao* refers exclusively to Taoism signifies that Taoism as a religious tradition came to be mature. That was in the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589), when the reformist movements both in the north and in the south had generally refined the earlier uncouth practices and theories which had been popular in the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism. As the refined version of religious identity gradually came to be accepted by intellectuals and people from the upper strata of Chinese society, all other schools of thought or religions abandoned the use of *Daojiao* for the sake of distinction. Since then, *Daojiao* has become a popular name referring to the Celestial Master School of Taoism (a more dignified name for the new reformist movement) and to other related organized Taoist movements.

## Distinction and Relation Between *Daojiao* and *Daojia*

While the distinction between *Daojia*, Taoist philosophy, and *Daojiao*, Taoist religion, has obviously existed throughout Chinese history, these two terms were often used interchangeably in the Taoist and non-Taoist literature. The following are some typical examples:

(1) Ge Hong, a noted Taoist scholar and alchemist, used the term *Daojia* to describe what actually belonged to *Daojiao*:

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* A traditional thread-bound volume, usually containing a much shorter text than a volume in modem book publishing.

> The "Inner Chapters" which tell about divine immortals and their elixirs, the metamorphosis of spirits and specters, physical cultivation, and the methods of eliciting blessings and fending off evil influences, can fall into the category of *Daojia*." (Ge Hong, *Baopuzi Neipian Zixu*.)

(2) Liu Xie, a most famous literary critic in the Southern Qi Dynasty, referred to *Daojiao* when it actually should be *Daojia*. In the essay entitled *Miehuo Lun* ("Essays on Eliminating Deceptions"), Liu summarized three major components of *Daojia*, when *Daojiao* might be more appropriate: "(*Daojia*) first claims Lao Zi as its founder, then speaks of the (cult of) immortality and finally talks about (teachings of) Zhang (Dao) Ling."

(3) In *Siku Quanshu* (*Complete Library in the Four Branches of Literature*), the largest collection of Chinese books from the Qing Dynasty, the entry *Daojia* includes the Taoist scriptures which were unique to *Daojiao*.

In spite of the documental inconsistency in the use of the terms *Daojiao* and *Daojia*, it is proper to delineate the differences and similarities between them for the sake of academic inquiry. In fact, this has always been an issue under constant debate during the five international conferences on Taoism that have been convened so far in China and other countries. The following represents two typical Chinese views, one from Chinese scholars of Taoist studies and the other from serious scholars-priests within the Chinese Taoist Association.

Let us first quote the view of Professor Mu Zhongjian, who works with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, to see what is the prevailing academic view about the relation between *Daojia* and *Daojiao* today. In his representative work, "*Daojiao Tonglun*" (*General Comments on Taoist Religion*,) Professor Mu states:

> *Daojia* and *Daojiao* have maintained a lukewarm relationship since the Eastern Han Dynasty. On the one hand, *Daojia* was carried on by its own teacher-student relationship; on the other hand, it had

a kinship with *Daojiao*, which either incorporated, expounded or refined the teachings (of Taoist philosophy). *Daojiao*, therefore, could be considered as a branch of a tree stemming from the roots of *Daojia*. As a result, some scholars attempted to make a clear distinction between them, while some others insisted that they were two in one. The relationship between *Daojia* and *Daojiao* still confuses the minds of most modern scholars on Taoism.

Roughly speaking the similarities between *Daojia* and *Daojiao* lie in the following aspects:

(1) The teachings of *Daojia*, which originated in pre-Qin times and flourished during the Western and Eastern Han dynasties, were the major source of *Daojiao*.

(2) *Daojiao* can be considered a branch of *Daojia*. There was an internal logic upon which *Daojiao* developed from *Daojia*.

(3) *Daojia* and *Daojiao* rest on a common similar theoretical basis, especially in their views of cosmology and self-cultivation.

(4) The teachings of *Daojia* were, in a sense, embodied in *Daojiao*, and were carried forward through the latter.

The differences between *Daojia* and *Daojiao* can be found in the following aspects:

(1) *Daojia* and *Daojiao* differ in their ultimate goals: while the former aims to realize a spiritual transcendence for its followers, the latter aims to immortalize its followers by means of its arts.

(2) *Daojia* and *Daojiao* also differ in their view of the ultimate principle to follow: While the former advocates *wuwei* (non-action), following a natural course of action, the latter appeals to the divine agents whenever and wherever necessary.

(3) Finally *Daojia* and *Daojiao* differ in their ways of demonstrating forms of existence: While the former makes its presence felt only in the intellectual world, the latter reaches its influences far and wide to various strata of society through its clergy and popular arts.

Now let us see how Chen Yingning, late chairman of the Chinese

Taoist Association, stated his point of view concerning the relation between *Daojia* and *Daojiao*. In *Daojiao Yu Yangsheng* (*Taoism and Life Cultivation*, Huawen Publishers, Beijing, 1989, P.81), Chen said:

> How could *Daojia* of pre-Qin and Western Han integrate itself with *Daojiao* of post-Eastern Han, when they appealed so differently? This is because they shared one central belief. The belief of what? The Tao of Lao Zi. Before Zhang Daoling founded his religious organization, there was no *Daojiao* except for *Daojia*. But some ideas as were later taught by *Daojiao* already existed (though latently) in the teachings of Lao Zi and his disciples, and were only developed further. Looking from the perspective of *Daojia*, no new works came out after the founding of the *Daojiao*. Can we say *Daojia* ceases to exist in China? Definitely not.
>
> Starting from the Three Kingdoms (220-265), Western and Eastern Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, Sui, Tang, Five Dynasties, Song, Yuan, Ming, and down to Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the whole *Daojiao* basked in the spirit of *Daojia*. Chinese intellectuals, be they in office or out of office, be they priests or laymen, worshipped Lao Zi as a teacher of serf-cultivation and government; learned from Zhuang Zi as a hermit and preserver of life. When they were asked to tell the legends of the divine immortals, their imagination often went far beyond that of Lie Zi. The stories they made up were too far-fetched and larger than life. In fact, the philosophical-oriented *Daojia* and the religious-oriented *Daojia* became inseparable.
>
> Throughout these dynasties, Taoism has been discriminated against by Confucianists and ridiculed by other non-Taoists. But Taoism, which emphasizes both this-worldliness and other-worldliness, survives until today. Why? One major reason I believe is that its teachings appeal to the hearts and minds of the Chinese people from all strata of society. It is important for us students of Taoism to understand its real social values. Otherwise, we will be subjective in analyzing other people's comments. We might well regard those slandering comments as "scratching an itch from outside one's boot" — an ineffectual action, and take the flattering comments grudgingly. In the past, many scholars were wondering as to how *Daojia's* philosophy had been incorpo-

rated into the belief of *Daojiao*, and how Lao Zi, a philosopher, became a Celestial Worthy. They were trying to separate *Daojia* from *Daojiao*, and to dethrone Taishang Laojun (Lord Lao, the Highest) the deified Lao Zi from his Heaven of "Three Purities." They all failed in their efforts, because they neither examined the historical linkage (between *Daojia* and *Daojiao*), nor understood the Chinese mentality.

Being chairman of the Chinese Taoist Association, Chen Yingning expressed the views shared by most Taoist priests in China. In spite of the seeming differences, Chen Yingning and Mu Zhongjian had much to share in the view of *Daojia* and *Daojiao*: *Daojia* forms a theoretical basis upon which *Daojiao* stands, and *Daojiao* contributes to the spreading of the teachings of *Daojia*, which otherwise would have ceased to continue. We agree with them in the view of the relation between *Daojia* and *Daojiao*. What we are to emphasize here is that in Chinese literature, *Daojia* and *Daojiao* are interchangeable in most cases, but differ slightly in some cases. Readers should be careful with their translation of these two terms whenever they come across them in Chinese literature.

## What Is *Daojiao* or Taoism as a Religious Tradition?

The distinction between *Daojia* and *Daojiao* being clear, a definition of *Daojiao*, Taoist Religion, is relatively easier to propose. As this is a book about the history of Taoism as a religious tradition, a clear definition will help to keep the contents of this book within reasonable limits. The following is how we define it:

Taoism is a religious belief system whose ultimate concern is the attainment of the Tao. While it considers the teachings of the Yellow Emperor and Lao Zi as its doctrinal basis, it emphasizes more the way or methods of attaining immortality through the Tao. In the course of its formation and development, it has absorbed many elements, which have been shown conducive both theoretically and practically to effecting its ultimate goal, such as the arts

practiced by individual seekers of mortality in the first place and the rituals of traditional ancestral worship in the second place. By combining the philosophical teachings, the arts and the rituals, Taoism aims to bring harmony to the universe, peace to the nation (communities) and longevity or immortality to individuals. In comparison with Confucianism, Taoism is considered a less orthodox faith. In comparison with Chinese Buddhism, Taoism embodies more traits unique to China. In comparison with Chinese popular religion, Taoism is more cultured and organized and considered less "superstitious."

## Who Is Considered *Daoshi,* a Taoist Monk or Priest?

Like the Tao, *Daojia* and *Daojiao*, the concept of what is considered *Daoshi* (literally the person who practices the Tao) evolved with history. The earliest group of people or individuals who could be very well considered Taoists were called *fangshi* in Chinese. Those people were engaged in practicing the arts which were believed to improve health and prolong life long before Taoism as a religious movement emerged in about the second century A.D. Like the term of *Daojiao* itself, the official use of the term *Daoshi* to address persons practicing *Daojiao* probably began from the fifth century A.D. when Taoism as a mature religion took shape. After that, the distinction between the professionals (*Daoshi*) and nonprofessionals (*Xintu*, persons who merely believed in the Tao) came to be clearer. Among those professional *Daoshi*, distinctions also exist as regards to lifestyles and emphasis in cultivation, as it is the case of Quanzhen *Daoshi* and Zhengyi *Daoshi*, professional Taoists within two major schools of the Taoist tradition today. While a *Daoshi* of the Quanzhen Order practices celibacy and emphasizes self-cultivation and lives in a monastery, a Zhengyi *Daoshi* can marry and live at home like other laymen. The history of Taoism is, in a sense, the making of these Taoist monks and priests. Through

their special knowledge of magic, medicine, alchemy, rituals and others, Taoist professionals attract individuals, serve the communities and in some period of history were made an inseparable component of state ideology. Fired with the passion for longevity and mortality, they experimented again and again on the various arts and methods, thus playing an important role in the development of Chinese science and technology. Moreover, in order to attract new followers and express their religious emotions, they absorbed and invented various art forms. Through these artistic expressions, they contributed greatly to enriching Chinese literature, architecture and the overall cultural tradition.

## What Is *Daoshu* or Taoist Arts?

*Daoshi* is the person who practices the Tao through *Daoshu*, the arts of the Tao. The idea is expressed very clearly in some Taoist scriptures. For instance, in the miniature Taoist canon, *Yunji Qiqian*, we have the following passage:

> The Tao is something in ultimate void. The *shu* (art) is the mystic skill capable of effecting changes. The Tao is intangible, but it serves the people through its *shu*. Man is an intelligent creature, he can grasp the Tao through serf-cultivation. Once he has grasped the Tao, he may transform himself freely. The essentials of the Tao are actually easy to comprehend. The secrets of its *shu* never go beyond *fu* (talismans), *qi* (vital energy) and *yao* (medical herbs).

As a matter of fact, there are far more Taoist arts than covered in the passage above. As Ma Duanlin pointed out in his *Wenxian Tongkao* (*A Comprehensive Study of Literature*) (*Juan* 225), "The Taoist arts are of various kinds, and are unsystematic." "One art is called *qingjing* (quietude); another is called *lianyang* (cultivations); another is called *fushi* (macrobiotics); another is called *fulu* (talismans and registers); and the other is called *jingdian kejiao* (scriptures and ritual conjurations). To demonstrate his points, he observed, the

books of *Lao Zi* and *Zhuang Zi* emphasized how to reach a state of quietude and desirelessness, touching only slightly on cultivation; Wei Boyang emphasized cultivation, but did not care for the yoga-like practice; Li Shaojun emphasized macrobiotics, but never spoke of cultivation; Zhang Daoling and Kou Qianzhi attached importance to magic talismans and registers, but not to cultivation or macrobiotics; as for Du Guangting, scriptures and ritual conjurations are of foremost importance.

Ma Duanlin's classification of Taoist arts are generally right. However, there are many other arts which cannot fall into any of the categories above, for instance, *fengshui* (geomancy), *fuji* (automatic writing) and *fangzhong* (sexual hygiene). Many of the Taoists still practice them as tools to improve their physical as well as spiritual wellbeing. In fact, the survival of Taoism hinges greatly on the popularity of these arts.

So far we have discussed several important terms related to Taoism such as *Daojia*, *Daojiao*, *Daoshi* and *Daoshu*. Let us give a brief summary of the relations between these four terms in a general framework of the Taoist religion, a subject under discussion in this book. Generally speaking, a religious assertion depends on two major factors: doctrine and priesthood. While the doctrine forms the theoretical basis of a religion, the priesthood is the group of devoted people who really make the religion known and attract the following through spreading its teaching and arts. Unlike many other religious traditions in the world, which are rich in doctrine and poor in arts, Taoism as a religious tradition is relatively strong in arts, but weak in doctrine. Therefore from the very beginning it made use of the teachings of *Daojia*, originally a philosophical school of thought. Taoism generally commands its followers through the arts as they are their strength. *Daoshi* are those proficient in performing the arts, though many of them are also quite good at theories explaining their arts. It is through the interplay of all these factors that *Daojiao* as an organized religion came into existence and prospers and holds on till today.

## How This Book Is Organized

From the discussion of the concept of Tao and other related terms such as *Daojia*, *Daojiao*, *Daoshi* and *Daoshu*, you might already have some idea of what Taoism really is and of what we are to offer in this book. The following is a brief account of the organization of this book.

This book is divided into seven chapters:

Chapter One The Origin of Taoist Religion (from antiquity to c.A.D. 142)

Chapter Two Early Phase of Taoism (142-220)

Chapter Three Reformation and Maturation of Taoism (220-581)

Chapter Four The Prime Time of Taoism (581-960)

Chapter Five The Growth of Taoist Schools (960-1368)

Chapter Six Taoism During the Ming and Qing (1368-1911)

Chapter Seven Taoism in the Modern Age (1911-1995)

The chapter division of this book generally follows the way of the stage division of *An Outline of Taoist History** prepared by the Chinese Taoist Association, Research Division, except that stage three in the Outline is broken up into two chapters and that a new chapter about Taoism since 1911 is added. We have also altered, omitted or re-formed the Outline wherever we thought fit for the limited space in this book. The epilogue in this book serves as a summary of the Taoist role in shaping Chinese culture and society.

Will Taoism, a tradition of 2,000 years or so, continue to exist or will it perish soon? In order to answer this question, we have to understand the value of this philosophical-religious tradition in relation to our lives today.

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Discussing the significance of Taoism, or what Taoist priests often term as "Fine Taoist Heritage," let us again quote Chen Yingning:

> Lao Zi was one of the greatest philosophers in ancient China. His philosophy proceeded from an overall view of cosmology, and is applied to Nature, Government and Self-cultivation. If we can understand his philosophy, we may "serve the world, if we are well-accomplished, preserve our lives, if we are unrecognized." Then, for a limited life span of a few decades we will never feel at a loss where we are going, and maintain a tranquility of mind when things are in a state of flux. The unusual combination of *Daojia's* philosophy of life and *Daojiao's* cultivation for life beyond is just what we term as "Fine Taoist Heritage." (Chen Yingning, *Taoism and Life Cultivation*, Huawen Publishers, Beijing, 1989.)

While it is true that Taoism can serve as a spiritual and physical guidance, the "Fine Heritage of Taoism" goes beyond this. Being an indigenous religious tradition of China, Taoism absorbed most of what the Chinese culture had to offer. For instance, Taoism took in Confucian social values and the theory of divination from *Yi Jing* (*The Book of Changes*), assimilated traditional Chinese medical theory and Practice, primitive metallurgy, folk music, painting and sculpture as well as rituals of ethnic Chinese minorities. In a sense, a kaleidoscope of the traditional Chinese culture is reflected in Taoism and can be better understood through further researches into this fascinating subject.

## *Chapter One*

# The Origin of Taoist Religion (From Antiquity to c. A.D. 142)

Generally speaking, three major components constitute what we call an established religion: belief in a supernatural world, systematic theology justifying the beliefs, and an established institution or institutions where the priesthood can perform services or other related activities. From antiquity until the reign of Han Emperor Shun Di (r. A.D. 126-144), there flourished various kinds of primitive beliefs and worship in Chinese society, but none of them could be termed an established religion, either because they lacked a systematic world view or a system of organization. Seven schools of thought like *Daojia* and the Yin-Yang School touched upon something like relation between the spiritual world and the mundane world, but the founders of these schools had no intention at all to establish an organization or to initiate a religious movement to propagate their teachings. There were some individuals or groups of people such as *fangshi* (alchemists or immortality-seekers) who were enthusiastic in explaining their teachings and arts to interested officials or emperors, but they were generally not organized in their endeavors. All those beliefs, thoughts and activities however, played an important role in the emergence of Taoism as a religion. In the following sections, these sources will be discussed.

# Section I Sources of Taoist Belief and Pantheon

Taoism is a polytheistic religion. This polytheism arose from the primitive Chinese concept that all things have a "soul" (*ling*). This concept found different expressions in different periods of ancient times. In the pre-historic period, there was the worship of forcers of Nature like mountains, rivers, plants and animals; there was also the worship of ancestors and totems. In the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century B.C.) there was the worship of *di* (ruler) and *shang-di* (ruler-on-high). Religious professionals such as *zhu* (sacrifice officials), *zong* (sacrifice technicians), *bu* (diviners) and *shi* (historians) arose during the Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th country-221 B.C.) with a clear division of labor among them. The following is a general description of these types of worship and how they helped to shape some of the important aspects of Taoist religion.

## 1. Pre-historic Worship

### Worship of Nature and Creatures

Like the peoples in many other cultures in the world, the earliest settlers in the Yellow River Basin did not quite understand why the sun rises in the east and sets in the west and why it sometimes rains and sometimes snows. The desire to understand and even to manipulate these and other natural phenomena gave rise to the earliest rituals which meant both to please the divinities and to call upon their services. As early China was mainly an inland state, and its people preoccupied with agriculture, the worship of mountains, rivers, stars, plants and animals was a common practice. Evidence of this worship is found mostly in Chinese mythology recorded in official history or geography books.

In his *Shi Ji* (*Records of the Historian*), the chapter "Fengshanshu," Sima Qian mentions a place called *Yong* where occurred the worship of the spirits of sun, moon, stars, wind, rain and seas. Worship of all the natural objects, plants or animals, believed to have souls, also flourished. Among the plants, large trees, old trees, peach trees, reeds, bulrushes, and thorn bushes were believed to possess more magic powers than other plants. Some domesticated animals like pigs, horses, oxen, sheep, dogs, chickens and rabbits were regarded as auspicious and worshiped. Wild animals such as tigers, leopards and snakes were considered awesome and worshiped.

Descriptions of these magic plants and animals abound in the *Shan Hai Jing* (*The Book of Mountains and Seas*), so did descriptions of some imaginary animals like the dragon, the phoenix and the unicorn. While many spirits of Nature found their way into the Taoist pantheon, some magical plants were turned into Taoist weapons of exorcism and most of the worshiped animals became part of Taoist symbol system. Remnants of animal worship can be found in popular Year Protectors in the Taoist monasteries today.

**Ancestral Worship and Worship of "Dead Souls"**

Ancient Chinese believed that when people died, their souls would not perish. The souls dwelled in the netherworld, but were not less active than when they were alive. Besides, the souls were not completely alienated from the human world. On the contrary, they kept an eye open for the human conduct, and had superpowers to reward or punish persons as they thought fit. Dead souls were generally called *gui*, *guihun* or *hunpo*. Just like people in this world, some *gui* were good and some were evil. In the netherworld, there were good souls as well as bad. People generally regarded their ancestors and sagely persons as good souls and those condemned or dying a sudden death as bad souls.

Sacrificial ceremonies held for good souls differed from those for bad souls. While the rituals for the former were done with respect and piety, the rituals for the latter were usually based on force and were meant to drive them out. One exorcist practice called *nuo* observed today reflects the continuing influence of that practice.

Ancestral worship was an extension of the worship of dead souls. The ancestors worshipped were usually those who had performed remarkable deeds for their country or community. In *Li Ji* (*The Book of Rites*), the chapter "Ji Fa" ("Ways of Sacrifice"), we have the following report:

> According to the sages, a person who has done the following deeds can be offered sacrifices: if his policy has benefited his people; if he has contributed his life to the cause of the nation; if he has worked hard to protect his country; if he has warded off catastrophes; and if he has got rid of great dangers.

As only those of noble birth could possibly have ancestors who had performed those great deeds, the number of ancestors worshipped by the noble class far exceeded that of the rank and file. Being considered the common ancestor of the Chinese people, Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, was indisputably worshipped by all. For most individuals, the souls of their ancestors were believed to retain power and exert direct influence on their family. When someone was torn by hard dilemmas, he would most likely ask a revelation from his own ancestors through prayer and kowtow.

While ancestral worship augmented the Confucian ethical standard based on family relations, the worship of ancestors extended to the worship of heroes who might not be the ancestors of the worshippers. In Taoist monasteries today, many ancients with distinctions are enshrined. The Taoist *shushen* (profane deities) like Thunder God, Kitchen God, Fortune God, Medicine God and others were deified heroes.

## 2. Worship During the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century B.C.)

### Worship of *Tian* and *Di*

The importance of *Tian* (Heaven) in China is very similar to that of God in the West. When a Chinese is in trouble, he usually appeals to *Tian* for help. The Chinese exclamation "Wo de Tian" has an English equivalent "My God." So far, we have no convincing evidence as to when the Chinese began to worship *Tian* as a personal deity or when the worship of *Tian Di* (Heavenly Emperor) as the supreme emperor arose. Possibly, it started since the Shang Dynasty, for, in *Tangshi Shangshu*, one of the earliest books on Chinese ancient history, Shang Tang, the founding father of the Shang Dynasty, claimed that he overthrew the preceding despotic government because of the will of *Tian*.

*Tian Di* literally means the heavenly emperor. The birth of this concept suggests the beginning of the official hierarchical system on earth, as the hierarchy of the deities in heaven in a large part reflected the official system below. Later the emperor on earth began to claim to be a representative of *Tian Di*, and their relation was analogous to father and son. Hence an emperor is often called *Tianzi* (Son of Heaven). While *Tian* or *Tian Di* was received into the official system of worship, in the Taoist divine hierarchy the deities related to *Tian* generally occupy a very prominent position.

### Divination

Ancient Chinese believed that the deities were constantly supervising human conduct on earth. They would reveal or give warnings to the possible consequences of their conduct through changes in the weather or climate, changes in regular animal behavior, or changes in human psychological reaction. "Whenever a nation is to prosper, there are good omens; whenever a nation is to perish, evil spirits make presence." As the deities were believed to

convey their message through certain animals and plants with magic qualities, the bones of animals such as tortoises and tigers, and plants like bamboo and alpine yarrow were very often used for the purpose of divination. Divination must have flourished in the Shang Dynasty, for most of the unearthed oracle bones dating back to the Shang Dynasty were about divination.

Basic to the belief and practice of divination was that human conduct was controlled by the invisible divine will or power. However, the Chinese did not feel powerless in the face of the divinities; they believed they could discover the divine message in some ways. Divination was one of the important ways of communication between heaven and man. Popular among the methods were divination through observing the positions of the stars, the changing shapes of clouds, the directions of the wind and the layout of the geographical position, and so were the divination through reading a person's palm or face, feeling his skull and interpreting his dreams. These techniques, though marginal to Taoist practice, became part of Taoist arts. Besides, as many decisions on important affairs such as state politics, war, agriculture, marriage, hunting and so forth were usually made through divination, a group of professional diviners came into being. The male diviners were often called *xi*, while the female diviners were called *wu*. The *xi* and *wu* were often persons who possessed some shamanistic tendency. Because of their professional service, they were often quite respected. In China today, though condemned by the official newspapers as superstitious, the arts of divination are in one way or another included in the Taoist package of arts practiced among the people.

## 3. Worship During the Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 1000-770 B.C.)

### Early Spirit System

In the Western Zhou Dynasty, there appeared a systematization

of primitive beliefs and worship. The supernatural beings that were worshipped generally fell into three groups. The first group included *tian shen*, deities residing in Heaven, such as the Heavenly Emperor, the Sun God, Moon God, and Rain God. The second groups included *di qi*, deities residing on Earth, such as the Land God, Grain God, and Gods of Five (holy) Mountains and Four (great) Rivers. The third group included *ren gui*, ghosts living behind the human world, such as the souls of the ancestors of a clan and the spirits of respected sages and heroes. Most of these deities and spirits found their way into the Taoist pantheon and Taoism had much to inherit from the way of systematization.

Most worthy of our notice was a lack of concept of hell where the souls could emigrate and receive judgement. This lack of a hell system reflected the ancient Chinese vision of the world which was generally two-dimensional. Above there was the heavenly residence of deities, down there was Earth inhabited by the spirits. Man being a part of Heaven and Earth resides in between, be he alive or dead. In Chinese language *Huang Quan*, Yellow Springs, is the common term used to describe the place of eternal rest for a human being. Perhaps, the deepest place the ancient Chinese could think of was a fountain or spring just beneath the yellow earth upon which they resided. This conception of the cosmos was retained in early Taoism. It was many years after the penetration of Buddhism that a new world dimension, a system of hells, was heard and accepted and became part of the Chinese world view.

**Professionalization of Religious Personnel**

Parallel to the emergence of the spirit-world in the Zhou Dynasty, arose a variety of professions whose function was to communicate between Man and the Spirits. They were *bu* (diviners), *zhu* (sacrifice officials), *zong* (sacrifice technicians) and *shi* (historians).

Divination was a popular practice in the Shang Dynasty, but special offices established for diviners started with the Zhou Dy-

nasty. The diviner officials (*bu guan*) performed their ceremonial service when an important decision was to be made by the emperor through divination. The *Yi Jing* (*The Book of Changes*) was originally a major book used for divination. It was first written in the period between the Shang and Zhou dynasties, but its final completion only dates from the Warring States or Han periods. Diviners foretold the future by interpreting divinatory symbols arranged in the *Yi Jing*.

In ceremonies, *zhu* usually played a very important role. He was often a very eloquent person. With his sweet voice, he would say prayers and please the spirit on behalf of those who paid tribute. He was actually the director of the whole ceremony. In the Zhou Dynasty, there was a special office established for *zhu*. In later Taoist monasteries, the person who communicates the prayer's message to the divinities is called *miao zhu* (*miao* meaning temple or monastery).

On the other hand, *zong* was the sacrifice technician who was in charge of the ritual technicalities of sacrifices. He was the person who was conversant with the clan law and knew the significance of each step of the sacrifices. *Shi*, a historian, was usually in charge of historical documents and of astronomical observations. But he did more than just record important events taking place in his time. He must have shared some of *bu* or diviner's responsibilities, as in the oracle bones of the Shang Dynasty many names of *shi* appeared together with names of the *bu*. But it was in the Zhou Dynasty that we found records of the earliest office established for *shi*. These professional personnel were actually forerunners of the Taoist priests.

## Section II Sources of Taoist Religious Thinking

The Taoist religious world view was based on many sources.

The earliest ancient work that had a profound influence on Taoist thought was *The Book of Changes*, at first a book of divination in the Zhou Dynasty which later developed into a philosophical work. Many of its ideas, such as "one Yin and one Yang make the Tao," or "changes occur when things reach their limit, after the changes, things run smoothly and last forever" and "(the law of nature and everything else for that matter) can be grasped by observing heaven above and earth below...by observing men within and things without," were a very important part of Chinese mentality and were absorbed by many schools of thought, especially Taoism.

## 1. Taoist Philosophy, the Major Source of Taoist Religion

### Lao Zi

Lao Zi is regarded as one of the greatest philosophers of all times, but the historical record of him is very scanty. According to China's greatest historian, Sima Qian, Lao Zi was a state archive-keeper, and elder contemporary of Confucius (551-479 B.C.). Seeing that the state of Zhou was on the decline, he left for the west. But he was urgently asked by Yin Xi, the keeper of a border pass, to write down his legacy. After he composed a 5,000-character script, he disappeared and nobody knew what has become of him. Sima Qian was not very sure about Lao Zi's life. It would be less possible for us, modern men, to provide a true, full picture of him. His thoughts are reflected in his famous 5,000-character document known as *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching* or *Scripture of the Tao and Its Power*).

We would misunderstand Lao Zi, however, if we labeled his book, *Dao De Jing* as one of philosophy if the term "philosophy" is understood in its original Greek sense, "Love of Wisdom." In fact in the 18th chapter of his book, Lao Zi states, "When knowledge and wisdom appear, great hypocrisy will also emerge." In the 19th chapter, he continues, "Only when sageness and wisdom are discarded can the people get benefits." But if the term philosophy is to

be understood as a reflective thinking on life or the universe, perhaps we are getting nearer to what Lao Zi was talking about.

Lao Zi's philosophy, though seemingly unsystematic to Western readers, is coherent in itself. He pursued his thesis from the very concept of *Tao*. In the opening chapter, he says:

> The Tao that can be spoken of is not a constant Tao;
> The name that can be named is not a constant name.
> The nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;
> The nameable is the root of all things.

What is this "constant Tao" in the mind of the author? In Chapter 25 Lao Zi elaborates on the nature of Tao:

> *There is something undifferentiated and yet complete, which existed before (the birth) of Heaven and Earth.*
> *Without sound or form, it depends on nothing external operating in a circular motion ceaselessly.*
> *It might be considered the mother of all beings under Heaven.*
> *I don't know its name, and so arbitrarily call it Tao.*
> *Forced to name it I call it "Great."*
> *The Great moves off, going further and further away, but it finally returns to the starting point.*
> *Therefore Tao is great;*
> *Heaven is great;*
> *Earth is great;*
> *And Man is also great.*
> *There are four great things in the universe,*
> *And Man is one of them.*
> *Man follows the way of Earth;*
> *Earth follows the way of Heaven;*
> *Heaven follows Tao;*
> *Tao follows itself.*

From the above quotations, we may very well assume that by constant Tao, the author probably meant the invisible principle that governs the workings of life of society and, of the whole universe.

How then can an average individual conform to this invisible principle Tao? The author uses his favorite symbol Water to make his point clear. Chapter 8 reads:

> Superior virtue is like water,
> It benefits all creatures, but does not compete with them.
> It dwells where nobody likes to stay,
> Therefore it is closest to Tao.

If every person has water-like virtue, and shows no strife nor aggression, the whole society will be at peace and in harmony. In Chapter 66, the author offers advice especially to the rulers:

> *The rivers and seas become the kings of all streams from the valleys, because they feel contented staying in lower places.*
>
> *Therefore, the sage who wants to reign over his people should be humble in his words; the sage who wishes to lead his people should learn to stay behind.*
>
> *In this way, if the sage is above them, the people will not feel that he is a burden to them.*
>
> *When the sage comes in front of them, the people will not feel that he is a hindrance.*
>
> *Therefore, all the people under Heaven will never tire of commending him.*
>
> *Just because he does not compete with others, nobody under Heaven can defeat him.*

From a social and political viewpoint of Lao Zi's teachings we can see the relationship between the birth of Taoist philosophy and the official historians who knew the ups and downs, rise and decline of individuals and nations. Again we will quote the passage from the *History of the Former Han Dynasty*:

> Those of the Taoist school had their origin in the official historians. By studying the historical examples of success and failure, preservation and destruction, and calamity and prosperity, from ancient to recent times, they learned how to hold what is essential and to grasp

the fundamental. They guarded themselves with purity and emptiness, and with humbleness and meekness maintained themselves...

As a personal philosophy, Taoism emphasizes the importance of preserving life. For instance, in Chapter 50, we have the following lines:

From cradle to grave,
Three out of ten will live a full life circle,
Three out of ten will die a premature death,
Three out of ten will not live as long as they should.
Why?
Because they live an abandoned life.
Those who excel in preserving life,
Never meet rhinos and tigers in the hills,
Or need to carry armor and weapons on the battlefield.
Rhinos can not thrust their horns into him;
Tigers can not rake their claws on him;
Weapons can not lodge their blades against him:
Why is it so?
Because he is not in the realm of death.

Lao Zi's idea of life preservation and cultivation was expressed even more clearly in Chapter 10:

Can you keep your body and spirit together?
Can you control your breath like a supple new-born baby?
Can you cleanse yourselves of the impure ideas and start a mental introspection?
Can you love the people and govern the country without affection?
Can you remain undisturbed when your senses start to work?
Can you know the world without resorting to wisdom?

In *The Book of Lao Zi*, there are many references to the art of cultivation. From these we may well establish that the birth of Taoist philosophy had also a lot to do with shamanism and the earliest seekers of immortality. This is one of the major reasons why later

practitioners of Taoist religion considered Lao Zi's teachings as their doctrinal basis and further deified Lao Zi as the founder of the religion. The life cultivation and preservation were even more highlighted in Lao Zi's follower, Zhuang Zi, whose work greatly emphasized spiritual emancipation. The image of *shen ren* (spirit men) Zhuang Zi created may have exerted a great influence on the Taoist conception of *xian* — immortal.

**Zhuang Zi**

After Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi was the most important early Taoist philosopher. Zhuang Zi lived between approximately 369-286 B.C. He was a native of the small State of Meng between the present Shandong and Henan provinces. He once served as a minor official, taking care of a lacquer tree garden, but before long quit his office and led a hermit's life. He must have held wealth and power in great contempt, for there is a story about how he declined the offer for a position and compared an office-taker to a well-ornamented pig to be used as a sacrifice. Zhuang Zi's philosophical ideas are reflected mainly in Inner Chapters, the first part of the book bearing his name. In several ways, Zhuang Zi developed the teachings of Lao Zi:

Firstly, in *The Book of Zhuang Zi*, the Tao is venerated as the Creator who has a physical as well as spiritual entity. For instance in the chapter entitled "Da Zong Shi" ("Great Master"), we read:

> Tao has reality and evidence, but no action and form. It may be transmitted, but can not be received. It may be attained but cannot be seen. It exists by and through itself. It exists prior to heaven and earth, and indeed for all eternity. It causes the gods to be divine and the world to be produced. It is above the zenith, but it is not high. It is beneath the nadir, but it is not low. It is prior to heaven and earth, but it is not ancient. It is older than the most ancient, but it is not old.... — (Translation quoted from Fung Yu-lan's *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*.)

Secondly, there was an integration of the Tao and the Spirit or Immortal. If a person attains the Tao, he becomes immortal. In "Xiao Yao You" ("Happy Excursion"), we have the description of *shen ren* (spirit men):

> Far away on the mountain of Gu Ye, there lived spiritual men. Their flesh and skin were like ice and snow. Their manners were elegant and graceful as those of maidens. They did not eat any of the five grains, but inhaled the wind and drank the dew. They rode on clouds, drove along the flying dragons, and thus rambled beyond the four seas. — (Translation quoted from the same book as above.)

In "Qi Wu Lun" ("On the Equality of Things"), we read a report on "perfect men":

> The *zhenren* (perfect men) are mysterious. .... Were the great lakes burned up, they would not feel hot. Were the great rivers frozen hard, they would not feel cold. Were the mountains riven with thunder, or the seas thrown into waves by a storm, they would not be frightened. Being such, they would mount upon the clouds of heaven, would ride on the sun and moon, and would thus ramble at ease beyond the seas. Neither death nor life can affect them; how much less can the consideration of what is beneficial and harmful? — (Translation quoted from the same book as above)

In "Da Zong Shi" ("Great Master"), we have a report on "perfect men" (*zhenren*):

> What are perfect men? The perfect men of old don't feel frustrated by a failure, neither do they wield their powers after a success. They take nothing too seriously, and pay no attention to self-interest, thus they do not regret over the failure, nor do they feel self-complacent over the success. And they could scale heights without fear, enter water without getting wet, and fire without feeling hot. Such are they whose knowledge has ascended to Tao.
>
> The perfect men of old slept without dreaming and wake without anxiety. They ate without discrimination, breathing deep breaths. The

breaths of the true men come from their heels, while men generally breathe from their throats.... — (Translation quoted from the same book as above.)

The description of the spirit men, the perfect men and the true men became the major sources of inspiration for the imagination of *xian* — immortal in the Taoist religion.

Thirdly, the Tao was closely related to and became the basis of the arts of life cultivation. In "Yang Sheng Zhu" ("Fundamentals for Life Cultivation"), we have a story of how a cook after dexterously cutting up a bullock explained to his master:

> "What your servant loves is Tao, which is more advanced than art. When I first began to cut up a bullock, what I saw was simply the whole bullock. After three years' practice, I saw no more bullocks as wholes. At present I work with my mind, but not with my eyes. The functions of my senses stop and my spirit comes to dominate..."
>
> "Excellent," said the prince, "from the words of this cook, I learned the ways of cultivating life." — (Translation quoted from the same book as above.)

These are only a few of Zhuang Zi's ideas, but they are adequate to show the relation between Zhuang Zi's teachings and later Taoist religion. Although some of Zhuang Zi's teachings such as the idea of "equalizing life and death" contradict the pursuit of immortal life in Taoist religion, Zhuang Zi's views on the relation between the cultivation of the Tao and immortality had a great influence on Taoism in its different periods of development.

No doubt, Taoist philosophy was the major source of the teachings and doctrines of Taoist Religion. Other schools of thought such as the Yin-Yang School, the Mohist School and School of Numerology all to a greater or lesser degree influenced the doctrines and practices of Taoist Religion, but they are too many to discuss here in full.

## 2. Genesis of the Ideas of *Xian*

Etymologically speaking, the character for *xian* 仙 is made up of two parts, which means a man and a mountain. This suggests that the earliest Chinese image of *xian* was related to the mountains. Early Chinese mythology was especially rich in telling stories about *xian* or *xian*-like beings flying freely in the sky and from one mountain to another. In a famous tale, the Moon Goddess, Chang'e, the wife of an eminent archer, after consuming a pill of elixir left her husband for the moon and stays there forever. Many ancient literary works mention the activities of *xian*, and they generally reflect the immortalist thoughts in different regions of China.

### *Xian* in the South

In *Chu Ci* (*Eulogies of Chu*), the chapter "Yuan You" tells how Qu Yuan, the author, wished to become a *xian*:

> In emptiness and silence I found serenity,
> In tranquil inaction I gained true satisfaction.
> I heard how once Red Pine had washed the world's dust off,
> I would model myself on the pattern he had left me.
> I honored the wondrous powers of the Pure Ones,
> And those of past ages who had become immortals.

They departed in the flux of change and vanished from men's sight, leaving a famous name that endures after them. — (David Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u, the Songs of the South.*)

Qu Yuan (c. 340-278 B.C.) lived in the state of Chu in the present provinces of Hubei and Hunan, where shamanism flourished in ancient times. His immortalist thoughts might have arisen from shamanist beliefs.

### *Xian* in Northwestern and Eastern Regions

*The Book of Mountains and Seas*, on the other hand, reflects the immortalist thoughts in the northwestern region in China. This

book contains many stories about *Xian* and their activities. For instance, in the chapter "Haiwai Nanjing" of the book, a record is kept of a tree of immortality. The persons who eat from the tree will live very long. There is a red fountain and persons who drink from it will never grow old. In the chapter "Dahuang Xijing," mention is made of the Yellow Emperor who becomes an immortal after taking a dose of elixir (jade paste). In the chapter "Hainei Xijing," the author describes a mountain among the Kunlun Mountain Range like this: it is 800 square miles, with an altitude of over 10,000 meters; there grow elixir trees which are fenced in by nine walls. Animals keep on guard at the nine gates. It is a meeting place for immortals and deities.

The legends about the famous Three Isles for Immortals reflect the immortalist thoughts of the eastern coastal region in China. Like in the northwestern region, the idea of *xian* in the eastern region may have been generated by chance witnesses of spectacular views such as mirages by certain people who went into the mountains or seas and brought back with them the stories. By and by other people began to take the stories as truth.

## Section III The Formative Process of Taoist Organization

### 1. *Fangxiandao* — Forerunner of Early Taoist Religion

In the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.), a few people in the eastern states of Yan and Qi (in present Hebei and Shandong provinces) were very active in practicing the arts of immortality and preaching their theory about immortality. In history, they were generally called *fangshi*. Breath control, massage, exorcism, and alchemy were among the arts they practiced. At first, their arts seemed to have achieved not much popularity, because their theory,

if there was any, did not appeal to the Chinese mentality. Later, they adopted the Yin-Yang Five Agents theory proposed by Zou Yan, formerly a *fangshi* in his own right, and thus initiated an established movement, which is historically called Fangxiandao, the Way of Magicians and Immortals.

There were three basic points in Zou Yan's theory. First, he adopted the traditional Yin-Yang Philosophy that everything has two opposite properties named Yin and Yang and that the interaction of these two properties results in a change in everything. The alteration of the four seasons, for instance, results from the proportional increase or decrease of the *Yin qi* and *Yang qi.*

Secondly, Zou adopted the traditional beliefs that the world is made of five basic agents (Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water) and that each element produces another but is overcome by a different one. Wood, for instance, produces Fire, but is overcome by Metal. This theory, originally meaning to reflect natural phenomena, was applied by Zou Yan to social and historical phenomena of the world. For instance, Zou said: The Shang Dynasty was overthrown and replaced by the Zhou Dynasty because the former characterized by the agent Metal was overcome by the latter characterized by Fire. Finally Zou Yan emphasized that there was a mutual responsiveness between Heaven and man. Heaven showed its signs whenever things happened to man on earth. For instance, before the reign of the Zhou King Wen, a red bird was said to have carried a red letter to his ancestral temple, therefore the Zhou Dynasty was represented by the agent of red Fire, and inevitably overthrew the Shang Dynasty represented by Metal. Zou Yan's theory gained great popularity for a long time and was somehow utilized to popularize the arts and magic of the *fangshi.*

With the theory and arts on hand, the Fangxiandao movement attracted quite a few emperors, among whom the First Emperor of Qin and the Han Emperor Wu Di were the most enthusiastic. These emperors in turn promoted the movement.

**Immortality Pursuit by the First Emperor of Qin and Others**

The enthusiasm for immortality of the First Emperor of Qin (r. 246-210 B.C.) and some other emperors was recorded in some detail in the official history, *Records of the Historian*:

> The Qi kings Wei and Xuan and King Zhao of Yan all ordered their men to look for Penglai, Fangzhan and Yingzhou. Legend has it that these three mortal islands are amidst the Bohai Sea, and they are within one's eyesight. Once the people get near to them, their boat will soon be blown away. The people who were lucky enough to get there came back reporting that *xian* and elixirs were all there. Plants, birds and beasts were all white. The palaces there were all made from gold and silver. They looked like clouds in the distance. But very often when people got near to them, they began to sink or were blown away by the wind. The kings, however, never gave up the hope.

After he united the country, the First Emperor of Qin made some trips to the eastern coast. There he heard many stories about the immortal islands. Fearing that he might not reach the islands himself, he ordered his men to look for them, gave the men many infant boys and girls as a gift. His men claimed that they had seen the islands, but as the wind was very strong, they could not reach them. In the following year, the Emperor made another trip to the seaside, and returned home en route Langya, Mt. Hengshan and Shangdang. Three years later, he made a tour of Jieshi, a seaside mountain, and obtained audiences with *fangshi*, immortality-seekers, who had reached the sea, and were returning home from Shangjun. Five years later, the Emperor toured Mt. Xianshan, and then Mt. Huiji and finally arrived at another seaside, expecting to secure elixirs from the three immortal islands. He did not get what he wanted and died in Shaqiu on his return trip home.

**Han Emperor Wu Di, Another Immortality Enthusiast**

In spite of the fact that the First Emperor of Qin never found the elixir in his life, the enthusiasm to seek elixir never seemed to abate

on the part of emperors. Han Emperor Wu Di (r. 140-87 B.C.) was a good case in point. The *Xiaowu Benji* (*The Book of History*) records how Li Shaojun, a *fangshi*, persuaded Wu Di into immortality pursuit.

> (Li) Shaojun said to the Emperor (Wu Di): "If you offer sacrifice to the Kitchen God, you will get a special substance. With this substance, you may transform cinnabars into gold. If you eat from the utensils made of gold, you will live a longer life. If you live long enough, you will meet the immortals in Penglai. After you have met the immortals and enshrined Mt. Taishan, you will become immortal just like the Yellow Emperor. I once met on the sea An Qisheng, who was eating a date as big as a melon. An Qisheng is an immortal who can go to and from Penglai. If he knows of a right person, he will go and meet him, otherwise he will hide away. Hearing this, the Emperor offered a sacrifice to the Kitchen God in person and then sent his *fangshi* to the sea to find An Qisheng and other immortals in Penglai. In the meanwhile, he saw about making gold through transforming cinnabar and other substances. When, after quite some time, Li Shaojun died of a disease, the Emperor thought An could not have died, and that he must have transformed into another being. Therefore the Emperor instructed Huang Cui and Shi Kuanshu to inherit An's arts. Although (the Emperor) never met An Qisheng from Penglai, many *fangshi* like Yan and Qi followed suit, telling fantastic stories.

In the same biography, another *fangshi* called Gong Sunqing is recorded as saying:

> "Immortals can be met. But as they come and go in a hurry, they often escape people's attention. Now Your Majesty may build a *guan* (the place where immortals stay and are seen), say, in the city of Goushi. Some dried dates may be placed in the *guan* to attract the immortals. Besides, the immortals like residing in this kind of building."

Acting on his advice, the Emperor ordered to have two *guan* built, one in the capital city Chang'an (present Xi'an) and the other in Ganquan. Officials were appointed to take charge of the affairs. In another record in *Zi Zhi Tong Jian* (*History as a Mirror*), when he heard a story about the Yellow Emperor who ascended to heaven

with his men and wives and concubines, the Han Emperor Wu Di enthused, "If I could be like the Yellow Emperor, I would leave my wives and children as if I were taking off my shoes!" The stories about Emperor Wu Di's enthusiasm in seeking immortality are immortalized in a fiction story called *Hanwudi Neizhuan* (*An Unofficial Biography of the Han Emperor Wu Di*).

## 2. Huang-Lao Tao Tradition — From an Ideology to Religious Faith

### Huang Di and His Stories

Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, is generally considered to be the common ancestor of all Chinese. The stories about him are numerous and some of them are conflicting. But generally we might assume that Huang Di was originally a versatile hero, who commanded such a high respect from his people that they rallied around him and made him the leader of a league of tribes. Legend credits Huang Di with many pioneering feats: 1) he set up an official appointment and recommendation system; 2) made the earliest Chinese calendar; 3) taught his people to plant crops; 4) built houses; 5) made clothes; 6) arranged funerals and interment; 7) made ships, carts, bows and arrows; 8) invented the earliest compass; 9) created Chinese characters; 10) made musical instruments; and 11) introduced medicine.

In sum, Huang Di was reputed as a founder of the earliest Chinese civilization. He was said to have 25 sons who lived in different places in China and who were often claimed to be the ancestors of all tribes and clans in China. In the Warring States Period, there was a common wish for national unity and a general tendency to claim Huang Di as the common ancestor. For a time, the veneration of Huang Di as a great hero became the order of the day. The followers of Lao Zi's teachings, who made a base in the capital of the state of Qi, took advantage of the Chinese mentality and claimed

their teachings as originally made by Huang Di and Lao Zi. The term *Huang-Lao Xue* (Huang Di-Lao Zi Thought) is generally used for this.

***Huang-Lao Xue***

In the Western Han Dynasty, *Huang-Lao Xue* asserted its existence in mainly three ways:

First, it taught the art of purity and tranquility in running a government and was adopted as a theoretical basis of the early Han's "laisser-faire" policy. That policy was largely responsible for the success of post-Qin reconstruction in China.

Secondly, it absorbed the Yin-Yang Five Agents theory which became the basis of numerology and divination popular in that period. In "Yi Wen Zhi," *Han Shu* ("Chapter on Biography," *History of the Han Dynasty*), for instance, Huang Di was recorded to have written many books of these kinds.

Finally, *Huang-Lao Xue* incorporated many elements of the immortality cult. Again in the "Yi Wen Zhi" there were quite a few books concerning life cultivation, medicine and other arts of immortality. Huang Di and Lao Zi were immortalized. In *Lie Xian Zhuan* (*Account of the Saints*), the most comprehensive book on immortals' hagiography in the Western Han Dynasty, Huang Di and Lao Zi were listed as *xian* with detailed accounts of their stories. Here is the story about Huang Di:

> Huang Di, whose assumed name was Xuan Yuan, could call all deities and spirits to his service. When he was young, he was eloquent. He was sagely and able to predict things. He could tell the age of plants, and claimed himself to be the Master of Clouds. His appearance resembled that of a dragon. He chose his day for eternal departure with his officials and then passed away. He was buried on Qiaoshan Mountain. When a landslide occurred on the mountain, his coffin was revealed, but his remains were not found except for a sword which had previously been buried with him.

An immortalist book records:

> Huang Di extracted copper from Shoushan Mountain and cast his heating tripod at the foot of Jingshan Mountain. When the tripod was finished, a dragon dropped down its beard for him to climb up, and so he ascended to heaven. The officials, who stayed beside him, quickly got hold of the dragon beard, and rose up also....

**Huang-Lao Tao**

In the Eastern Han Dynasty, throughout the country there was a general trend toward belief in the existence of a supernatural world and in human beings' relatedness to it. That was probably occasioned by the social and political instability of the time. In this atmosphere, *Huang-Lao Xue* became more religion-oriented. Huang Di and Lao Zi were both deified and they began to receive sacrifices in the temples especially built for them. Emperor Huan Di (r. 147-167) was especially enthusiastic in promoting the deification of Huang Di and Lao Zi. He was said to have built their temples in his palace and even went to Lao Zi's hometown in person and offered sacrifices to Lao Zi. Finally *fangshi* and Huang-Lao's theory merged, and gave rise to a movement, historically called Huang-Lao Tao (Cult).

## 3. General Ideas of Immortality Cults As Reflected in *Lie Xian Zhuan*

In a span of over 2,000 years between the Three Dynasties (Xia, Shang and Zhou) and the reign of Han Emperor Cheng Di, there are many stories about *xian* either recorded in writing or told orally. By collecting the existing stories available, Liu Xiang compiled a book called *Lie Xian Zhuan*, the first hagiography of immortals. Liu however was not random in his collections. Running through the whole book was his conviction that immortals did exist and that everyone could become an immortal.

First, since the remote past, immortals were living in every dynasty. The earliest immortal who came to the stage was Chi Song Zi (Master Red Pine). He was said to be a teacher of Yellow Emperor, and was a frequent visitor to the stone chamber where Queen Mother of the West lived. The other 69 immortals appeared in the dynasties that followed. The latest immortal was called Gu Chun, who was claimed to have resurrected after death.

Secondly, the immortals could be found in almost every corner of China proper or in its peripheral areas. For instance, the Immortal An Qisheng was formerly a native of Langya in present eastern China, Shandong Province; the Immortal Shan Tu was from Longxi in present northwestern China, Shaanxi Province; the Immortal Zhu Zhong came from Huiji in present southeastern China, Zhejiang Province; Ge You formerly lived near Shu in present southwestern China, Sichuan Province.

Thirdly, people from every walk of life could become immortals. Of all the seventy immortals listed, most were originally ordinary people such as a shoe-mender, door-keeper, chicken-keeper, wine-maker, or fisherman. There were a few middle class people such as a medical doctor, vet, alchemist, or official in charge of porcelain production. Upper class people were few except for Yellow Emperor, Cang Rong (a princess), and Wang Zijiao (a prince). A few ethnic minorities were represented such as Jiang man (Ge You) and Ba Rong man (Chi Fu). At a time when the minorities were regarded as inferior races, Liu Xiang's intention was clear: all the people of whatever social distinctions and cultural backgrounds could become immortals.

Fourthly, there were various ways to the land of the immortals. Of all the immortals described, some are certain plants such as pine seeds, pine leaves, glossy ganoderma, and *fuling* (Poris cocos), or swallowed refined alchemical substances before they became immortals. Some practiced gymnastics, such as breathing exercises, and sexual hygiene, or inhaled astral emanations, coupled with

herbal therapy. Still some others became immortals merely because they had done a good deed or something. The typical example was a horse doctor. Once he saw a dragon whose mouth was open and ears were drooping. Realizing that the dragon must be ill, the horse doctor concocted some medical herb for it, and soon it recovered. Later when the horse doctor got ill, the dragon came to his aid and taking him on its back, it flew to the sky.

Fifthly, before a mortal being became an immortal, he would display one of the following traits:

1) He had no feeling of hunger or coldness and the body was as light as a feather.

2) He felt rejuvenated as his age advanced.

3) He ascended to Heaven on the back of either a dragon, a phoenix or a crane.

4) He resurrected after death.

5) Nobody could find his corpse soon after it was interred. In Taoist terminology his corpse has been delivered (*shijie*).

As one of the major sources of Taoist Religion, the immortality cult was very pervasive in China before the birth of Christ. But those beliefs in immortality were quite unsystematic: First there was no supreme god or a supreme divine power who could command devotion on the part of the believers. Secondly, there was no systematic theory which could serve as a theology, nor books of divine revelations which could serve as scriptures. Lastly, there was no institution whatsoever to serve as a center to convert the would-be followers or to initiate priests to spread the teachings. In sum, the cult of immortality in this period under discussion was not yet institutionalized as a religion. As the Huang-Lao Tradition emerged and then flourished, the immortalists gradually mingled with the followers of the Huang-Lao Tradition. These two traditions, together with primitive worship of various kinds, finally merged into the Taoist Religion which came into existence during the second century.

## *Chapter Two*

# Early Phase of Taoism (142-220)

Primitive Cults, the Immortality Tradition and the Huang-Lao Tradition constitute the three major leading sources to organized Taoist religion in and around the second century A.D. As we have mentioned earlier, an organized religion is often characterized by three major factors, namely, a founder (or founders), theology (scriptures) and organized movement. These three characteristics applied to the Taoist religion of the second century and therefore we generally regard this period as the early phase of Taoism. The Great Peace (Taiping) Movement, the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism (Wudoumi Tao) and, the publication of *Can Tong Qi*, the earliest scripture on alchemy, were the three main expressions of Taoist Religion in this early phase.

## Section I The *Great Peace Scripture* (*Taipingjing*) and Great Peace Taoism (Taiping Tao)

The earliest Taoist movement began with Great Peace Taoism, a movement characterized by teachings based on the *Great Peace Scripture* (*GPS*). In this section we will first discuss the evolution of the *GPS*, then introduce its main contents and finally give a

brief account of Taiping Tao, a movement with a strong political orientation.

## 1. The Evolution of the *GPS*, the Earliest Text of Taoist Religion

The *GPS* was the most important scripture in the early phase of Taoist Religion. In fact, both the Taiping Tao and Five Bushels of Rice movements were influenced by ideas set forth in the scripture. The 170-*juan** *Taiping Qinglingshu* was generally considered to be the original version of the scripture, but only 57 *juan* survive in the Ming edition of the *Taoist Canon* (*Zhengtong Daozang*). But our story of the scripture will start with *Tianguanli Baoyuan Taipingjing*; a scripture recorded to have existed during the reign of Western Han Emperor Cheng Di (r. 32-7 B.C.). We believe it might well be regarded as the earliest predecessor of the *GPS*.

***Tianguanli Baoyuan Taipingjing***

The title suggests that the pursuit of longevity was one of the ideals in the scripture. *Taiping* (literally meaning "Great Peace') not only refers to political stability, but also suggests a complete harmony between man and the universe, a peace which pervades everything. From the title itself we can find the possible relation between the *Tianguanli Baoyuan Taipingjing* and the *Taipingjing* in popular circulation.

In addition, the record in the "Biography of Li Xin" in *Han Shu* (*History of the Han Dynasty*) revealed something about the teachings of Gan Zhongke. For instance, one of the most significant things about Gan Zhongke's teachings was the involvement of *zhenren* or immortal in secular affairs. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, those *zhenren* or *xian* immortals cared only about their own freedom. This method of propagation which involves a divine authority, a perfected being or immortal and a religious prac-

titioner, was frequently adopted by later Taoist priests. In fact, the teachings of the *Taiping Qinglingshu* adopted this very method of propagation.

Although Gan Zhongke himself was later persecuted for "talking about politics," his teachings were spread secretly by some of his disciples, especially Xia Heliang. According to the "Biography of Li Xin" again, Gan Zhongke's teachings enjoyed some popularity among certain higher ranking officials. And for a time, his disciples succeeded in having part of his teachings adopted by Han Emperor Ai Di (r. 6-1 B.C.):

> Emperor Ai Di had been long unable to recover from his illness, therefore he followed (Xia) Heliang's advice. Then he had his edict carried out by his Prime Minister and ministers, which reads: "...He granted a general pardon, changed his reign of the year to Taichu Yuannian (the first year of Taichu) from the original Jianping Ernian (the second year of Jianping), and assumed the name of Sage Chen, Great Peace Emperor Liu. The water clock was divided into 120 graduations and made known to the public."

When Xia Heliang, Li Xin and some adherents of Gan's teachings went so far as to carry out a political reform, the emperor began to mistrust them. Besides, the remedy they prescribed for the emperor's sterility proved inefficacious. In the end, Xia was sentenced to death, and Li Xin and some others were exiled.

Though Xia and his comrades did not end up well, the scripture of *Tianguanli Baoyuan Taipingjing* must have been in secret circulation, for Ge Hong (284-364) mentioned *Baoyuanjing* in his famous *Baopuzi Neipian* ("Inner Chapters" of *The Book of Master Baopu*). We have mentioned in the previous chapter that Huang-Lao Thought became part of the political ideology in the early Western Han Dynasty and contributed for some time to the economic revival and prosperity. However, after Emperor Yuan Di (r. 48-33 B.C.) was enthroned, the people began to suffer from both political corruption and social instability. Things became even worse during the

reign of Emperor Cheng Di. Natural calamities came one after another, which resulted in starvation of millions of people. In this social climate, some followers of Huang-Lao Taoism began to propose ways to solve the social and political problems. One of the results was the creation of *Tianguanli Baoyuan Taipingjing*.

According to the record in the "Biography of Li Xin" in the *History of the Han Dynasty*, the *Tianguanli Baoyuan Taipingjing* was written by a *fangshi* called Gan Zhongke, a native of Qi in present Shandong Province:

> Early in the reign of Emperor Cheng Di, Gan Zhongke of Qi composed the *Tianguanli Baoyuan Taipingjing*; 12 *juan* in total. (The scripture) said that the Han clan was at the critical moment when heaven and earth were in transition, therefore it became all the more necessary to follow divine providence. The Heavenly Emperor sent Perfect Being (*Zhenren*) Chi Jin Zi to teach me (Gan Zhongke) the Tao.

According to the hagiographical book *Lidai Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian*, Chi Jing Zi was a Perfect Being who was active during the reign of the legendary Emperor Zhuan Xu who succeeded the Yellow Emperor in prehistoric times and was noted for his teachings of loyalty and obedience. The *Tianguanli Baoyuan Taipingjing* is no longer extant, but from the title of the book and a fragmentary record kept in the "Biography of Li Xin" in the *History of the Han Dynasty*, we can still get some rough idea of the contents of the book, from which a linkage can be established between this scripture and the *Taipingjing*.

As the first part of its title *Tianguanli* (which literally means "Calendar of celestial officials") suggests, this scripture emphasized the relation or mutual responsiveness between heaven and mankind, as the ancient calendars always reflected. On the other hand, *Baoyuan*, which literally means "embracing the primordial," was probably taken from the classic *Chun Qiu* (*Spring and Autumn Annals*), which had one sentence like this:

"As the primordial *qi* is embraced, it conceals its essences. It began to pervade the universe since the creation. If a sage feels its power and follows its way, he will then live a long life."

We speculate that the *Baoyuanjing* was originally a copy of the *Tianguanli Baoyuan Taipingjing* or its surviving parts. It was due to the efforts of many adherents of Gan Zhongke that the original 12 *juan* was expanded to 170 *juan* named *Taiping Qinglingshu* (*Green-headlined Scripture* of *Great Peace*). The surviving chapters in the *Taipingjing* elaborate on Yin and Yang, natural catastrophes, the Tao and its virtues, and divine portents, and further suggests its probable connection with the original *Tianguanli Baoyuan Taipingjing*. More will be said about it in the next subsection.

### *Taiping Qinglingshu* and Its Principal Compiler

The earliest record of the 170-*juan* scripture named *Taiping Qinglingshu* appeared in the "Biography of Xiang Kai" in the History of the *Later Han Dynasty*:

> Earlier in the reign of Emperor Shun Di (A.D. 126-144), a Gong Cong from Langya (in present Shandong Province) went to the court and presented to the emperor the 170-*juan* divine scripture which his master Yu Ji had obtained from the Spring of Quyang (near present city of Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province). The scripture was bleached white, with red margins, red contents and green headlines, it was called *Taiping Qinglingshu* (*Green-headlined Scripture of Great Peace*).

The *Taiping Qinglingshu* is now commonly referred to as *Taipingjing*. The name of the scripture was mentioned in quite a few Taoist books and official records. For instance, in the *Shen Xian Zhuan* (*Hagiographies of Deities and Immortals*), Ge Hong wrote:

> In the reign of Han Emperor Yuan Di (48-33 B.C.), Song (sic) went to the Spring of Quyang with Ji (Yu ji). They met a divine immortal there who revealed to them the ten-section *Taipingjing* which was written in red characters and bound by blue silk bands. Ji passed it on to Song after he obtained the Tao (message) from the scripture.

This record clearly contradicts the above record in the "Biography of Xiang Kai" as to the time when the scripture was created, which is truer to the fact. It is humanly improbable to live over 150 years if we suppose both records to be true. (The last year of Emperor Yuan Di's reign plus the first year of Emperor Shun Di's reign is the least number we can obtain for the age of Yu Ji.) It is necessary that we make a further investigation into Yu Ji, the principal compiler of the scripture, by falling back on other records.

**An Investigation of the Principal Compiler**

According to the "*Biography of Sun Ce*" in the *History of the Three Kingdoms*, Yu Ji was killed by Sun Ce, the ruler of the state of Wu:

> At that time, there was a Taoist from Langya, named Yu Ji. He originally resided in the east, but came to the capital of Wu and the nearby city of Hui (in present Jiangsu and Zhejiang respectively). He set up sanctuaries, offered incense and read Taoist scriptures. He also made talismans and incantations to cure the people's illness there. Consequently, many people followed him. Once when Sun Ce had assembled his generals and guests to the rostrum on the city walls, (Yu) Ji in his holiday best came to the gate, holding up a painted armor on his stick, which was called "the immortal's ploughshare." Two thirds of the generals and guests went down to greet him. The protocol official could not stop them, therefore Sun Ce issued an order to have him arrested immediately. Some followers asked their wives to petition Sun Ce's mother for help. Sun's mother then said to her son, "Master Yu has been aiding our army, doctoring our soldiers and generals, you must not kill him." Sun then retorted, "This enchanter misleads people and makes them abandon the proper etiquette guiding the supreme ruler and his subjects. Since they all have gone downstairs and greeted him, I cannot but eliminate him." Finally all these officials signed a petition and begged for pardon on Yu's behalf, but Sun got irritated and said, "This fellow has been listed on the register of the ghosts. Don't waste your pen and paper any more!" With these

words, Sun ordered an early execution and had Yu's head hung up in the city. His followers, however, did not think that their master had actually died. They said that he had merely been delivered from his corpse (*Shijie*) and began to enshrine him to ask for blessings.

Sun Ce was a contemporary of Han Emperor Xian Di (r. 189-220). We believe the records in the biographies of both Xiang Kai and Sun Ce to be true, for it was possible that Yu Ji had an active life between A.D. 126, the first year of the reign of Emperor Shun Di, and A.D. 220, the last year of the reign of Emperor Xian Di. Our belief is further confirmed by another record appearing in *Zhi Lin*, a historical collection by Yu Xi between the late Jin Dynasty (265-316) and Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420). For one thing, Yu Xi was much closer to the life of Yu Ji than any other keeper of the records mentioned above. Moreover Yu Xi was a very erudite scholar of his time. He might have had other sources to fall back on when he wrote the following words:

> About 50 or 60 years had passed between the time in the reign of Emperor Shun Di (when he got the *Taiping Qinglingshu*) and the time in the reign of Emperor Xian Di, Jian'an era (when Yu got killed by Sun Ce). At that time, Yu Ji was nearly one hundred years old. An old man such as he was should not be punished according to the established rites and norms, ... Yu Ji's crime was not so serious as to deserve capital punishment. He was killed by a sheer mistake; it was not a virtuous act on the part of the killer.

Nearly 150 years elapsed between Gan Zhongke's creation of the 12-*juan Tianguanli Baoyuan Taipingjing* and Yu Ji's compilation of the 170-*juan Taiping Qinglingshu*. The miscellaneous and sometimes conflicting ideas we find in the present collated version *Taipingjing Hejiao* reflect the various interpretations existing before the time of Yu Ji. The completion of the *Taiping Qinglingshu* was a significant event in the history of Taoist Religion, as the earliest Taoist movements were in one way or another influenced by that scripture.

**Further Texts of the *Taipingjing***

After publication of the 170-*juan Taipingjing* by Yu Ji, different texts appeared thanks to different propogators in different regions at different times.

Zhang Ling, or Zhang Daoling, who initiated the Five Bushels of Rice Movement, was recorded to have possessed one version of the *Taipingjing*. The full name of the text was *Taiping Dongjijing*. Only 144 *juan* of it seemed to have existed when Zhang had it. The *Taiping Dongjijing* is no longer extant, but from other references we can establish the similarities between this version and the original version of the *Taiping Qinglingshu*. The textual research into these two versions is too lengthy to mention here.

Zhang Jue, who initiated the Yellow Turban Uprising at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, was also recorded to have obtained the *Taipingjing*. While we have no idea as to the exact number of *juan* Zhang Jue's version had, we have substantial proof that Zhang Jue truly got the scripture. We will talk more about it at the end of this section.

After the Eastern Han Dynasty, the *Taipingjing* began to circulate even more clandestinely because of its relation with the Rebellion. At the end of the Tang Dynasty Luqiu Fangyuan rearranged the *Taipingjing* into ten large sections. The new version was called *Taiping Jingchao*. As time went by, the *Taipingjing* became less and less complete. Only 77 *juan* of it can be found in the Ming Taoist Canon. Based on its surviving 77 *juan* and Luqiu's *Taiping Jingchao* and other references, the late Professor Wang Ming was able to collate the *Taipingjing* into a rather satisfactory version named *Taipingjing Hejiao*. Our knowledge of the *Taipingjing*, in fact, of the earliest Taoist religion has been greatly increased on account of this collated work.

## 2. What the *Taipingjing* Was About

As the *Taipingjing* is not the product of one period or of one

particular author, its contents tend to be miscellaneous. However, there is still a coherence in thought especially in terms of its cosmology, its ideal world and its emphasis on the methods to realize its ideals. The whole scripture is arranged in dialogues between a Celestial Master and a Perfect Being. We discuss these three aspects in the following passages to give a rough idea of what the book is mainly about and how it influenced the later Taoist movements.

**Cosmology**

The cosmology as reflected in the *Taipingjing* was not too different from the view of the universe as held by the men of letters of the time and earlier. *Qi* was endowed with two aspects, Yin and Yang. Everything in the universe took either Yin or Yang aspects of *qi*. When these two aspects interacted, a new thing would be produced. In *Juan* 73 to 85 of the *Taipingjing in Collation*, we have the following passage:

> The invisible primordial *qi* was condensed as One, that was how heaven was created; the other aspect Yin broke away from heaven, and formed the earth; now the Two were born; as heaven above met the earth below, that was to say as the Yang met the Yin, man was thus produced. Now we had the Three (Heaven, Earth and Man). These three interacted with one another and brought about the myriad of creatures.

Obviously, this passage is an interpretation of Chapter 42 in *The Book of Lao Zi*, which reads:

> The Tao creates One;
> The One creates the Two;
> The Two create the Three;
> And the Three create thousands of creatures.

Besides the concepts "One," "Two" and 'Three," "Yin," "Yang" and "*qi*," another important concept, "Tao," was also emphasized in the scripture. "Tao" was considered to be the law, the principle that

governs all the changes in the universe, it was therefore something "*qi*' had to observe when it generated the working of the universe. One passage from *Juan* 18 to 34 reads:

> What is Tao? It is the primary cause of everything. It cannot be named. Nothing within the Six Poles (six directions — east, west, south, north, above and below — another name for universe) can make a change without the Tao. It was through the Tao that the primordial *qi* produced things under the sun (and above and beyond it). In sum, everything be it heaven or earth, be it large or small, is created through the working of the Tao.

Also manifested in the *Taipingjing* is the idea of solidarity among man, society and the universe. It was believed that the principles that governed the universe or the macrocosm, were applicable to human society and man himself as a microcosm. It was based on this belief that the writers of the scripture envisaged their ideal world.

**Social Dimension of the Scripture**

The writers of the *Taipingjing* believed that everything was made up of three elements or a triad, be it the shapeless *qi*, or the social relation of a human being whose creation was attributable to the *qi*. The harmony between the elements in this triad was indispensable for a thing to survive or develop. In the passage entitled "How to Revitalize the Country Through Harmonizing the Three *Qi*" in *Juan* 18 to 34, we find a dialogue going like this:

> The Perfect Being asked the Divine Being, "I wish to bring an immediate great peace to the country for the emperor. Can you tell me how to do that?" The Divine Being answered, "...Primordial *qi* is made up of Ultimate Yang, Ultimate Yin and Harmony *Qi*; Heaven, Earth and Man make up the physical world; the sun, the moon and the stars make up the heaven; the North Pole is in the middle; mountains, rivers and plains make up the earth; father, mother and son make up human beings; emperor, officials and the people make up a govern-

> ment. If the great peace is to be brought about, the three elements should be in complete harmony. (As far as the government is concerned), the emperor, officials and their people should understand one another, share the woes as if they were members of one family. In this way the great peace will naturally ensue and stay for ever.

It now became clearer that the ideal world the writers envisaged was a world of great harmony among everything in the universe, from harmony with the physical world to harmony within human society. Therefore they used the compound word *taiping*, which literally means "great peace," a peace extended beyond the mundane world or society itself. To their thinking, a harmonious society was guaranteed only through the harmonies of the other dimensions of the whole universe.

It should be noticed that the ideal of a great peace society came as a response to the hardships people suffered in the middle and late Eastern Han Dynasty. There were quite a few allusions to the life picture of the time when natural catastrophes were frequent, corruption was rampant and social injustice prevailed. And these allusions were only confirmed by the historical records telling about the situations of the time. For instance, in the "Chronicle of Emperor An Di" (A.D. 107-125), *History of the Later Han Dynasty*, we have a record going like this:

> The masses of people suffered from famine and starvation. Some people ate other people.... Catastrophes occurred one after another; broad daylight robberies were frequent; the barbarian neighbors encroached upon the land, wars and battles went on and on. Exhausted and hungry, the people were difficult to draft. Locusts were rampant, damaging the mature wheat....

Against such a background, the writers of the *Taipingjing* put forward many constructive proposals to the emperor(s), officials and the ruled people. To the emperor(s), their advice was to uphold the Tao, Virtue and Benevolence:

> The emperors of the highest order conquer their people by the Tao, for they won the heart of heaven, and could rule the people effortlessly. It is the true Tao that conquers the people's hearts; the emperors of the medium high order conquer the people's hearts by their Virtue; the emperors of the lowest order conquer their people's hearts by their Benevolence; the emperors in a chaotic country conquer their people by laws and statutes; the emperors on the verge of being overthrown conquer their people by corporal punishments.

Exactly how can an emperor rule effortlessly? The key lies in how to deal with the relationship between an emperor and his officials. The writers held that a successful government depended in a large measure on the smooth relationship between the emperor and his officials. Different attitudes toward his officials resulted in different degrees of success. In *Juan* 53, the Celestial Master explained to the Perfect Being the four ways through which a government of great peace will be achieved.

> By "government by heaven," it means that the emperor is to treat his senior officials as his fathers and teachers. Why should an emperor treat them as his fathers and teachers when these officials are more humble than he is? Though their positions are humble, they have a higher level of the Tao and virtue. By showing respect for them, the emperor respects the Tao and its virtue. By consulting them, the emperor can keep the country under his control. By "government by earth," it means that the emperor is to treat his officials as his friends, and to establish a comradeship with them... By "government by man," it means that an emperor is to treat his officials as his under age children. As the children cannot help their father in making decisions, the country ruled in this way will have some sort of chaos. Finally by "government by beast," it means that an emperor is to treat his officials as his dogs and plants, not bothering himself to pick up able officials for some positions. The officials in office are manlike, but ignorant. Why is that so? They look like "men," but in fact what they actually like is fortune. They rest content with what they have done, not caring for the interests of their

emperor. Instead, they are busy scrambling for power and profits for their own.

While an emperor's attitude toward his officials is emphasized, the writers also proposed that the emperor not neglect the masses of working people, because these people were suppliers of the food and clothing for the country. If there were no people, whom were the emperor and his officials to rule? In a word, it was the emperor's responsibility to be concerned about the life of his people, to share with them weals and woes. If an emperor could follow this advice, he became an enlightened emperor. There were also many pieces of advice to the officials and the ruled people to follow, such as obeying the law, being dutiful to parents, and respecting masters. They are too many to discuss in detail here.

**Religious Dimension of the Scripture**

If the *Taipingjing* dealt only with social ideals, it would be regarded as a work of pure political or social philosophy rather than a work of religion. In fact its religious orientation is very strong. By appealing to the religious aspect of human emotions, the authors wished to lead their followers, literate or illiterate, to a world of moral perfection as well as individual transcendence. Through moral cultivation and perfection, the individuals were promised a land of immortality as well as a land of great peace. The symbiosis of the mundane and spiritual world ideal characterizes the teachings of the *Taipingjing*.

Owing to the diversity of the authors and the diversity of the regions where the scripture circulated, there was a diversity of deities venerated in the *Taipingjing*. These deities were believed to be inspecting human conduct on earth so as to deter them, including the emperors and officials, from committing errors or crimes. The description of the immortals or "Xian" was even more significant, morally speaking. In the earliest literature, they claimed that a mortal being could usually become an immortal if he only got a

proper pill or elixir and ate it. Here in the *Taipingjing*, moral cultivation was greatly emphasized as a means of attaining immortality. In *Juan* 94 to 95, we have a passage like this:

> In ancient times, when a beginner was learning the Tao, he preserved himself by letting his mind wander here and there but always hold to softness; he never ceased accumulating credits of virtues, and finally became an immortal; he then rode on the clouds and dragon and moved with Heaven.

In *Juan* 56 to 64, there was a significant account of how moral perfection could transcend social distinctions and finally transport the people to the Ultimate.

> A worthy servant may learn to become a good man; a good man can learn to become a worthy man; if a worthy man does not stop learning, he will become a sage; if a sage persists in learning, he will know the gate to the heavenly Tao; he will become immortal if he keeps cultivating the Tao; an immortal will become a Perfect Being if he does not quit learning; a Perfect Being will become a deity if he persists in learning; if a deity proceeds with his learning, he will attain union with Heaven.

In the *Taipingjing*, we also notice that the writers attempted to provide a theory explaining the perplexing paradox concerning ethical conduct. Why some morally good people end up bad? The writers proposed the theory of retribution on the basis of family relationships rather than individual responsibility. The theory might have convinced many people as it quite appealed to the Chinese mentality. In *Juan* 18 to 34, we read a passage entitled "The Formula for Repaying Ethical Debts" like this:

> A person who has done good deeds ends up bad, because he has to shoulder the burden of his deceased ancestors who did wrong. The harm is done to the person by the accumulated disasters. An evil person ends up good, because he is reaping the fruit of moral trees his ancestors have planted. And if a person has done a sufficient number

of good deeds, he will not be adversely affected even if his ancestors left to him the unaverted disasters.

Clearly, the Taoist conception of retribution is different from the Buddhist one, which teaches people to be responsible for their own misdeeds and to reap as they sow. As a scripture which has almost no traces of Buddhist influence, the *Taipingjing* is able to tell us more about what was characteristic of the early Taoist religion than most other early scriptures. In this sense, the Taoist religion began with the formation of the *Taipingjing*.

Before we conclude the religious and ethical dimension of the *Taipingjing*, the first and the most important Taoist scripture, we want to remind you again of its emphasis on Tao and Te, the Chinese compound word for "morality." The Tao could be understood as an intrinsic law or internal logic which makes a thing as it is. There is Tao in everything and everything has its Tao. The universe has its Tao, the government has its Tao, life has its Tao and so has the Bear of Pooh, as the Western author Benjamin Hoff vividly illustrates. The Te, on the other hand, can be understood as a manifestation of Tao, a power which is cultivatable and palpable. The power or force of the Tao in a person, for instance, expresses itself through his ethical behavior, and his moral cultivation will in turn help him master the Tao in himself and in the things with which he is in contact. It is based on this understanding of the Tao and Te that the writers of the *Taipingjing* attempted to synthesize the political ideal and religious ideal. The followers of their teachings were led to believe that their cultivation was of itself an essential step toward the land of mortality and the state of Great Peace.

### *Shouyi* — The Most Important Taoist Art in the Scripture

The strong religious orientation of the *Taipingjing* is also reflected in the arts recommended to its followers. Among those arts, the one called *shouyi* (meaning "holding to the 'One'") was most strongly emphasized, and therefore deserves our particular attention.

"Yi" or "One" is an abstract Taoist notion. It might be a borrowing from Chapter 41 of *The Book of Lao Zi,* as we have quoted earlier in this subsection. It could refer to the original beginning of things in the universe, or to the "wholeness" or "totality" of essential elements that were endowed in everything. For instance, in the *Taipingjing Shenjun Mizhi*, probably an extract from the *Taipingjing*, we have the following passage:

> ... if Heaven does not hold to the "one," it will no longer be clear; if Earth does not hold to the "one," it will no longer be peaceful; if the sun does not hold to the one, it will no longer be bright; if the moon does not hold to the one, it can no longer emanate; if the stars do not hold to the one, they will stop moving; if the mountains do not hold to the one, they will collapse; if the water does not hold to the one, it will be covered with mud and dust; if the *shen* (deity) does not hold to the one, it will disappear; if a man does not hold to the one, he will not survive....

More specifically, for a man, the art of *Shouyi*, or holding to the One, meant holding to the three essential elements namely, *jing*, *qi* and *shen*. Like Tao and Te, *jing*, *qi*, and *shen* were also very important Taoist concepts. Originally the word *jing* might have some connection with the rice, on which the people depended for living. In modern Chinese, the word *jing* often refers to the male's semen. *Shen* originally meant that which brought about everything. It often refers to deities residing in Heaven or on Earth; it might also refer to the spirit or soul which was believed to be independent of a human body, but which usually lived with it as long as the body existed. In the *Taipingjing*, *jing* and *shen* might appear separately in one place, but became a compound word in another. In fact in modern Chinese the compound word *jingshen* means "spirit' or "mind" in popular usage. Let's hear what the *Taipingjing* in *Juan* 154-170 says about the relations between *jing*, *qi* and *shen* and human life:

> The three elements, *jing*, *qi* and *shen* are in one place, and they are the endowments from the anterior *qi* of *Heaven*, *Earth* and *Man*

respectively. Together they form the Tao (of life). The *shen* (spirit) rides on the *qi* (vital energy) and the *jing* (life essence) stays in the center (of the body). Life depends on the interplay of these three elements. Therefore, if a man is to live a long life, it is essential that he set great store by *qi*, *shen* and *jing*.

By holding the *jing*, *shen* and *qi* in one entity, a man is expected to become an immortal. Holding fast to life characterizes the Taoist teachings throughout history. It is understandable that a fabulous number of arts has been tried and recorded in Taoist literature. Many of these arts have either spiritual value for elevating the mind of the people who practice them, or medical value for curing their diseases or at least maintaining sound health. In the *Taipingjing*, a significant number of arts have been recorded, besides the art of *shouyi*, the fact shows that from the very beginning Taoism placed a high value on arts and practices. The soul of Taoist Religion, so to speak, lies in its belief in immortality and the rich arts geared for its attainment. It was only after Buddhism gained strength in China and gradually eroded Taoist sphere of influence that Taoism began to take on a more sophisticated theoretical dimension. We will discuss Taoist theology in later chapters.

### 3. Taiping Messianic Movement

The *Taipingjing* is a scripture of mixed contents. In some passages, it supports the interests of the ruling class; in others, it campaigns for social justice and sympathizes with the suffering population. These conflicting values in the scripture reflect different stances of the authors who compiled it. The above-mentioned Gong Chong and his companions could be regarded as reformists, who wished to bring great peace to their country through persuading the emperor and leading officials. However, we have already noticed that their reformist efforts were soon frustrated. Plunder and exploitation of the working people went on as usual and natural calamities seemed impossible to stop. In the reign of Han Emperor Ling Di (r. 168-189),

Zhang Jue, a follower of the *Taipingjing*, began to take a more radical way to change the situation. He was not a reformist, but a revolutionary.

Our knowledge of the *Taipingjing* far exceeds the knowledge of the revolutionary, military movement which intended to realize the ideals set out in the scripture. From the available sources and records, we can only get a very rough idea of the whole process during which the movement occurred. The "Biography of Huangfu Song" in the *History of the Later Han Dynasty* tells us the initial religious movement of Taiping Tao and how the movement accelerated into a military action:

> At first, a Zhang Jue from Julu [in present Hebei Province] claimed himself to be "Great Sage, Good Master." He followed the teachings of Huang Di and Lao Zi and took disciples. He recommended repentance of sins by kowtowing and praying. He prescribed talismanic water and incantations for patients seeking for medical advice. Many patients were cured of their diseases in this way, therefore more and more people followed him as their master. Zhang Jue dispatched eight of his disciples to four different places, preaching what they practiced. Soon their gospel spread far and wide. Within ten years, he commanded a following of hundreds of thousands of people coming from the eight prefectures in northern China. He organized them into 36 military units called *fang*. A general was appointed to lead each large *fang* which consisted of over ten thousand people, and each smaller *fang*, which consisted of six to seven thousand people. They spread the rumor which carried a strong political and religious message: "Blue Heaven is collapsing, it is time to replace it with Yellow Heaven. Now we are in the year of Jiazi*, we will all be lucky." They had the word Jiazi painted in a white earth on the gates of temples and palaces in the national and prefectural capitals. In A.D. 184 Ma Yuanyi, a general of a large *fang*, assembled an army of several

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*Jiazi, the name for the beginning year of the 60-year cycle in the pre-modern Chinese calendar, symbolized the beginning of a new cycle.

tens of thousands from the prefectures of Jin and Yang and planned to meet with the other armies in Ye [present Linzhang County, Hebei Province] and started an uprising there. At the same time, Ma shuttled to and from the national capital [Luoyang, in present Henan Province] and planted Feng Xu, Xu Feng and other eunuchs as their fifth columnists. It was agreed that they were to rise in revolt on the fifth day of the third lunar month. Before that day, Tang Zhou, a disciple of Zhang Jue's from Jinan, disclosed their plan to the government. Ma Yuanyi was caught and executed in Luoyang. Emperor Ling Di then ordered to have Zhang Jue's followers caught and have over one thousand of them killed. Meanwhile, he ordered to search the Prefecture of Ji [present Hebei Province] for Zhang Jue. As Zhang learned that their plan had been disclosed, he immediately sent out the message to all the other military units. The revolts occurred spontaneously. As the rebels wore a distinctive yellow turban as their headgear, they were called "Yellow Turbans" by the people of their time. The more depreciatory name for them was "moth thieves." They offered the men they killed as sacrifices to Heaven. Zhang Jue was called the "General of Heavenly Lord" (Tiangong Jiangjun), his brother Bao was called the "General of Earthly Lord" (Digong Jiangjun) and his other brother Liang was called the "General of Human Lord" (Rengong Jiangjun). They burned down the official residences and plundered them as they moved their troops. They occupied many counties and prefectures, whose officials took heel as fast as they could. People all over the country responded enthusiastically, which shocked the people in the capital.

From the above records, we can see quite a few evident connections between the *Taipingjing* and the Taiping Tao or Great Peace Movement led by Zhang Jue, which later accelerated into an uprising. Let us take a look at the following evidence.

First, Zhang Jue claimed himself a "Great Sage, Good Master," while in *Juan* 90 of the *Taipingjing* we read: "How can one learn well if one does not have a brilliant master? How can a country peacefully be governed if it is not assisted by a great sage?"

Secondly, the three Zhang brothers claimed themselves to be the generals governing Heaven, Earth and Man, while the *Taipingjing* in *Juan* 53 has this sentence: "There are three levels of government, the government of Heaven, government of Earth and government of Man. When after the three *qi* (in different levels) are perfectly harmonized all creatures will be under peaceful government."

Finally, the impact of the *Taipingjing* on the Taiping Tao and the Yellow Turban Uprising is evidenced by the fact that the movement practiced what the scripture had preached:

In the passage we learn that Zhang Jue instructed his people to "repent their sins through kowtowing." And we find in *Juan* 97 of the *Taipingjing* the following words: "Now if you want to have your sin pardoned, you must often go to a crossroad in an open area and make an apology by kowtowing five times each to the four directions....

Zhang Jue was recorded to cure the people of their diseases by administering talismanic water and incantations, and we find in *Juan* 92 of the *Taipingjing* a passage about how to teach worthy adepts the magic:

> One must take an ablution and meditate before he is told about the red talisman; then he must face north, south, west and east, and swallow it with some good wine; a bowl of clean water also serves the purpose; after that, form a mental picture of the letters on the talisman and of the disease, if there is any. That is to say "restoring the essence to recuperate health."

Much more evidence of the connections between the *Taipingjing* and the movements could be listed. No doubt, the Taiping Tao and Yellow Turban Uprising were greatly inspired by the *Taipingjing*.

Now let us tell you the end of the story of these movements and their impact on the later political and religious movements in China.

Soon after the uprising was launched, the government sent many troops to quell it. The one led by Huangfu Song seemed to be most meritorious in its endeavor, for it played a leading role in

capturing and decapitating the three Zhang brothers. But Cao Cao, another warlord, seemed to get the most benefit, for he took over thirty thousand of Zhang's soldiers who surrendered. The enlarged army made it possible for him to become the most important hegemon among the Three Kingdoms that came into existence soon afterward. The Great Peace messianic movement was finally quelled, but the traces of its impact can be detected in movements taking place in later Chinese history. For instance, in the 12th century, Ming Jiao, a Chinese version of Manichaeism, which was led by Fang La, worshipped Zhang Jue as its founder and patriarch. In 18th-century Qing Dynasty, a folk religion called White Lotus put up a slogan which read "the Yellow Heaven is to replace it." Obviously the slogan was inspired by the Great Peace Movement we have just discussed. As for the ideal world of Taiping, great peace, it has always been a Chinese utopia. Careful readers might have already associated it with Taiping Tianguo, the Great Peace Kingdom of Heaven, a movement breaking out in the last century. That movement was inspired by the Christian teachings as well as by the utopian ideal. Because of its connection with the revolutionary movement, in many Chinese dynasties, Taoist Religion was mistrusted by the government.

## Section II The Wudoumi Tao (Five Bushels of Rice Movement)

### 1. Zhang Daoling and the Wudoumi Tao

Some time before the Taiping Tao was taking place in the eastern part of China, in the southwestern part of the country, another religious force was asserting itself. This religious movement was led by Zhang Daoling. As each follower was required to submit *wu dou mi* (five bushels of rice) as a membership fee or tax, the movement was generally called Wudoumi Tao by the people at the

time. Like the Taiping Tao, the Five Bushels of Rice also venerated the Yellow Emperor and Lao Zi and inherited much of the Huang-Lao Tradition and the Immortalist Tradition. But as the Five Bushels of Rice Movement was at first centered in Bashu Area (mostly in present Sichuan Province), which was on the periphery of the political center in northern China, it was able to gain momentum without being noticed by the government.

Zhang Daoling was formerly named Zhang Ling, a native of Fengxian County (in present Jiangsu Province). According to a Taoist record, he was at first a Confucian scholar by training, but later had a great liking for the teaching of Lao Zi and the arts of immortality. He once served as a government official, but the political instability of his time dampened his enthusiasm for a political career. For ten years he found hermitage in Hangzhou, in present Zhejiang Province, where he practiced Taoist self-cultivation. During the reign of Han Emperor Shun Di (r. 126-144), he moved to Sichuan with his disciples and retreated to Heming Mountain there. He spent the rest of his years composing books and talismans, reforming the local uncouth beliefs and finally established the early Five Bushels of Rice Taoism.

Bashu was an underdeveloped area where many of the Chinese ethnic minorities lived. Before Zhang arrived, primitive cults were widespread, but those cults were diffused and unorganized. Zhang Ling reformed some of those practices and made his own teachings "orthodox."

Firstly, he commanded his followers to make a new "covenant" with the deities. The covenant would have a binding restraint on their conduct especially as regards to the proper deities to worship. Here is what the covenant was about as recorded in *Santian Neijie Jing*, a book written by a Mr. Xu in Liu Song Dynasty (420-479):

> In 157, ...[the people] made a covenant with the three generals taking charge of Heaven, Earth and Water to permanently use the Santian Zhangfa, "Three Heavens Orthodox Ways":

Never hinder the communication between Heaven and the people;

Do not offer sacrifices to unauthorized spirits or deities;

Do not offer drinks or food to the spirits, nor money to the master;

Do not abandon yourself or commit a theft;

The master who helps the patients must not drink wine or eat meat;

The people are allowed on some auspicious days to offer sacrifices to their late parents and near ancestors, on the eighth day of the second lunar month to the God of She or Village and the God of the Kitchen;

All the other unauthorized Tao are produced by dead *qi*;

The sick are asked to repent their sins that they think to have committed since the age of seven, and then proper rituals and talismans are prepared to achieve a healing effect....

(*Santian Neijie Jing,* or *An Interpretation of the Three Heavens Scriptures*)

Secondly, Zhang Ling initiated his administrative system by dividing his domain first into 24, later into 28, Zhi or territories where the members would meditate in *Jingshi,* assemble three times in a year in a center and perform other religious activities.

"Zhi" and "Jing" originally shared a similar meaning referring to a place where people prayed or meditated or practiced self-cultivation. Later, "Zhi" and "Jing" referred to different things. While "Jing" still referred to the prayer room of the ordinary people, the "Zhi" referred to the residence of the libationers appointed by the Celestial Master as head of a territory. The twenty-eight territories retained a different name with a clearly defined region, as were recorded in some Taoist scriptures. Among them Yangping Zhi, Lutang Zhi and Hemingshan Zhi were then the largest. The name of Yangping Zhi, for instance, appeared often in Taoist registers and talismans and on the seal of the Celestial Master. Among libationers, there were different ranks of religious officials. They administrated different religious activities. Finally, Zhang Daoling was recorded to have available several important scriptures such as *The Book of*

*Lao Zi*, the *Taiping Dongjijing* and *Tianguan Zhangben* and to have interpreted some of the scriptures by himself. The following quotations might shed some light on the main activities of the early Wudoumi Tao, of which Zhang Ling was the leader.

> Every household sets aside a room for praying, believing in donating five bushels of rice, which represents the product of creation and the *qi* of Five Properties. What's more, all the lives in the family hinged upon the rice. The members attended festivals yearly. On the first day of the tenth month, they assembled in the Territory of Celestial Master and donated their rice for public granary. Way stations were built every five or ten *li* so that the starved could get hands on it during the time of famine. The passers-by never bagged the rice away to their homes.
>
> (*Yao Xiu Ke Yi Jie La Cao*, by Tai Zhenke)

> The Three Assemblies were held three times a year, on the fifth day of the first month, the seventh day of the seventh month and the fifth day of the tenth month respectively. At the times, the members assembled at their own territory. The Master would come and check their household registration. By adding the new-born and crossing out the dead from the record, an accurate number of members could be arrived at. Besides, propagation campaigns were launched to that effect. On those special days, the deities from both Heaven and Earth would arrive and meet at the territory where the Celestial Master stayed, rechecking the registration. The Master and his followers all had to remain quiet and solemn. No drinking, eating of meat or rowdiness were allowed. When an assembly was over, the members would return home and teach their family members to abide by the regulations and commandments issued at the assembly.
>
> (*Tao Men Ke Lue*, by Lu Xiujing)

In addition, an activity called "Chu Hui" ("dinner meeting") was arranged for the benefit of the sick. A few guests were invited by the host to pray for them and bless them. A register granting system was initiated, by which the faithful would receive a different kind of talisman according to their qualification. The talisman or

register possessed some magic power capable of exorcising demons or fending off misfortune. An adult might be granted a special register called Huang-Lao Chi Lu, a register, which practically taught the technique of sexual hygiene, as these techniques were believed to be effective in lengthening people's life.

All in all, under the direction of Zhang Ling and his libationers, the Wudoumi Tao, with its proper administration, scriptures, rituals and activities commanded a large following. Its influence was only brought further and further by Zhang Lu who, following in his grandfather's footsteps, tactfully entrenched himself in the nearby region and made the Wudoumi Tao an officially recognized faith for quite some time.

## 2. Zhang Lu and "Taocracy"

When Zhang Ling died, the celestial mastership was passed on to his son Zhang Heng, who in turn passed it on to his son Zhang Lu. The three Zhangs were respectfully called "Three Masters." We have little knowledge about the life of Zhang Heng, but we can find Zhang Lu's activities in a few historical writings and Taoist books. For instance, the *Huayanggou Zhi* written by Chang Ju of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, has a record on how Zhang Lu fared in the Hanzhong Region where he entrenched himself for 28 years:

> At the end of the Han Dynasty, ...after Zhang Ling died, his son Heng inherited his position. After Heng died, his son Lu inherited Heng's position. Lu styled himself Gong Qi. He established a trust from Liu Yan, the head of Yi Prefecture. Lu's mother still looked young and pretty while well on in years, she was a frequent visitor to Liu's home. In Chuping era (190-193), Lu was made a *sima* [military officer with a rather high rank] and stationed his troops on the Hanzhong Region to cut off grain transportation.
>
> After Lu arrived, he began to preach his teachings and soon was known for his generosity and charity. He built public houses in the name of righteousness and placed "righteous rice" and "righteous

meat" there. Passers-by may take them free just to fill up their stomach, but should not overdo it, otherwise the demons would come and make them ill. So they believed. Equity rules were also introduced to govern market transactions. Those who breached the rules could be excused three times before getting punished. The un-initiated learners were named *guizu* (literally meaning "little ghost"), they could be made a *jijiu* (libationer) as they progressed in their career. Many ethnic groups also followed his teachings. As each follower of the teachings was required to donate five bushels of rice, the teaching of Zhang Lu was called "Mi Tao," the Tao of Rice.

The teachings of Zhang Lu did not seem very different from the teachings of Zhang Ling. What is worthy of our special attention here is that Zhang Lu was not only a religious leader, but also a political leader, because after he arrived in Hanzhong, he conquered it and became the top administrator of the region. Later he took over the region of Ba and became an important warlord during the period when three major political powers led by Cao Cao, Liu Bei and Sun Quan were fighting fiercely for political supremacy and reunification of the country. During the 28 years of his rule, the religious officials like libationers and others served also as administrators of the same level. So popular was he among the people and so effective was his administration that the then national government could not but acknowledge his rule and many people from other regions emigrated to his domain. In spite of the fact that Zhang Lu finally surrendered to the more powerful warlord Cao Cao, the Wudoumi Tao that his family established retained a continuing influence on the development of the later Taoist religion. In fact, Zhengyi Taoism, one of the two major Taoist schools active today, has a direct lineage to the Wudoumi Tao.

## 3. Theology of the Wudoumi Tao

Before we conclude this section, we will talk about the theology of the Wudoumi Tao. As we have mentioned earlier, the *Taipingjing*

circulated among the followers of the Wudoumi Tao and had some bearing on its practices and theory. A good case in point was the ban placed on drinking alcohol. In "Biography of Liu Yan" in the *History of the Later Han Dynasty*, the record goes like this:

> When Zhang Lu arrived in Hanzhong... people were forbidden to butcher in spring and summer, to drink alcoholic beverages....

In *Juan* 56-64 of the *Taipingjing*, we have the following report:

> Food and drink are necessities of life, but some can be taken and some cannot. I want the virtuous persons to teach you: From now on, if any one drinks one *dou* (decaliter) of an alcoholic beverage without good reason, he shall be given 20 whippings... May all the sage persons and gentlemen in this country learn the law and fear to be disgraced so that they dare not offend against it. Ignorant persons shall be punished as soon as they break the law. Makers of the beverage shall be punished just like the drinkers.

As the *Taiping Dongji Jing*, the version of the *Taipingjing* popular among the followers of the Wudoumi Tao, has been lost, the theology of early Taoist religion can be seen mainly in the *Laozi Xiang'er Zhu* (*Xiang'er's Commentary on "The Book of Lao Zi"*), a text generally ascribed to either Zhang Ling or Zhang Lu. No matter who actually wrote the text, it generally reflects the teachings or theology of early Taoist religion. The following are some instances of how the author(s) interpreted *The Book of Lao Zi* and made their interpretation as an authoritative theology in itself:

1. The supreme Truth, "Tao," is interpreted as the supreme God, "Lord Lao, the Highest" (Taishang Laojun).

Lao Zi: "Can anyone control his soul, embrace the One without separating them?" (Chapter 10)

Commentary: "The One became air when it dissipated, but when it was concentrated, it produced Lord Lao, the Highest, who governed Mount Kunlun."

2. Many of Lao Zi's ideas were twisted to justify the pursuit of immortality.

Lao Zi: "The sage who always tries to stay behind other people will in the long run stay in front." (Chapter 7)

Commentary: "By staying in front, the author meant to say that the person lived a phenomenal long life like a divine immortal and so got blessed earlier than the lay people."

Lao Zi: "Is it not because he has no personal interest that his own interest is ultimately fulfilled?" (Chapter 7)

Commentary: "If one does not know the Tao of immortality, his living body will finally become a corpse. And if a person can give life to his corpse, he may be regarded as an immortal."

3. Lao Zi's negation of the Confucian doctrines of benevolence and righteousness was turned into affirmation.

Lao Zi: "When the Great Tao is abandoned, the doctrines of benevolence and righteousness will come to light. When knowledge and wisdom appear, great hypocrisy will also emerge. When a family falls into dispute, filial piety and parental affection for children will be advocated. When a country falls into disorder, there will be loyal ministers."

Commentary: "In ancient times, when the Tao was applied, benevolence and righteousness were practiced for the sake of fame. When the Tao was applied, the affections between parents and children appeared in every family. When the Tao was applied, ministers became loyal, sons became dutiful and the country was thus easier to run."

In sum, *Xiang'er's Commentary* is a very important document if we are to learn about the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism. Almost all the traces of earlier traditions of cults and worship can be found in the theology and practices of the Wudoumi Tao. Mentioning in passing, the only extant copy of the Commentary is now preserved in the British Museum in the Sir Aurel Stein collection. He took it to Britain along with many other ancient scriptures when they were

first discovered in Dunhuang early in this century.

As for the fate of the Wudoumi Tao itself, because of the rapprochement between Zhang Lu and Cao Cao's regime, it did not suffer much. On the contrary, because of the new emigration of Zhang Lu's followers to the capital area in the north, Taoism spread more widely. In fact, many of the officials in the new government were converted to Taoism, as we will see in the next chapter. By and by, the Wudoumi Tao was reformed and gained official recognition. As for the Zhang lineage after Zhang Lu, after the year 220, Zhang Sheng, the third son of Zhang Lu, moved to Longhu Shan, in present Jiangxi Province, carrying with him the seal and sword passed on from Zhang Lu and established a new center there.

## Section III Wei Boyang and *Can Tong Qi*, the Earliest Taoist Scripture on Alchemy

Another characteristic of the early phase of the Taoist religion is the emergence of *Can Tong Qi*, a magnum opus on *Xuanxue*, "Mystery Learning."

In the previous chapter, we have noted that some *fangshi* were very active in promoting the cult of immortality, as in the case of the First Emperor of Qin and Han Emperor Wu Di. However, since the early Eastern Han Dynasty, the *fangshi* seemed to have lost imperial favor, so they changed the direction of their activities: some moved out toward the masses; others went to live in mountains or forests. The initiators of the Taiping Tao and the Wudoumi Tao were those individuals who actually mingled with the masses. The major contributors to the *Xuanxue* were those mountain-and-forest recluses. Wei Boyang, the author of *Can Tong Qi*, was just one of them.

## 1. Wei Boyang and His Story

Wei Boyang has not been recorded in official history. The earliest literature mentioning him was *Shenxian Zhuan* (*Hagiography of Deities and Immortals*) by Ge Hong, a great third century alchemist and Taoist theoretician. Though it can not be considered an authentic historical record, the hagiography throws at least some light on Wei Boyang's life:

> Wei Boyang was a native of Wu, born into a family of high status. He had a bent for Taoist arts, and was unwilling to enter a political career. He stayed at home idle, the people near him could not understand why. They thought to themselves that possibly he did it just for the sake of health. He went into a mountain with three disciples, experimenting on *shendan*, "divine elixir." As he found that two of the disciples had shown signs of disbelief, after the elixir was made, he cautioned, "Though we have made the elixir, we must first try it on the white dog. Only if the dog begins to fly after it is fed, can we people swallow it. And if the dog dies, we should not swallow it." Earlier when he was going into the mountain, he took with him a white dog. And usually if the "divine elixir" was consumed before it went through the complete process of *jiuzhuang*, or "Nine Reversals," it was poisonous. Any creature consuming the "divine elixir" would experience a temporary death. Therefore Wei tried it on the dog.
>
> After the dog died, Wei said to his disciples: "Afraid we can not succeed in making any elixir. Now the product was there and the dog ate it, but it died. I am afraid that we haven't got the message from the divine power and that we will be just like the dog (if we take it). "What shall we do? Shall we take it? Master?" one of his disciples asked. Wei replied, "I have stayed away from worldly pursuits and came here into this mountain, but I haven't got the Tao of Immortals, so it would be a disgrace if I should return home (empty-handed). No matter whether I will die or not, I will take it." With these words, Wei put it into his mouth and died immediately.
>
> His disciples looked to one another. One of them said, "The rea-

son why we came to make elixir is that we want to lead an immortal life. If we swallow the elixir and die, what's the point of our effort?" Another disciple retorted, "Our master is not an ordinary man. He took the elixir and died, is it that he did it intentionally?" With these words, he took it and also died soon. The two remaining disciples came to an agreement, "Why must we take it, if it only hastens our process of life? If we don't take it, we can at least live another few decades." They did not take the elixir and left the mountain, as they wanted to buy coffins for Wei and their fellow disciples. After they left, Wei rose to his feet and brought to life his disciple called Yu and his dog and left there too.

When he came across a firewood collector, Wei asked to have his message sent to his two other disciples (who had just left). When his disciples saw the message, they were overcome with regret.

Wei has written two books, *Can Tong Qi* and *Wu Xian Lei*. The books appear intended to interpret *The Book of Changes* (*Yi Jing*), but actually to record alchemical experiments by using the symbols of *Yi Jing*. The Confucianists do not understand the things about divine immortals. They interpret the books as of Yin Yang (human sexuality), therefore they have failed to grasp the gist of the books.

## 2. *Can Tong Qi* and Its Interpretations

Wei Boyang lived during the reign of Emperor Huan Di (r. 147-167) of the Eastern Han Dynasty. He was a contemporary of Yu Ji and Zhang Daoling. He combined the *Yi Jing*, Huang-Lao cult and alchemical theory into one system and thus compiled the *Can Tong Qi*. In Chapter 85 of the book, the author actually made its theoretical basis explicit: "The Great Changes in nature follow a strict pattern. The teachings of Huang Di and Lao Zi, if pursued deeply, become obvious and easy to follow; that Alchemical Elixir exists is evident. The Tao of these things are as 'one,' coming from the same path."

However, if we are to penetrate the mystery of this archaic

cryptic writing, we will be confronted with many difficulties, as many people throughout history have already experienced. Zhu Xi, a great Chinese philosopher of the Song Dynasty, is recorded to have said the following words after he had read the book: "I do not know where to start. I dare not comment on it too rashly."

The major reason behind the difficulties in understanding this book is that when the author started to write it, he could do nothing but use metaphors or similes to express his hidden meanings. In the following passage, Wei Boyang expressed his dilemma when he came to write the book:

> If I don't put it to pen, I will be killed because of my crime of bringing the Tao to extinction. If I record it on the bamboo and silk, I fear I will be condemned by Heaven because of my disclosure of the secret. I sigh and hesitate, these thoughts obsess me even after I go to bed.

In the *Dao Zang* (*Taoist Canon*, Ming edition) and *Daozang Jiyao* (*Extracts from "Dao Zang"*) over forty commentaries on the book *Can Tong Qi* have been recorded. Each commentator proposed a different interpretation of the basic contents: some explained it as a book of inner alchemy; others as outer alchemy. Among the latter, some saw it as a product of the Pure Cultivation School, whose emphasis was on the practice by a single male or female, others of the Yin-Yang school, whose emphasis was on the practice by a male and female together. In addition, some wrote simple text exegesis and did not advocate any definite theory.

Modern scholars also find it very difficult to understand this book. So far, they cannot agree whether the book was exoteric (outer alchemy) or esoteric (inner alchemy). In our opinion, this book was mainly about exoteric alchemy but incorporated some esoteric alchemical practices. The reasons for this interpretation are twofold. Linguistically speaking, the Chinese term *nei dan*, which means esoteric alchemy, appeared much later in literature. Historically speaking, the prosperity of esoteric alchemy largely resulted

from the failure of exoteric alchemical elixir. Therefore, we can deduce that Wei Boyang of the second century A.D. must have been preoccupied with the making of the exoteric alchemical elixir rather than the esoteric one, though he might have thought that consuming alchemical elixir while engaging in some esoteric cultivation would achieve better effects.

In *Can Tong Qi*, there is a vivid description of the whole process of how the elixir was made, from securing chemical substances and setting up a furnace, to controlling heating. Modern chemists, from their own point of view, find that the chemicals involved in the reaction are lead (Pb), mercury (Hg), cinnabar, white alum, mica, sal ammoniac, copper and gold, and that mercury oxide is the very elixir Wei Boyang was after. In this book, the author also describes how a person reacted after he swallowed the elixir. The following is how Wei wrote about its effects on the person:

> ... As it has the property of gold which is imperishable, the elixir is the treasure of all treasures. When the immortalist consumes it, he will live long.... When the "gold cinnabar" reaches down to the vital organs, it will dissipate like wind and rain, penetrating all the way to the four limbs. As a result, his complexion will become lustrous, his white hair will turn black and his gums will grow new teeth. A senile man will be vitalized and a senile woman will be just like a pretty young lady. Since the person alters his body physique, we call him "perfected man."

## 3. *Can Tong Qi* and Its Later Influences

*Can Tong Qi* seems not to have enjoyed much popularity when it was first published. Though Ge Hong mentioned Wei Boyang and his book in his *Shen Xian Zhuan* (*Hagiography of Deities and Immortals*) and *Baopuzi Neipian* ("Inner Chapters" of *The Book of Master Baopu*), he did not quote Wei Boyang in his theory about *Xuanxue*, "Mystery Learning." Tao Hongjing, an eminent Taoist

master of the fifth and sixth century, also mentioned the title *Can Tong Qi*, but did not quote Wei's theory in his works on alchemy like *Zhen Kao* and *Dengzhen Yinjue*. The popularity of *Can Tong Qi* seems not to have come until after the reign of Tang Emperor Xuan Zong (712-756) when Liu Zhigu in his *Riyue Xuanshu Pian* enthusiastically recommended *Can Tong Qi* to his emperor.

After that, more and more books came out, some commented or annotated on *Can Tong Qi*, some others based their theories on it. No matter how they interpreted the book, they all considered it a book of the greatest importance for alchemy. To use the word of Zhang Boduan, an inner alchemist of the Song Dynasty, "(It is) the all-time king of all works on alchemy."

In sum, most works on alchemy appearing in later Taoist history were in one way or another influenced by Wei Boyang's *Can Tong Qi*.

## *Chapter Three*

# Reformation and Maturation of Taoism (220-581)

The period from A.D. 220 through 589 witnessed frequent replacements of old dynasties by new ones and disunity of China as a nation. The Three Kingdoms, namely Wei, Shu and Wu, coexisted and occupied the North, the Southwest and the Southeast respectively since A.D. 220. These three kingdoms were finally replaced by a new dynasty called Jin in 265. The Jin Dynasty was ruled by a family clan called Sima who first made Chang'an (present Xi'an) its capital, then moved its capital to the southeastern city of Nanjing in 317 because of the threats from the nomadic tribes in the northwestern part of China. Historically, the first period of the dynasty was called Western Jin, while the second period was called Eastern Jin.

After the Eastern Jin Dynasty was finally overthrown in 420 by a military general called Liu Yu, China began to enter a period of history which was called the Southern and Northern Dynasties, because dynasties emerged one after another and replaced each other both in the south and in the north until the Chinese nation was again brought to unity in 589.

As far as Taoism is concerned, during this period we find many distinctive traits of its development.

First, as the new regime of Wei and the later Western Jin regime adopted a harsh policy against any organized movement which had the potential of igniting a rebellion, Taoism in northern China was generally under check, though individual *fangshi* were recorded to have been active in the capital areas. The center of Taoism, therefore, shifted to the Jiangnan region (south of the Yangtze River) in the east where the regime of Wu and later of the Eastern Jin were more tolerant of different beliefs and ideologies.

Secondly, with more and more scholar-gentlemen or official-literati joining in the cult of immortality, there emerged Ge Hong (284-364), who systematized the existing theories and practices of immortality and thus established what may be called Jindan Sect.

Thirdly, the spread of the Wudoumi Tao which assumed the new name Tianshi Tao (Celestial Master Taoism) was especially strong in the Jiangnan Region. Between 362 and 365, there emerged the Jinglu Sect, a new sect characteristic of scriptural composition or hand-downs from one worthy disciple to another.

Fourthly, peasant rebellions broke out frequently in this period in different regions in China. Many of them combined religious worship with political ideals just as the Yellow Turban Uprising before them did. The most influential uprising among them was the one led by Sun En and Lu Xun. The name *Changshengren*, or "immortal men," itself took on a very distinctive Taoist color. Taoism became associated with rebellion once more.

Fifthly, during the Period of Disunity, Kou Qianzhi, an eminent Taoist priest in the north, reformed the so-called bogus teachings of the three Zhangs and founded the New Celestial Master Taoism, also known as the Northern Celestial Master Taoism.

Sixthly, in present Shaanxi of northwestern China, emerged a new tradition called Louguan Tao. The Louguan Taoists venerated the teachings of Lao Zi and were involved in the rivalry between Taoism and Buddhism for official patronage.

Seventhly, Lu Xiujing, on the other hand, established what was

called the Southern Celestial Taoism during the Liu Song of the Southern Dynasties (420-479). Lu systematized the largely available Taoist scriptures and emphasized sacrificial rites and liturgies.

Finally, based mainly on the Shangqing scriptural tradition of the Jinglu Sect, Tao Hongjing synthesized the teachings of other traditions, Confucianism and Buddhism, and established what was generally called the Maoshan School. It enjoyed great prosperity during the Tang Dynasty.

# Section I The Wei Regime's Control of Taoism and the Shift of the Taoist Center to Jiangnan

## 1. The Wei Regime's Control of Taoism and Related Activities

When Zhang Lu surrendered with the followers of the Wudoumi Tao in A.D. 215 Cao Cao and his successors took some measures to keep Taoism under control.

### Cao Cao and His Policy Concerning the Wudoumi Tao and *Fangshi*

Cao Cao's policy concerning the Wudoumi Tao was one of the "carrot and stick." On the one hand, he knighted Zhang Lu and his five sons marquis and had one of his princes marry Zhang's daughter; on the other, he initiated an emigration policy, by which over ten thousand households were removed from Hanzhong, the former headquarters of Zhang Lu's Wudoumi Tao, to Luoyang, Yecheng and other northern cities or regions. This policy turned out to be very effective, for now the formerly well-organized Wudoumi Tao broke up: the top leaders were roped in to assist the new regime of

Wei, while most of the followers were scattered in different rural areas.

Cao Cao's policy had some other major consequences too. With many of its top leaders transferred to the capital cities and appointed high officials, the Wudoumi Tao was able to spread secretly among the people in the upper class society. With the removal of a large number of followers of the Wudoumi Tao to the northern regions, Taoism began to spread there.

Cao Cao's policy concerning individual *fangshi* was a little different from that concerning the Wudoumi Tao. The activities of individual *fangshi* were permitted in the capital areas. The following are the records of some of the eminent *fangshi* such as Zou Ci, Gan Shi and Que Jian at the time. For instance, Cao Zhi, a son of Cao Cao, said:

> Whenever a *fangshi* is found in the world, my king (Cao Cao) will send for him. (Among the recruited *fangshi*), there is a Gan Shi from Ganling, Zou Ci from Lujiang and Que Jian from Yangcheng. Gan Shi is a master in breath control, Zou Ci is conversant with *fang zhong shu* ("the arts of the bed chamber") and Que Jian is best at grain abstention. They all claim to be three hundred years old....
>
> (*Biandao Lun* by Cao Zhi)

Although those *fangshi* were allowed to propagate their arts, they were actually assembled for some other considerations. Cao Zhi made his father's real intention clear. Again in his book entitled *Biandao Lun*, we have:

> The reason why they have been assembled in the Kingdom of Wei is that we fear they will deceive the people with their magic arts. How can it be true that we expect to see divine immortals in Penglai and Yingzhou islands and meet Anqi Sheng through them? ... My King, crown prince, other brothers and me all consider those arts a laughing stock. We don't believe them.... Gan Shi and others find that their king does not treat them as anything special; their salaries are not higher than those of ordinary officials, they do not receive rewards

without meritorious deeds, they have no opportunity to travel to the islands in the sea or to be granted official garments, they dare not say anything absurd to the King.

(*Biandao Lun* by Cao Zhi, quoted in the "Biography of Hua Tuo" in *History of the Three Kingdoms*)

**Wei Wen Di's Policy Toward the Huang-Lao Tao and Other Folk Cults**

In the Kingdom of Wei, not only those eminent Fangshi were kept under control, the worship of Lao Zi as a deity was also forbidden for a time especially during the reign of Emperor Wen Di (220-227). Earlier during the reign of Han Emperor Huan Di (r. 147-167), there was a temple dedicated to Lao Zi in his hometown, Kuxian (generally believed to be in present Henan Province). It was recorded that Han Emperor Huan Di once sent his men to offer sacrifices to him. But two years after he was sworn in, Wei Emperor Wen Di passed an order which read:

Let the Governor of Yuzhou be informed: Lao Dan (another name for Lao Zi as recorded by Sima Qian in his *Records of the Historian*) was a worthy person, he must not be placed before Confucius. I am wondering if there is a temple especially dedicated to Confucius in Lu Prefecture. Han Emperor Huan Di heaped favors on those who curried with him and believed in Lao Zi, wishing to receive blessings from him. It was really ridiculous! This temple was built by Emperor Huan Di. Because he thought Lao Zi was a worthy person, Emperor Wu Di (Cao Cao) did not demolish it. Earlier I ordered to have it renovated because I thought it was in the middle of the road and passers-by would often stop and take a look, but the dilapidated roof was endangering the people below. Yesterday I went to inspect it and found that the renovations had not been completed yet. I fear that some ignorant people will believe that an act of god is performed in the temple and therefore go there to pray. This will be violation of our prescriptions. It is your duty to inform all the officials and people about these.

(Biography of Xu Gaoshen)

The Wei Regime not only roped in eminent *fangshi* and forbade the worship of Lao Zi as a deity, they prohibited the folk cults and sorcery as well, because they feared that there would be another Yellow Turban uprising. In 224, Wei Emperor Wen Di passed another edict saying:

> During the turmoils of the last generation, people held superstitious beliefs in shamanism and sorcery. From imperial palaces down to people's houses, wine was sprinkled on the ground. How misled the people were! From now on whoever makes unauthorized sacrifices, follows the teachings of shamans and sorcerers will be considered heretical. And this will be written into laws and canon.

As the Wei Regime and succeeding Western Jin Regime kept an eye open for any potential insurrection, the development of Taoist religion in the northern region was discouraged. Those devotees to the Wudoumi Tao and some individual *fangshi* who wanted to find a more tolerant political atmosphere began to look for a new place to practice their teachings and arts. There in Jiangnan, they found an ideal place where a more tolerant religious policy was practiced throughout the period of Wu and Eastern Jin. By and by, the center of Taoist activities shifted to Jiangnan.

## 2. The Shift of the Taoist Center to Jiangnan

### Immortality Cult of the Wu Emperors

In the Jiangnan region, where the Kingdom of Wu was in power since 222, Taoism had a better fate. The Emperor of this kingdom, Sun Quan (r. 222-252), was a Taoist enthusiast himself. Like the First Emperor of Qin in the third Century B.C., Sun Quan sent men to look for the islands of the immortals in the ocean:

> In 230, ... (Sun) ordered his generals Wei Wen and Zhuge Zhi to lead an army of ten thousand soldiers to search for Yizhou and Danzhou. Danzhou is in the middle of the sea. The old man passed on the

word that the First Emperor of Qin had sent the *fangshi* Xu Fu to lead several thousand young boys and girls to the sea in order to find immortality pills and immortal islands such as Penglai but that they stopped at Danzhou and did not return home.

("Biography of Wu Zhu," *History of the Three Kingdoms*)

Sun Quan was also a patron of Taoism and maintained a good relation with the eminent Taoists of his time:

In 244, a Taoist *fangshi* Ge Xuan submitted a report to Wu Emperor Sun Quan, saying that Buddhism was born and worshiped in the western land, but Taoism was born earlier in China. He petitioned him to promote Taoist teachings. One Taoist temple was thus built in his honor, and that was the beginning of Taoist temples.

(— *Zhenzheng Lun*)

Sun Quan's son, Emperor Jing Di (r. 258-264), was also recorded to be interested in Taoist arts. It was said that once he summoned Taoist Wu Chun to show his technique of grain abstention. The political climate was generally favorable to the expanding of various religious movements in this region. The atmosphere did not become worse in the region even after the Kingdom of Wu surrendered to the more powerful regime called Western Jin and the Eastern Jin that succeeded it in 317 with its new capital in Nanjing, a city by the Yangtze River. Now Taoists of different traditions came one after another to the Jiangnan region. Besides, Yujun Tao, a tradition initiated by Yu Ji, as we have mentioned in the previous chapter, Bojun Tao and Lijia Tao, two major folk traditions which originated in the north, also spread to the region of Jiangnan.

**Bojun Tao and Lijia Tao, Two Popular Folk Traditions**

The above-mentioned favorable political climate made Jiangnan an ideal land to foster folk traditions of worship. The Bojun Tao and Lijia Tao were two major traditions, which demonstrated the staying influence of the Taiping Tao and Wudoumi Tao in the new region.

The Bojun Tao was initiated by a Taoist called Bo He, who was recorded to have close connections with the *Taipingjing*. According to *Shenxian Zhuan* (*Hagiography of Deities and Immortals*) by Ge Hong, Bo He was a disciple of Dong Feng, who served at Sun Quan's court. Bo learned from Dong the techniques of breath control. It was said that he had three important scriptures copied from a stone wall carving, namely *Taiqing Zhongjing Shendan Fang* (Great Purity Middle Scripture Elixir Concoction Methods), *Sanhuang Tianwen Dazhi* (The Large Letters of Three Emperors), and *Wuyue Zhenxing Tu* (A Design of the Real Topography of the Five Sacred Mountains). At first he must have been very popular in the north, for several persons pretended to be Bojun in order to attract a following. Ge Hong reports:

> There were some persons claiming to be famous Taoists who had already died. For instance, a man who called himself Bo, was believed to be 8,700 years old. He occasionally appeared among the people and suddenly disappeared. Nobody knew where he went. There was a Taoist in the Luoyang region who was very knowledgeable about things, especially alchemy. He often consulted Bo He on some difficult questions. Bo was able to provide a thorough answer to all of them. As Bo was always removed from people, nobody knew how old he really was. Maybe, he was a few thousand years old. Later he suddenly disappeared and nobody knew his whereabouts. There was another man claiming himself Bo He in northern China. People from places far and near went to wait on him as their master, and many of them got rich. Once when the disciples heard that their master appeared somewhere, they were ecstatic. They went to the place to meet him, but found a false Bo He....
>
> (— *The Book of Master Baopu*)

The Bojun Tao later spread to the Jiangnan region and acquired a more popular name "Profane God (*sushen*) Worship." Many of the upper class families in the region were its followers, such as Zhou Ziliang, a disciple of great Taoist master Tao Hongjing. The

followers of the Bojun Tao later were converted to the Shangqing Tradition of the Taoist Jinglu Sect.

Another folk tradition which spread to the Jiangnan region was the Lijia Tao. The Lijia Tradition considered an immortalist master called Li Babai as its founder. The Lijia Tao originated in the Shu region in southwest China. The earliest Lijia Tao movement might have exerted some influence on the formation of the Wudoumi Tao. In his *Shenxian Zhuan*, Ge Hong reports that people in a dozen different generations all said to have seen him, therefore people concluded that he must have been over 800 years old and called him Li Babai (Li the Eight Hundred). We believe that Li Babai was an eminent alchemist who may have achieved some measure of success and was immortalized by his followers. In today's Jingtang County, Sichuan Province, there is a place believed to be the very spot where Li Babai concocted his alchemical elixir. As he was very popular, a lot of people claimed themselves to be Li Babai before they started to attract people as their followers. In the chapter "Daoyi Pian," *The Book of Master Baopu*, Ge Hong says:

> Some ask when the Lijia Tao originated. During the reign of Wu Emperor Sun Quan, there was a man called Li'er in the Shu region, who lived in a cave and ate nothing. He was seen by people of many generations and was nicknamed Eight-hundred-year-old Man.... Later a man called Li Kuan came to the Kingdom of Wu, but had a Shu accent. He was able to cure disease with talismanic water. Therefore his name spread far and wide and people thought of him as Li Kuan and called him Eight-hundred Li. They were different persons, of course. Officials from the highest to the lowest asked to be initiated. He became arrogant and overbearing and so people could not request audiences with him very often. The visitors often made obeisance to the gate of his house and then left. How strange it was. Thousands of people including lower-rank officials who wanted to escape from forced labor were initiated as his disciples.
>
> (— *The Book of Master Baopu*)

The favorable atmosphere for Taoist activities in Jiangnan was not only reflected in the Bojun Tao and Lijia Tao which attracted followers in this region, but was also reflected in the fact that quite a few renowned *fangshi* such as Du Chi and Zou Ci took refuge there to practice cultivation and that a few aristocratic families such as the Du Zigong family and Sun En family were converted to Celestial Master Taoism, a new version of the Wudoumi Tao.

Though, in this period, Taoism was provided with fertile soil to grow and prosper, as a whole it was unorganized and in a confused state of affairs. Owing to their different social status and political interests, the Taoists of different persuasions often clashed with each other. For instance, Ge Hong, a representative of the elite class, strongly condemned the folk traditions like the Lijia Tao and Bojun Tao. Sun En, a Celestial Master Taoist himself, killed Wang Ningzhi, also a follower of the Celestial Master Taoism. More will be said about Ge Hong and Sun En in Sections II and III.

## Section II Ge Hong, the Greatest Theorist of Immortalist Taoism

The Cult of Immortality began very early as might be seen in the legendary tale of the Queen Mother of the West, the historical records of the First Emperor of Qin. But except for the earliest alchemical work *Can Tong Qi*, the immortality-seekers made their names known to the world much more by selling their practicable arts than by persuasive theories. In *Can Tong Qi* itself, the theory was fragmentary, with infrequent quotations from classics like *The Book of Changes* and *The Book of Lao Zi*. But during the Wei and Eastern Jin periods, things started to change. More and more official-literati were converted to Taoist belief, some of them initiated a school of thought called Xuanxue (Mystery Learning), which is

known to the West as Neo-Taoism. The Neo-Taoists loved to discuss Lao-Zhuang, especially the thought of Zhuang Zi and elaborated on some important Taoist concepts (Chapter XIX of *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* by Fung Yu-lan which provides a good background knowledge of Neo-Taoism). While many of its concepts, especially terminology, found their way in early Buddhist scriptures through translation, Neo-Taoism also inspired the seekers of immortality to theorize their practices and arts. Ge Hong was a very good case in point, though he personally did not quite agree to the way they appreciated the Lao-Zhuang Thought. With his unusual background and experiences, Ge Hong was able to establish the Jindan Sect with a rather systematic theory and practice. His representative work was *The Book of Master Baopu*, especially its "Inner Chapters."

## 1. Life Story of Ge Hong (284-364)

Our knowledge about the life of Ge Hong can be obtained from both the *History of the Jin Dynasty* and the autobiographical account in his book *Baopuzi*. Ge Hong, styled Zhichuan, was a native of Danyang County (in present Jiangsu Province). He was born into an official's family in 284, but his father died at his post when Ge Hong was 13 years old. From then on his family began to come down in the world. Poor though he was, Ge Hong was keen on learning. The record says he would cut down fuel trees in order to exchange them for writing brushes and paper. He was soon known as a Confucian scholar. He was an introvert, and not fond of playing or making friends. But whenever he was confronted with a question and learned that the answer could be found in a book somewhere, he would go out of his way to get the book no matter how far away it was kept. He had a perusal of various kinds of literature, but was especially interested in books on methods of cultivation or approaches to immortality.

Ge Xuan, a brother of Ge Hong's grandfather, had been a master of alchemy. He passed his expertise to his disciple Zheng Yin, who in turn passed it to Ge Hong. Ge Hong was also a disciple of Bao Xuan, a governor in a southern province. Bao was a master of Taoist esoteric arts, especially fortune-telling. He had a great liking for Ge Hong and transmitted his skill to him, and gave him his daughter in marriage.

Ge Hong was also an eminent doctor, gifted writer and successful military officer. In 302 he helped put down the rebellion initiated by Shi Bing, and got a promotion because of that. However, he was more interested in scholarship and so went to Luoyang, then capital of China, to look for more books to study. It was said that several times he was offered an official post, but he turned down the offer. When he reached his senior age, he asked to be appointed magistrate of Goulou County in a southern province, but his request was not granted by the emperor. When he further explained that the place was said to have the reserve of cinnabar, an important substance for making elixir, the emperor gave him permission. On his way to the county, he was stopped by Deng Yue, the mayor of Guangzhou, who persuaded him to stay there. And he did. He spent the rest of his life on Mount Luofu near the city and died there in 364.

## 2. The "Inner Chapters" in *The Book of Master Baopu*

### Motivations for Writing the Baopuzi

From his life story we can see that Ge Hong was a widely cultured person who was ready to accept different ideas. Self-taught as a Confucian scholar, he did not blindly believe what the Confucian classics said. When challenged by the question why Confucian classics did not record the deeds of divine immortals, Ge Hong retorted, "There are places that the sun and moon don't shine on; there are things that the sages don't know." When pressed further,

he began to write his masterpiece *Baopuzi* (*The Book of Master Baopu*) which literally means "The master who holds on to simplicity." In his autobiography, he recounts the motivation for writing this book:

> .... Nowadays Confucianists only know how to venerate the Duke of Zhou and Confucius, and they don't believe what the books on immortals have said. They laugh at them and make slanderous remarks. Therefore, I write many chapters on alchemy entitled "Inner Chapters." The rest of the chapters are intended to explain and retort some challenging questions, and are entitled "Outer Chapters." Altogether there are 116 chapters (or plan). Though they are not precious enough to be stored in famous mountains, they can be put in a gold case for knowing persons to read."

**Characteristics of Ge Hong's Theory Reflected by the "Inner Chapters" of *The Book of Master Baopu***

Ge Hong's greatest contribution to the development of Taoism is his systematization of Taoist theory and practices which revolve around the goal of immortality. This is reflected mainly in his "Inner Chapters" of *The Book of Master Baopu*. The following are some of the major features of his theory.

First, Ge adopted the notion of *Xuan* in his discussion as the cosmic origin. By cultivating *Xuan*, a person might become an immortal.

In his first chapter of the "Inner Chapters," entitled "Expounding *Xuan*," he introduces the notion of *Xuan* as his main philosophical category which was very similar to the omnipresent Tao. He describes it as follows:

> It is so deep that no eye can see, it is so far in distance that it is beyond reach, it is so high that it crowns the Nine Heavens, it is so wide that it envelops the Eight Corners. It is as bright as the sun and moon. It travels as fast as the lightning .... It is shown to be in existence by the billions of creatures and it is shown to be in

non-existence by the quietness and tranquility. It plunges into an abyss and begins to sink, it shoots up to the sky and begins to float. Gold is not as hard, dew is not as soft. It is square, but the rule can not measure its area; it is round, but the compass can not measure its perimeter. When it comes, it is invisible, it leaves no trace. Heaven is high because of it, Earth is low also because of it. Clouds travel because of it, the rain pours because of it. It gestates "Primordial One," it molds "Two Principles." It embraces the Great Beginning" and it produces billions of creatures.

Here we can see that *Xuan* is something omnipresent and omnipotent. It follows that if a person grasps *Xuan*, he will possess the quality of omnipresence and omnipotence, then he will become none other than *xian*, immortal.

Secondly, Ge Hong considered alchemy much more important than the sweeping discussion of immortality in the works of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. In the chapter entitled "Gold Elixir," Ge says:

> I have had a perusal of over one thousand *juan* of books on self-cultivation and immortality. Gold liquid revertible to elixir has always been emphasized as something of greatest importance.

Why is the "gold elixir" capable of effecting immortality in a man? In the same chapter he says:

> The longer gold elixir is burned, the more miraculously it transforms itself. When gold is thrown into a fire, it will not melt easily; and if it is buried in the ground, it will never perish just like Heaven. These two things will temper your body and enable you to stay young and imperishable. This is because the thing exterior can be used to strengthen the thing interior. For instance, a candle light will not die out if wax is placed besides the burning candle continuously; if a man's feet are coated with copper liquid, they will not putrefy under water, because his flesh gains new energy from the copper liquid. When gold elixir is consumed, it enters the internal passages, and is therefore more efficacious than the copper liquid which can only be applied to the outer skin.

In this passage, Ge Hong reflects a way of reasoning which was very typical among ancient Chinese, that is, conclusion was often drawn simply through an analogy. This way of thinking runs through many of the early books on Taoism.

Compared with the books of Lao-Zhuang, Ge Hong's ideas were certainly new and fresh. For instance, in the chapter entitled "Zhishi," he says that those books which claim to be inspired by Huang Di and Lao Zi were far from being "simple words with deep meanings" and that "the people would not benefit from them even after they have read them ten thousand times." Even the "Register of Five Thousand Characters" itself "has a too sweeping discussion (on immortality)." "The readers who fail to grasp its gist are wasting their time. As for the works of Zhuang Zi, Wen Zi and other Taoist philosophers, what they were talking about "was billions of *li* away from what spirit-immortals really are."

## 3. While spiritual cultivation was considered to be important, Ge Hong seems to have emphasized the physical cultivation

In Chapter Five, "Ultimate Truth," Ge Hong said:

> Existence comes from non-existence. The body can not stand by itself without spirit. "Existence" is the palace housing the "non-existence." The body is the house where the spirit resides. By analogy, water drains away once a dam is damaged; a fire is put out once the candle burns up. When the body is strained, the spirit will disperse; when air is exhausted, life perishes... the dead will never return to life, rotten wood will never turn green. Don't you think it is a sad fact, students of Taoism!

As physical wellbeing was basic to physical immortality, Ge Hong absorbed many different arts and methods which have either been recorded or proved by his own experiments to be helpful. For

instance, he explained the importance of *Shouyi* (Retaining the One), a technique much elaborated in the *Taipingjing*. In Chapter 18, he says:

> Retaining the One and preserving the true essence enable you to communicate with the gods. Desire little, eat little, for the One may retain your breath; when a sword hangs over your neck, you can get off lightly if you meditate on the One; it is not difficult to know the One so much as to stick to it to the end; if you can do this you will have an infinite power; in land brutal beasts will avoid you, in water, fierce dragons will leave you unharmed; you will not fear evil spirits nor snakes nor sword. These are the main things the True One can do.

Perhaps, Ge Hong was not fantasizing. Some of these magic powers are sometimes demonstrated by some well accomplished Wushu (martial arts) or Qigong (breathing exercise) masters today. Besides the technique of *Shouyi* Ge Hong introduced many other methods of importance such as the "arts of the bedchamber" and "conducting air." In Chapter 8, "Clearing Stagnant Mind," Ge Hong emphasizes:

> There are over ten schools of the arts of the bedchamber. Some claim that they will nourish health, some believe they will cure diseases, some employ them to extract Yin essence to nourish Yang essence, still some believe them helpful to prolong their life.... The gist of the arts is that the man who practices them can "nourish his brain" by reversing his sperm movement. This art has been passed by Perfect Beings orally and it is not written in books. The person who takes good medicine but doesn't know the essence of the art cannot enjoy a long life. A human being must not give up sexual intercourse for ever, otherwise he will suffer from atrophy of his organs, therefore he will be prone to illness and will not live long. And if a person abandons himself, he will also have a shorter life. Only if he learns to show moderation in the affairs, can he remain without suffering.

As for *xing qi* (conducting air), a more popular name being Qigong, Ge Hong highly recommended the technique of *tai xi*

(embryonic breathing). In the same chapter of the book, Ge Hong says: "If a person who practices embryonic breathing can breathe through neither nose nor mouth, does as if he was an embryo, then he has accomplished the Tao." The procedure follows:

> When breathing, a beginner may take in the air and hold it until he counts to number 120. Then he may pass it out through his mouth gently. In so doing, he must not make his breathing audible even to his own ear. He should take in air more than what he passes out. If he will not move a feather placed on his nose, it means that he does it correctly. Gradually he might retain his breath up to 1,000 counts or more.

Although these arts were useful for man's physical wellbeing, Ge Hong believed they were incomparable to alchemical elixir, as we have discussed above.

Finally, Ge Hong incorporated social ethics into his theoretical system. In Chapter Three, "Against Lay Beliefs," Ge Hong says:

> If a person has not done enough good deeds, even if he has taken immortalist pills, he will not get the benefits. If a person has done many good deeds, even if he has not taken any pill of immortality, he will not die a sudden death.

In another passage of the same chapter, he states,

> If a person is to seek immortality, he must adhere to the fundamental ethical standards such as loyalty, filial piety, harmony, benevolence and faithfulness. If he does not strive to meet these standards, focusing on Taoist arts only, he will not enjoy a long or immortal life.

Small wonder Ge Hong abominated those folk traditions which once stirred up uprisings such as the Great Peace Movement and the Li Family tradition and therefore listed them as targets of elimination. In Chapter Nine, "The Meaning of the Tao," Ge Hong condemns those folk traditions as heretic Taoism:

> In the past there were a gang of people like Zhang Jue, Liu Gen,

> Wang Xin and Li Sheng who either claimed to be 1,000 years old or deceived the people by their petty arts such as sitting in forgetfulness and transforming their appearance. They all assembled hordes of ignorant people around them. They neither helped people to prolong their lives nor cured their disease or fended off their disasters. They got wicked people together to launch rebellions against legitimate governments....

In sum, the "Inner Chapters" of *The Book of Master Baopu* had so far given the most systematic description of Taoist theories and practices. In it, Ge Hong synthesized the intellectual school of *Xuan* with Immortalist Taoism, provided a theological basis for the existing practical arts, and reconciled two major streams of them, namely alchemy and talisman, and harmonized individualistic Taoist pursuits with the accepted social ethics. In so doing, Ge Hong brought Taoism much closer to the elite class.

Mentioning in passing. Ge Hong also excelled in many other fields besides alchemy and Taoist theory. He was a great poet, hagiographer as well as a medical doctor. He was the author of 100-*juan Jingkui Yaofang* (*Gold-cased Prescriptions*) and four-*juan Zhouhou Yaojifang* (*First Aid Prescriptions*). His record of how to cure rabies was more than 1,500 years earlier than the discovery of vaccine by Pasteur in 1885. His discovery of smallpox was over 500 years earlier than the discovery made by a famous Arabian physician in the ninth century.

## Section III The Rebellion of the "Immortal Men"

### 1. Wang and Du Families and Celestial Master Taoism in Jiangnan

Another development of Taoism during the Eastern Jin Dynasty

was the penetration of the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism into a great number of upper class families in the Jiangnan region, the political and cultural center of the south. By one estimate, there were over 30 families converted to Taoism, who to a large extent were the backbone of the dynasty. Wang Family from Langya and Du Family from Qiangtang both in present Zhejiang Province are two good cases in point.

In Wang Family, the belief in Taoism was firm for many generations. According to "Biography of Wang Xizhi," *History of the Jin Dynasty*, Wang Xizhi, son of a very high-ranking official and one of the greatest calligraphers in Chinese history, had a great liking for an eremitic life. He had a wide association with many of the eminent people of his time, including Confucianists, Buddhists and Taoists. He had a specially close association with Taoists after he resigned from office:

> Wang and Xu Mai, Taoists, were experimenting in alchemy. They would go a thousand *li* to get the drugs and minerals needed. They made a tour of all the famous mountains in the eastern and central part of China, and they reached far out to the sea. "I will die of pleasure in the end," Wang sighed.

Another story about Wang Xizhi and the story about his relation with a Taoist priest has become a household one:

> There lived a Taoist in Shanyin (in present Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province), who raised geese. Xizhi went to have a look at them and began to like them very much. He asked to buy one of them. The Taoist wanted to bargain with him, so he said "If you make a copy of the *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching* or *Scripture of the Tao and Its Power*) for me, I will give you all my geese." He was only too glad to do it. Soon he finished the copy and returned home with the caged geese. He took great pleasure in doing things like this.

Wang Xizhi's second son Wang Ningzhi, seventh son Wang Xianzhi and fifth son Wang Huizhi all had devout belief in Taoism.

When Sun En, a rebel leader, threatened to storm the city of Huiji, where Wang Ningzhi was the mayor, Wang's subordinates asked to prepare the fight, but Wang brushed aside their advice and withdrew into his chamber. When he reappeared, he reassured them by saying, "I have petitioned the Great Tao, who agreed to assist us with his ghost soldiers. The enemy troop will defeat itself." In the end, Wang was killed by Sun En.

In another instance, when Wang Xianzhi was in a critical illness, his family repented and prayed and his brother Wang Huizhi begged a Taoist priest to perform a healing ritual for him and said that he would be willing to die if his brother could be saved. As for Wang Xianzhi, who was also a noted calligrapher, he is recorded to have drawn many talismans, registers and incantations which characterized the practices of the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism.

So much for Wang Family and its relation to Taoism. Now we will talk about another Taoist family in the region, that is Du Family.

Du Family also had a tradition of following Taoism. But unlike Wang Family, Du Family was engaged in Taoist communal service. The most famous member of the family was called Du Zigong, styled Jiong. The life story of Du can be found in *Tao Xue Zhang* (*Records of Taoist Learning*).

> Du Jiong, styled Zigong, was very much devoted to Zhengyi Taoism (Orthodox Unity Taoism, a more dignified word for the Wudoumi Tao). After he reached the age of 30, when he was very young, he already received a register issued by the Celestial Master. He preached his teachings and helped the needy. He practiced self-discipline, but was generous toward other people. He did not require any donation from beneficiaries. He built parish chambers for meditation and offered extensive care to the sick, and they all got well soon. Du was a good doctor as well as a good prophet who could predict good or bad things in the world.

It was said that four generations of Du Family were devout followers of the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism and its influence was

very great in the Jiangnan region. The followers of Du Zigong not only included the commoners, quite a few people from the upper class were either initiated by or closely associated to Du Zigong. That was only further confirmed by Shen Yue of the Liang Dynasty, who authored the *History of the (Liu) Song Dynasty*:

> Earlier, Du Zigong from Qiangtang possessed certain Taoist arts. The people from both rich families in the east and powerful families in the capital served him as their religious master and held him in great esteem.... After he died, his disciple Sun Tai inherited his profession, and later passed it on to his own disciple Sun En....

By now we can see that there was a pervading belief in Taoism in Eastern Jin society, but there lacked a centralized organization which could join all the Taoist followers for one common cause. In fact, class distinction among followers of Taoism was clear-cut, and when self-interest got the upper hand, fraternity was pushed aside, as we may soon see from the movement known as the "Immortal Men's Rebellion."

## 2. The Immortal Men's Rebellion

The Immortal Men's Rebellion was a series of events which finally led to the collapse of the Eastern Jin Dynasty. As the name suggests, this rebellion had a very strong Taoist color. The course of events was initiated by Sun Tai, the disciple of Du Zigong. The *History of the Jin Dynasty* has the following record:

> When Du Zigong died, Sun Tai inherited his arts. He was a gifted leader and manipulator. Those people enchanted by him respected him as a god, giving him all of their property, some even sacrificing their daughters in order to get his blessings. He secretly assembled and aroused the masses, thinking that the collapse of the Jin Regime was imminent. A large number of scholars and commoners followed him. At the time, the officials in Guiji (present city of Shaoxing, Zhejiang

Province) all feared that Tai would initiate a rebellion. But they kept silent because they knew that the Prince of Guiji was Tai's close friend. Then the magistrate of the city discovered Tai's plot and Prince Tao Zi had him killed.

After Sun Tai was killed, his nephew Sun En fled to an island where he assembled hundreds of followers and waited for an opportunity to take his revenge. Now an opportunity came. The Prince of Guiji committed many cruel acts against his people and aroused their hatred. Sun En took advantage of the turmoil and started to fight back. He first conquered Shangyu County and killed its magistrate and then moved his troops to Guiji and killed the magistrate Wang Ningzhi, and occupied the city. There he claimed himself the General of Conquering the East and called his party "Immortal Men." He ordered to have all his dissidents murdered including their children. His men burned down granaries and houses of the government and of civilians, chopped down trees to fill wells and plundered other people's property. It was agreed that his men and captives would all assemble in Guiji. Those women who had difficulty moving to the city because of their babies saw their children taken away in bags and baskets and thrown into the river. They heard people say to the babies: "You mount to the immortal land first, and I will soon follow you." Several times Sun En was driven away but several times he fought back from his base at the island. In 402, Sun En was completely defeated and drowned himself. Hundreds of collaborators and concubines considered him a Water Immortal and killed themselves too. Sun En was succeeded by his brother-in-law Lu Xun, who was finally defeated by Liu Yu.

The Immortal Men's Rebellion was the second most important Taoist political movement next only to the Yellow Turban Uprising, which brought about the eventual downfall of the Han Dynasty, in much the same way the Immortal Men's Rebellion caused the collapse of the Eastern Jin Dynasty. Liu Yu, who killed Lu Xun, became the founder of the new dynasty called Song. As the distrust in

Taoism grew stronger from the upper elite class, it was high time that Taoism started some reforms doctrinally and institutionally. The reform movements which took place both in the north and in the south of China obviously met the needs of the times.

## Section IV The Emergence of Three Scriptural Traditions

Besides the Immortal Men's Rebellion, another important event taking place during the Eastern Jin Dynasty was the emergence of three scriptural traditions, namely Shangqing (High Purity) Tradition, Lingbao (Numinous Treasure) Tradition and Sanhuang (Three Emperors) Tradition. These three traditions, each in its own way, developed the theology and practice of the early Celestial Master School.

### 1. Sanhuang Tradition

Among the three the Sanhuang Tradition appeared the earliest. The main scriptures included *Words by Three Emperors* (*Sanhuang Wen*) and the *Genuine Map of Five Mountains* (*Wu Yue Zhen Xing Tu*). The historical records did not agree who actually initiated this tradition. According to "On Three Emperors Scripture" in *Yun Ji Qi Qian*, Bao Jing (another name for Bao Xuan, father-in-law of Ge Hong) was the initiator:

> In the reign of Jin Emperor Wu Di (r. 265-290), there was a Bao Qiang, who was inclined to immortalist Taoism at a young age and once served as the governor of Nanhai Prefecture. On the second day of the second month, he climbed Songshan Mountain and found a cave where he practiced meditation and fasting. Suddenly he saw an ancient text of *Three Emperors Scripture* carved on the stone right in

front of bis eyes. As there was no teacher available then, Bao Qiang took an oath by himself and offered four hundred feet of silk as a testimony, as was the custom. Later he passed it on to Ge Hong, who in turn passed it on and on until today.

According to the section entitled "Earthly Perfect Being," in the "Inner Chapters" of *The Book of Master Baopu*, it was Bo He, the founder of Bo Family Tradition, who actually initiated the tradition:

> During the period of the Three Kingdoms (220-265) Bo He went to Xichang Mountain to be a disciple of Wang Fangping. For three years, he meditated in a cave house, then he discovered the scriptures *Great Purity Middle Scripture Divine Alchemical Elixir, Large-Lettered Scripture of Three Emperors* and *Genuine Map of Five Mountains*.

One possible explanation to reconcile the discrepancy between the two records about the *Three Emperors Scripture* was that Bo He's scripture was called "Lesser Scripture," while Bao Qiang's was called "Greater Scripture" and that these two scriptures differed slightly. These two scriptures were reedited and became *Inner Scripture of Three Emperors*, which Ge Hong held in great esteem. In the section entitled "Extensive Reading" of the same book, Ge Hong says:

> I have been told by Zheng Ying that of all Taoist scriptures, *Inner Scripture of Three Emperors* and *Genuine Map of Five Mountains* were the two most important ones. In the ancient time the officials of immortals and Perfect Beings all kept them secret. Unless a person has his name registered in the land of immortals, the scriptures cannot be passed to him. One scripture says, if one has *Three Emperors Scriptures* at home, he can avoid evil influences like ghosts, plagues, and unexpected disasters. If a sick or dying person has a strong faith in Taoism and keeps this scripture, he will definitely be cured or saved. If a Taoist priest wishes to seek immortality, and goes into a mountain carrying this book with him, all fierce beasts like tigers and wolves, evil forces like spirits and poisonous airs, will move away from him. Carrying this book, he will safely cross the seas or rivers, scaring

> away dragons and pacifying the waves.... In addition, if a person has the book and takes ablutions and follows a vegetarian diet for a month, he will have the power to summon deities like the Longevity God and the Year Protector, make a tour of the Five Mountains and Four Rivers within one day and make the god in the village temple appear just like a man, whom he may consult about his fortune or the causes of illness if he is sick.... If one has the *Genuine Map of Five Mountains* at home, he can escape murder and if another person is going to kill him, that person will only invite disaster to himself.

From Ge Hong's writing we can see that the *Inner Scripture of Three Emperors* was mainly concerned about the Taoist arts like summoning ghosts or deities, talismans, and meditation. It was later developed into a 14-volume scripture and became the central scripture of *Dong Shen* Scriptural Family.

## 2. Lingbao Scriptural Tradition

Lingbao, which literally means "numinous treasure," was the name of a deity. The Lingbao Scriptural Tradition included two major scriptures: *Lingbao Wujing* (*Numinous Treasure Five Talismans Scripture*) and *Lingbao Duren Jing* (*Numinous Treasure Salvation Scripture*).

The author of *Numinous Treasure Five Talismans Scripture* is still unknown. But as Ge Hong had already mentioned this scripture in his "Inner Chapters" we may very well conclude that the author lived well before Ge Hong's time. From the existing three volumes of it in *Taoist Canon* we can see its main contents. Volume One talked about the arts like meditation and *fuqi* (inhaling astral emanations); Volume Two was about macrobiotics; Volume three was about talismans and incantations and the ways of immortalization through *shijie* (deliverance of a corpse). The most distinct feature of the scripture was its emphasis on the importance of Five Directions in relation to the efficacy of talismans. The influence of the Five

Agents Theory on the scripture was clearly discernible there.

*Numinous Treasure Salvation Scripture* appeared somewhat later, its author was probable Ge Caofu, grandson of Ge Hong's brother. Our conclusion is based on the fact that Ge Hong never mentioned any other scriptures belonging to the Lingbao Tradition except for *Numinous Treasure Five Talismans Scripture* and that in *Zhengao* (*Declaration of the Perfected*) Tao Hongjing (456-536) mentioned Ge Caofu as the "maker of Lingbao, promoter of the teachings."

As the *Numinous Treasure Salvation Scripture* was the main scripture in Lingbao Scriptural Family we will discuss it in more detail. From the existing text, we find that the scripture carries some quite distinctive features:

Firstly, Yuanshi Tianzun, Celestial Worthy of Original Beginning, was venerated as the supreme god of all gods residing in Three Realms, Ten Directions and Thirty-two Heavens and Earthly Palaces (Hells).

Secondly, external gods were called on to assist in cultivational practices through fasting, incense offering and chanting besides the conventional arts like *neishi*, visualization of internal gods, who had long been believed to reside inside a person's body and brain.

Thirdly, devotional rituals like praying, chanting and sacrificing were given more prominence than the traditional practical arts such as alchemical elixir, macrobiotics and "the arts of the bedchamber," to the negation of shamanism and unauthorized excessive sacrifices.

Lastly, the emphasis was laid on the salvationist aspect rather than the individualist pursuit. In the word of the author, "The Tao of immortalists cherishes life, its mission is to salvage an indefinite number of people."

The *Numinous Treasure Five Talismans Scripture*, the *Numinous Treasure Salvation Scripture* and other scriptures of Lingbao Tradition were later systematized by Lu Xiujing (406-477) and thus were made even more popular. In fact the *Numinous Treasure Sal-*

*vation Scripture* became so important that it was placed as the first scripture in the Ming edition of *Taoist Canon*. Commentaries on the scripture were composed by Taoist scholars in almost all the later periods.

## 3. Shangqing Scriptural Tradition

### Its Formation

Among the three scriptural traditions, the Shangqing Tradition was the most important. Shangqing, which literally means "high purity," was believed to be the celestial palace where all the important immortals or Perfect Beings resided. The scriptures belonging to this tradition were believed to come from the Shangqing Palace. As a matter of fact, this tradition was initiated by Lady Wei Huacun and the larger part of the scriptures was recorded by Yang Xi, Xu Mi and Xi Hui. Lady Wei was the daughter of a very high-ranking official in the Jin court. She was once a libationer of Celestial Master Taoism and the revealer of *Huangtingjing* (*Yellow Court Scripture*). She died in 334.

According to *Zhengao*, written by Tao Hongjing, we have the following:

> The origin of True Scripture of Shangqing can be traced back to A.D. 364 when Lady Wei of "South Mountain," Mt. Hengshan (in present Hunan Province), descended and passed the scripture on to her disciple Yang Xi who was under the patronage of a high ranking official in the Kingdom of Langya. Yang copied the scripture in a style called *li* (official script), and again passed it on to Xu Mi, another official in Jurong County, and his third son Xu Hui. The two Xus were also engaged in copying the scriptures and they finally succeeded in their cultivation of the Tao. Of the existing writings by the three persons, a dozen of scriptural and hagiographic texts were copied by Xu Hui while over 40 revelations were received by Yang Xi.

In 364, Lady Wei had already been dead for 30 years. How did

she pass the scripture on to her disciple? Our explanation is that it was through the spirit-writing that the larger part of Shangqing scriptures were produced. Lady Wei is believed to be the revealer of the scriptures during the spirit-writing sessions. Among the scriptures belonging to this tradition, *Yellow Court Scripture* and the *True Scripture of Great Cave* deserve our special attention.

***Huangtingjing***

There are three kinds of *Huangtingjing* or *Yellow Court Scriptures* extant today, namely, *Internal Vision of Yellow Court Scripture, External Vision of Yellow Court Scripture* and *Medium Vision of Yellow Court Scripture*. The *Medium Vision of Yellow Court Scripture* (*Huangting Zhongjing*) appeared much later than the former two scriptures, and therefore is not to be discussed here. As for the first two scriptures, modern scholars differ in opinion as to which came into being earlier. As the *External Vision Scripture* talked mainly about the cultivational practices for males while the *Internal Vision Scripture* was intended for both male and female practitioners, it is our opinion that Lady Wei wrote the *Inner Vision Scripture* based on the *External Vision Scripture* which she had received from her teacher Wang Bao. The existing *Inner Vision Scripture* was given a finishing hand by Yang Xi and Xu Mi.

The *Internal Vision of Yellow Court Scripture* gives a detailed description of many different human organs and orifices and their respective functions in inner-visualization or introspection as an important means of Taoist cultivation. The human physical body was understood as constituted of three parts, upper, middle and lower. There were nine compartments or *gong* inside the upper part of the body (brain) with the central compartment Niwan Gong (metaphorically referred to as the "palace of earthen pill") located three inches down from between the brows. The Niwan Gong was popularly known as the "upper elixir field"; each of these compartments was believed to be inhabited by a different god. Gods

also resided in the middle part of the body, that is the inside vital organs like heart, liver, lungs, kidneys, spleen and gallbladder. There was one palace assigned to each of the vital organs which had one god to itself. The God of the Heart stayed in the compartment called "Red Palace," which was situated right in the heart. It was also the very place called Middle Elixir Field that the digestive, excretory and reproductive organs were all inhabited by gods and were considered to be in the lower part of the body. The Lower Elixir Field was three inches (or 2.4 inches) right under the navel. The Lower Elixir Field was also called the "Sea of Breath" (*Qihai*) and the "Gate of Life" (*Mingmen*). It was believed to be the place where a man stores his semen, a woman carries her fetus, and therefore was a key acupoint for Taoist physical exercise. The following two stanzas from the scripture give a vivid description of different gods in different physical organs and have been considered to be the most important part of the scripture:

> The Ultimate Tao is not superfluous, the Perfect Being is not illusory, in every joint of Niwan (head) resides one god;
>
> The God of Hair is black and white, which is styled "Great Beginning";
>
> The God of the Brain is the root of essence, which is styled "Earthen Pill";
>
> The God of the Eyes is as bright as the sun, which is styled "Light Mystery";
>
> The God of the Nose is like a jade ridge, which is styled "Spiritual Sustainer";
>
> The God of the Ears is free and leisurely, which is styled "Secluded Field";
>
> The God of the Tongue is a passage of life, which is styled "Standard-Setter";
>
> The God of the Teeth is like a sword edge, which is styled "Catching Thousands";
>
> The God of Niwan is the master of all these gods and all the nine Perfect Beings inside Niwan have palaces assigned to them;

They live within one-inch radius inside the brain, dancing in silk clothes;

If you visualize one god and stick to it, you will enjoy an immortal life.

The God of the Heart is the origin of elixir, which is styled "Soul Keeper";

The God of the Lungs is luminous, which is styled "Void Nurturer";

The God of the Liver is like dragon smoke, which is styled "Nursing Brightness," and is hidden inside to distinguish turbid smoke from clear smoke;

The God of the Kidneys is mysteriously dark, which is styled "Nursing Infants";

The God of the Spleen is forever present, which is styled "Soul Retainer";

The God of the Gallbladder is like a jumping dragon, which is styled "Distinct Courage".

All the spirits and essences in the internal organs follow the pattern of Heaven within the heart; if you can retain them day and night, you will naturally lead a long life.

So popular was the *Yellow Court Scripture* that many commentaries were made on it. In a poem written by a famous Song Dynasty poet Lu You we read the lines: "After my hair turned grey, I began to realize that all the wonderful things about life preservation are to be found in the two-volume scripture of *Huangtingjing*."

### *Dadong Zhenjing*

The *True Scripture of Great Cave*, on the other hand, was regarded as an even more important scripture by the Taoists of the Shangqing Tradition. The "Great Cave" probably referred to Huayang Cave on Mount Maoshan where immortals were believed to reside. The importance of the scripture in the eye of Shangqing masters can be seen from the commentary, which appeared in Tao Hongjing's *Zhengao*:

> If one does not know the arts of the bedchamber and breath control, one will never attain the Tao even if one takes medical herbs. If his determination moves the spirit who comes down to assist him, he can do without the herbs. If one knows only the arts of the bedchamber and breath control, but does not know the method of making elixir, he will not become an immortal. If one has access to the elixir, he may forget about other arts and he will instantly become an immortal. And if he has available the *True Scripture of Great Cave*, he may forget about the methods of alchemy. After he has read the scripture ten thousand times, he will become an immortal.

While *Huangtingjing* emphasized the importance of internal gods in visualization, the *True Scripture of Great Cave* paid attention to both internal gods and external gods. Let's read the summary of the *True Scripture of Great Cave* made by a famous Ming bibliographer Ba Yunji:

> The secret message of the *Great Cave* [scripture] lies in the myriad names of the gods residing in a person's body. The names of the inner palaces where they live have been taken from those of mountains, woods, pavilions, pools and halls and so forth. It is imperative that these gods be made to stay where they belong and to take charge of their respective responsibilities. If a person keeps nurturing his "vital force," chanting precious texts, the divine Perfect Beings will descend and mingle themselves with the "vital force" within his body, and physical immortality becomes a reality.

The important scriptures which appeared in the three traditions in the Eastern Jin Dynasty greatly enriched the Taoist doctrines and methods of cultivation. There we find that Taoism became much more refined than either the early Wudoumi Tao or the folk traditions active in the Jiangnan region. These three scriptural traditions were later systematized and developed by Lu Xiujing and then Tao Hongjing. Through the efforts of those eminent Taoist masters, Taoism finally became a mature religion in many respects. We will discuss Lu and Tao in detail in Sections XII and XIII of this chapter.

# Section V Kou Qianzhi and the Northern Celestial Master Movement

We have mentioned earlier that a large part of adherents to Five Bushels of Rice Taoism were forced to move to northern China from their base in Sichuan, when Zhang Family gave itself up to the new ruler who established a dynasty called Wei in about the middle of the second century. After two centuries of spreading in the new areas, Taoism commanded larger and larger followings from the people of various social status there. Many problems arose within local communities. With no supreme authority like the Celestial Master Zhang to guide the activities, corruption prevailed especially among the libationers, thus the reputation of Taoism was badly damaged. A drastic reform of Taoist practices and administration seemed necessary if Taoism was to grow and prosper in the areas. Kou Qianzhi emerged as if to meet the need of the time. His actions made Taoism an official religion at least for a time in the kingdom where he lived.

## 1. Kou Qianzhi, a Life Story

The life of Kou Qianzhi is recorded in the official *History of the Wei Dynasty* (*Wei Shu*). He was a younger brother of a provincial governor. When Kou was a teenager, he already showed a keen interest in Taoist arts, especially those practiced by Zhang Lu, such as macrobiotics. He did not experience the results he expected for years, but his persistence was enough to move an immortal called Chen Gongxing, as the record went. The relationship between Kou and Chen was very interesting. At first Chen was a tenant working for Kou's maternal aunt. Once when Kou visited his aunt, he found a strong tireless worker in Chen, and so he asked his aunt to let him hire Chen as a working hand. Kou brought Chen back home and

asked him to till the pepper field in the south of his house.

Once when Kou was busy calculating a math problem under a tree near the field, Chen several times came up to Kou and watched him doing the problem. Kou felt curious and asked him, "If it is your job to till the land, why do you take time off to watch me?" Later, Kou was puzzled by a problem on positions of the seven stars nearest to Earth. Chen went over to him and asked, "Master, why do you feel so unhappy?" Kou replied, "I have been learning calculation for years, but my solution to the problem does not agree to that in the math classic *Zhou Bi*. It is shame on me. It is none of your business to know about this, why do you bother to ask me that?" Chen began to give him a nudge, "Master, listen to me and try to do it again." The problem was soon solved. Kou admitted guilt and asked Chen to be his teacher. But Chen turned Kou's request down and instead asked to be his student. At last Chen asked Kou, "Since you have intentions to learn the Tao, are you willing to lead a life of a hermit with me?" Kou readily agreed.

They practised three days' retreat before they went into Mt. Huashan. When they got there, Chen asked Kou to stay in a stone house and went out to gather herbs himself. Kou no longer felt hungry after he swallowed the herbs. Then Chen moved Kou to Mt. Songshan (in present Henan Province) and had him stay in another stone house. Once a few years later, Chen said to Kou, "When I am away, someone will bring herbs here. You must eat them without the least suspicion." Before long, as it was arranged, someone arrived carrying herbs, which were none other than stinking, repulsive insects. So frightened was Kou that he began to run away from the house. When Chen returned and asked about the matter, Kou had to tell him the truth. Chen heaved a sigh, saying "Master, the time of your becoming an immortal has not yet come, if you enter politics, you will become the teacher of an emperor." For seven years, Chen kept Kou's company and finally left him alone on the mountain.

The life story as recorded in the *History of the Wei Dynasty* is

not without exaggeration. We can still find some truth in it especially when we compare and contrast with other records. Another record in the official history, in the "Biography of Yin Shao," confirms that there was a wandering magician called Chen Gongxing who was active in the area and that his two revelations were both claimed to take place in Mt. Songshan. These two revelations were divine pronouncements, by which Kou carried out his reform campaign.

## 2. How Kou Qianzhi Carried Out His Reform Campaign

Before we discuss the method Kou adopted in his reform campaign, some background knowledge will be offered. In his time, northern China was ruled by a tribe from beyond the boundaries of China proper. As the family name of the new emperors "Touba" easily suggested to the Chinese, the new rulers of the northern region came from a "barbarian tribe." To rid themselves of their cultural inferiority, they first declared that they were descendants of a grandson of the Yellow Emperor, who had conferred the territory where their tribe had since lived. Then an order was passed to forbid using their dialect in the court and to encourage their tribesmen to wear Chinese costumes. As Taoism was regarded as a religion representing Chinese faith, Emperor Tai Wu (r. 424-452) followed the advice of Kou Qianzhi who was recommended to the court by Prime Minister Cui Hao. The emperor received the Taoist registers and became a Taoist himself. In so doing, the Wei rulers wished to legitimize their rule in a country with a strong cultural supremacy.

Kou's reform campaign actually started before Emperor Tai Wu was enthroned. Kou believed in divine revelation, which is a traditional way to establish one's authority to command worship.

The first revelation occurred in 415 when Kou claimed to meet Taishang Laojun, the deified Laozi, who passed to him the following words:

.... Since the death of Zhang Ling, there has been a vacancy of position (of Celestial Master), and so there has been no master who can pass the teachings to those who cultivate Goodness (of the Tao). Kou Qianzhi, a native of Shanggu, now residing in Mt. Songshan, is qualified to serve as a model in terms of both virtue and behavior and is thus able to fill the vacancy. This is why I have come down to meet you here and grant you the position of Celestial Master. Now take home this 20-volume scripture called *New Commandments for Chanting in the Clouds* (*Yunzhong Yin Xin Ke Zi Jie*), then he added, "These scriptures have never been revealed to the world since the creation of Heaven and Earth. But fate decides that these should appear now. You must preach my New Commandments, purify and reform Taoism by eliminating the false teachings of the three Zhangs such as taxation by rice and the art of harmonizing *qi* between males and females. The great Tao like ours is characterized by its purity and humility, how come it includes malpractices like these! You must first emphasize ritual practice, supplemented only by macrobiotics and meditation.

The second revelation occurred in 423. But this time it was Li Puwen, a great great-grandson of Lao Zi, who came down to meet him also on Mt. Songshan. Li claimed that there were 36 realms of heavens, each of which had one palace and that he was the owner of one of the palaces, who reigned over both people and spirits on earth. After entrusting Kou to rule the region with Mt. Songshan at the center, Li declared:

I have been living in a heavenly palace, spreading true teachings, and I have found that you have practiced Taoism for 22 years. In the first ten years you were kept in the dark what Taoism really was, and in the next ten years you were engaged in spreading Taoist teachings. Though you have not accomplished a great deal, your hard work says a lot. Now I want to move you to the inner palace and grant you four registers through which you can assume the positions of six masters, namely, Master of Great Perfection, Master of Great Treasury, True Master of Nine Prefectures, Master of Governing Ghosts and Spirits,

> Master of Governing the People, and the Inherited Master of Heaven. Your promotion will be based on the way you work. Now I am granting the written registers from Heaven so that you can pass them on to your disciples and summon various deities to your service. Take different positions on the altar, make different prayers, and wear different costumes. The registers make up over 60 volumes and are assigned the name *True Scriptures of Registers* (*Lutu Zhenjing*). I want you to follow the teachings of the scriptures and assist the True Lord of Great Peace in the north .... As for the common people on Earth, it will be difficult to convert them to our belief, for a cataclysm is imminent. You may just advise these men and women to set up altars and pray day and night. And if there are fathers whose merits add glory to the people of past generations and who are learning and practising arts of immortality by self-cultivation or alchemical experiments, then they are the elect (Zhongmin) of the True Lord.

Emperor Tai Wu very much appreciated what Kou had preached, for he permitted Kou to construct a *daochang*, a sanctuary for ritual practice, and had himself ordained as a Taoist priest according to Kou's system. This practice was followed by the successors to Emperor Tai Wu. Kou Qianzhi's activities no doubt strengthened the relation between Taoism and the ruling class and so facilitated the transformation of Taoism from a former folk belief to a state religion.

## 3. Kou Qianzhi's Reform Plan

All the 60 volumes of the *True Scriptures of Registers* have been lost, but from the existing volume of the *New Commandments*, which is called *Laojun Scripture of Commandments for Chanting*, and other documents, we can still see that Kou Qianzhi had reformed original Taoism in many ways.

First, Kou eliminated the names of the original organizational system as was practiced in the region of Shu.

When the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism was practiced in the

region of Shu in the southwestern part of China, the local Taoist community was centered in the house of an appointed libationer official. The religious community was called *Zhi*. At first 24 *Zhi* were set up in the region, the number of which corresponded to the 24 solar terms used to divide one solar year. Later the number of *Zhi* was increased to 28, which corresponded to the number of constellations as the ancient Chinese viewed the sky. Since the Taoist followers had been scattered in the new region in the north, due to Cao Cao's immigration policy, there was no point to use the original name of Zhi anymore. Kou expressed his intention through the mouth of Laojun:

> .... As a beginning, I revealed to have 24 *Zhi* established, in response to the 28 constellations in Heaven and 24 solar terms on Earth, and further to have the capable libationers entrusted with leading and educating the people. Zhang Daoling acted out my methods and put them into practice at first in the region of Shu. There he worked with me in appointing male and female Taoist officials to take charge of quiet chambers, way stations and *Zhi* houses distributed in various areas of Taoist influence and in leading and educating the populace .... Later Taoist officials, however, did not fully understand the real situation of the netherworld and so continued to use the methods (after they moved to a new region) ... From now on, all the officials, male or female in all the prefectures, who carry the registers must report to the Celestial Master and have the names of their communities corrected.

Secondly, Kou introduced a merit system to replace the original hereditary system of choosing Taoist officials.

Since Zhang Ling established the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism, the position of Celestial Master was passed from one generation to another in the same family. The position of libationers, too, was hereditary. To find a justification for his assumption of Celestial Master on one hand and to add new vitality to the leading Taoist officialdom on the other, Kou spoke through the mouth of Laojun:

> There are libationer-officials who claim that when the fathers die, their sons inherit their positions. Therefore a degeneration of the official class inevitably occurs. The commandments say, "The Tao and Virtue are respectable and so they should be passed on to those who are able and worthy. If a son is not dutiful to his parents, how can he inherit his father's career? ... All the Taoist officials including libationers should be chosen on the basis of their merits. The traditional hereditary system should be abolished, for it is the very reason why Taoism is not prosperous.

Thirdly, Kou eliminated the practice of tax collecting upon the membership.

After the death of Zhang Ling, there was a long-standing practice for *Zhi* members to hand over rice or other things to the libationers as a tax. This practice has often been singled out for ridicule or criticism by Buddhist opponents. In the commandments, Kou again spoke through the mouth of Laojun:

> When I first appointed Celestial Master and entrusted to him the mission of preaching the Taoist teachings, taking charge of registers and talismans, was there any practice like taking pennies from our devotees? ... Now I have new rules for you to abide by. From now on, there are no such things as voluntary contributions ..., collective "vow-making dinner" (*Chu Hui*) .... If there is any Taoist official who does not cleanse himself of the corrupted heart and follow the orthodox teachings, his people may purify his behavior by resorting to the *New Commandments.*

Fourthly, Kou eliminated sexual rites from the list of Taoist arts.

The early Taoist followers were made to believe that only through the proper sexual rites, to use the original word, "harmonizing the *qi* between male and female," could their sins be pardoned and could they be the elect (Zhongmin). The sexual rites also became the target of attack by Buddhist opponents. Kou also strongly opposed these practices. His attitudes were recorded in the

chapter "Shi Lao Zhi" in the History of the Wei Dynasty mentioned above. In the *Laojun Scripture of Commandments for Chanting*, Kou expressed his position in the words of Laojun:

> My *Scripture for Chanting* orders the elimination of the practice of *Huangchi* (Yellow and Red, a euphemism for sexual intercourse) and introduces a more purified method, which will achieve as much as the Tao. The Taoist officials and the new initiates, male or female, who carry the *Huangchi* register, must abandon the practice from now on.

Fifthly, Kou introduced new rituals and ceremonies as part of Taoist cultivation.

The early Five Bushels of Rice Taoism emphasized physical cultivation especially by macrobiotic means to attain immortality. But Kou had a different opinion. He believed that immortality cannot be attained if proper rituals are not performed to discipline the heart. In the *Laojun Scripture*, Kou made this point clear:

> If proper medicine is taken, at best a person will be immune to poison or epidemics and so enjoy a healthy life. If he is going to live out his years, he may cultivate his mind by performing proper rituals to have his offenses pardoned and his desires emptied. And as those immortality-seekers all like to find chanting commandments, if a person wants to be immortal, he must offer incense and practice the ritual of retreat so as to experience divine inspiration.

In another passage of the same scripture, Kou specified what the rituals were really like:

"What the disciples venerate are the rites such as practiced by ritual scholars and government officials."

What Kou intended to do here was to bring Taoism in conformity with the accepted Confucian ethics. That was a necessary step toward the final acknowledgement of Taoism by the government. Further, as far as Taoist teachings were concerned, this was an important change.

Sixthly, Kou introduced the Buddhist ideas of reincarnation and retribution into his own teachings.

It is a Buddhist belief that a human being will again become a living creature after his death and that whether he will become a high-class or low-class creature depends on what he does in this life and the life before this one. Buddhists also believe that human souls can be immortal, and therefore they tend to emphasize spiritual cultivation. In contrast, Taoists claim that immortality of the physical body is attainable, together with human spirit which is believed to be inseparable from it. The emphasis of Taoist cultivation, therefore, has always been on physical existence. As can be seen, Buddhism and Taoism differ greatly in such fundamental issues as life and death. But Kou Qianzhi was liberal-minded enough to incorporate part of Buddhist theory into his own teachings. For instance, in the *Laojun Scripture*, he taught that what a person performed in the beforelife affects that result of cultivation in this life and what he is performing in this life will affect his afterlife. In another instance, Kou adopted Buddhist teachings like "the Six-Way Transmigrations" to admonish his followers not to rebel against the existing government; otherwise, he warned, they would anger Laojun and be punished in hell. Some of the most serious offenders would turn into beasts after they died.

Seventhly, Kou Qianzhi assimilated the Taoist arts of different traditions.

According to the chapter "Chronicle of Song" in *Zi Zhi Tong Jian*, Kou Qianzhi was the person who assimilated different Taoist arts.

> The books written by Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi meant to equalize life and death and teach people to make light of leaving or staying; the immortalists, however, practiced macrobiotics and alchemy for the purpose of either longevity or silver and gold; the practical arts employed, therefore, contradicted each other.... Later the arts such as talismans and incantations emerged. Kou Qianzhi assimilated all these arts to his service. Since then, assimilation of all kinds of arts has become a common practice within Taoism of all traditions.

The fact that Kou assimilated the arts of different traditions is further confirmed by another record kept in the Ming edition of the *Taoist Canon*. In the preface to the chapter "Grain Deity," the author says: "Kou Qianzhi of the Northern Wei Dynasty used to collect Taoist scriptures. As there were not many of them he could find, Kou incorporated the books on magics, talismanic water, medicine, divination and augury."

Eighthly, Kou introduced music to accompany scriptural chanting.

In the early Five Bushels of Rice Taoism, the Taoists just sang the words of the scriptures without the accompaniment of any musical instrument. Realizing that much more grandeur was added when music was employed in the official and ancestral worship, Kou began to do the same in the Taoist scriptural chantings. In this way, the chanters and audience alike would gain a sense of solemnity and splendor in the ceremony.

In sum, both institutionally and theologically, Kou Qianzhi reformed the original Five Bushels of Rice Taoism and made it more acceptable to the ruling class under whose domain Taoism made its presence. Indeed, not long after Kou launched his reform campaign, the Northern Wei Emperor Tai Wu changed the title of his year of reign to "True Lord of Great Peace" and declared Taoism the official religion of the country under his rule.

The whole reform campaign is generally called the "New Celestial Master Taoist Movement." To distinguish itself from the Celestial Master Taoist Movement taking place in the Southern Dynasties, this movement led by Kou was also called "Northern Celestial Master Movement." Unfortunately, the success of the new Taoist movement was just a flash in the pan, it declined soon after the death of Emperor Tai Wu in 452. In northern China, another Taoist tradition emerged and became the center of attention after the decline of the new Celestial Master Movement. This tradition was called Lou Guan Tradition.

# Section VI Lou Guan Taoist Tradition

## 1. Origin and Development of the Lou Guan Tao

Lou Guan was the name of a group of buildings located on Mt. Zhongnan in present Shanxi Province. As a tradition, it was characterized by the worship of Lao Zi and his teachings. There were many generations of eminent Taoist masters living in the period throughout the Wei, Jin and the Southern and Northern Dynasties (220-589).

According to a Taoist legend, the earliest history of Lou Guan can be traced back to Yin Xi, the guardian of the Hangu Pass, who came here for cultivation. It was also the place where Lao Zi transmitted the *Dao De Jing* to Yin Xi. In *On the Origin of Lou Guan* written by Liang Chen, we have the following:

> Lou Guan was formerly the residence of Yin Xi, the guardian of a pass, an official of Zhou King Kang. Yin made a tower with straw and used it as an observatory, therefore it was called Lou Guan, "Tower Observatory." It marked the beginning of Taoist monasteries. When the Tao is discussed, scriptures passed on and prosperity of a great religion follows. Therefore, the ancient immortalists, sages and eminent Perfect Beings venerated the Tao (Way) and the Te (Virtue) as the sources of creation, the divine immortals as the fundamental of worship; they looked for the trails of "All Wonders" and yearned for the ideals of the "Double Mystery." And so when Zhou King Mu made an expedition west, and when the First Emperor of Qin made a hunting trip eastward, each of them took roundabout course to stop here and made a personal worship to the "True Beginnings." The First Emperor built a temple to the south of the tower, the Han Emperor Wu Di built another to the north of it.... The temple tenants of the Qin and Han dynasties lasted from one generation to another.

However remote the history of Lou Guan is claimed to be, more reliable sources identified Liang Chen as an initiator if not the ini-

tiator of the Lou Guan Tradition. Liang Chen, as some records say, apprenticed himself to Master Zheng in Lou Guan in the year 264. In 305 he received scriptures such as *Inner History of the Origin of the Later Lou Guan Masters* (*Louguan Xianshi Benqi Neizhuang*) from a Perfect Being who was believed to be the brother of Yin Xi. Liang Chen was succeeded by Wang Jia, Sun Che and Ma Jian, who received a certain degree of attention from emperors of short-lived dynasties. It was not until the reign of the Northern Wei Emperor Tai Wu that the Lou Guan Taoist Tradition became better known to the Taoists of other traditions and the lay public.

We have mentioned in the last section that Emperor Tai Wu was a Taoist enthusiast. When he heard of the fame of Yin Tong, the disciple of Ma Jian in Lou Guan, he had incense and candles sent there and asked him to perform rituals. Since then, "there was an endless number of people visiting there," "the horses and carriages of the officials and gentry jammed the gate and the buntings decorated the streets." Wang Daoyi, a Taoist who originally practiced on Mount Gushi, went down to Lou Guan, taking with him seven disciples. Wang made a great contribution to the renovation of the building complex and was responsible for collecting over ten thousand scriptures. By now, we may very well say that Lou Guan Taoism as an organized sect began to take shape.

Further prosperity came after the Wei Dynasty was split into Western Wei and Eastern Wei in 534. A Taoist master named Chen Baochi was invited to discuss Taoism with the Western Wei Emperor Wen Di (r. 535-552). Many higher-ranking officials including Yuwen Tai, father-in-law of the emperor, apprenticed themselves to Master Chen. Emperor Wu Di of the Northern Zhou (r. 561-578) which followed the dynasty of Western Wei, invited Lou Guan Taoist master Wang Yan to the capital to edit Taoist scriptures. Even before he issued the edict banning the activities of Buddhism and Taoism, the emperor summoned Wang Yan and another Lou Guan Taoist master Yan Da for consultations.

When the edict was finally carried out, the emperor ordered to build a monastery called Tongtao in honor of Yan Da and picked ten eminent Taoist masters including Yan Tao as residents in the monastery. The ten masters were fondly called "Ten Oldies in the Field Valley." The prosperity of Lou Guan Taoism lasted until the early Sui Dynasty (581-618).

## 2. Lou Guan Taoism and Buddhism

Situated in the northwestern part of China, Lou Guan Taoism distinguished itself from other Taoist traditions in its particular attention to the teachings of Lao Zi and its active involvement in debates with Buddhism.

Chinese scholars generally believe that Buddhism came to China proper about the time when Jesus Christ was born. At the time, the Buddhist monks were not treated any differently from the Taoist magicians. Buddhist doctrines were generally unknown to most men of letters, not to speak of the illiterate masses of people, due to the scarcity of translations. The few earliest Chinese versions of Buddhist scriptures or sutra that existed were loaded with Taoist terms. It was just natural that Buddhism was believed to be a sect of Taoism that Lao Zi established in the area west of China. If it was not so, why did Lao Zi depart for the west in the sixth century B.C. as the official history had recorded it? At first Buddhist monks had to agree with the allegation. What else could they do? After all Buddhism needed time to stand on its own in a new land where the people had a strong cultural superiority. But after two or three centuries of consistent efforts on the part of the Buddhist monks, Chinese and "barbarians" as the Chinese would call any people from non-Chinese cultures, Buddhist influence grew stronger and stronger. Now when they felt that they were provoked by some unfounded allegation, they would no longer remain silent and began to fight against those who dared to do so.

Among those provokers were Wang Fu and Liang Chen. Wang Fu was formerly a libationer, who was believed to be the author of the *Huahujing* (*Scripture of Converting Barbarians*) after his debate with the Buddhist monk Bo Yuan during the reign of the Western Jin Emperor Hui Di (290-306). The thesis of the book was that it was Lao Zi who converted the barbarians to Buddhism and that Buddhism was inferior to Taoism. Liang Chen, on the other hand, was probably responsible for the authorship of *Xishengjing* (*Scripture of Western Ascension*). In the *Inner History of the Origin of the Late Lou Guan Masters*, Liang Chen had already expressed the idea that Lao Zi ascended to the west and preached his teachings. Besides Liang Chen, Yan Da must have been an active participant in the Buddhist-Taoist controversy.

The involvement of Yan Da can be seen from the record kept in *Hunyuan Shengji* (*Sagely Chronicle of Chaotic Origin*), which goes like this:

> In May 574, the Zhou Emperor Wu Di had ordered to get rid of Buddhism and to eliminate all the Buddhist scriptures and statues. He was thinking of abolishing Taoism, and so he summoned Taoist master Yan Da to his court. The emperor asked Yan, "Which is superior, Taoism or Buddhism?" Yan replied, "A host is superior to a guest." "How do you distinguish a host from a guest?" the emperor pursued. "Buddhism emerged from the west, isn't it a guest? Taoism was born in China, isn't it a host?" Yan answered. The emperor pursued further, "Since the guest has already returned to the west, don't you think the host should see it off to its home?" Yan responded, "The guest has returned and benefited the barbarians' land; the host stays on, but does not harm the land of China. Isn't it all right for a host to let his guest go and himself stay home?" The emperor was very pleased with his answers.

## 3. Scripture of Western Ascension

This text reflects the main teachings of Lou Guan Taoism. It was true that the Taoist masters there also practiced macrobiotics,

breathing exercises and other arts like summoning spirits, but what featured prominently in this tradition was their veneration of the teachings of Lao Zi. The *Scripture of Western Ascension* employed the theory of Lao Zi to justify the pursuit of physical immortality. It was also a hallmark of Taoist theoretical development. Preserved in the Ming *Taoist Canon* are *Scripture of Western Ascension Annotated by Song Emperor Hui Zong* in three volumes and *Scripture of Western Ascension with Collected Annotation* in six volumes by Chen Jingyuan. The text of the scripture in both editions consists of 39 chapters, but differs slightly in wording. We can get the main idea of the scripture:

In terms of cosmic origin, the author was obviously influenced by the teachings of Lao Zi and the Mystery Learning or Xuan Xue, which prevailed during the Wei and Jin periods. In the scripture *xu wu*, or "the state of nothingness," was believed to be the very origin of the universe; *zi ran*, or "self-so," and the Tao were believed to have come from "the state of nothingness." In the author's own words "the state of nothingness produces what is self-so; the self-so produces the Tao; and the Tao produces the One, which in turn produces a myriad creatures." Here the author wanted to establish the thesis that there was a fundamental principle governing the creation of the universe. The concepts like *xu wu*, *zi ran* and the Tao were trinity of the principle. Deducing from this thesis, the author produced another thesis which addressed the issue of the relationship between body and soul or spirit. The author said:

> The spirit produces the body and the body manifests the spirit, for, without the spirit the body can possess no power, without the body the spirit can not form itself. When the spirit and body are combined, they supplement each other.

Here the author believed that the creation of human beings was also governed by the principle that "nothingness" produces "somethingness." In terms of cultivation, the author emphasized the im-

portance of "quieting obsessive thoughts and holding to one central idea" and regarded "physical ascension as of secondary importance." In terms of government and politics, the author followed the teaching of Lao Zi that a plentiful nation comes only after the government adopts the policy of *wuwei* or "non-action" in the affairs of its people.

While the *Scripture of Western Ascension* inherited mostly the early Taoist philosophical and religious traditions, the traces of some Buddhist influence can also be detected, as it was produced at the time when Buddhism gradually gained a footing on Chinese soil. Being a scripture with a rather strong theoretical content, the *Xishengjing* was an important scripture for the study of the Lou Guan Taoist Tradition and early Taoist-Buddhist relations.

## 4. The Lou Guan Tao and Other Taoist Traditions

While the *Scripture of Converting Barbarians* and the *Scripture of Western Ascension* were highly regarded by the Taoist masters of Lou Guan, quite a few scriptures from the Taoist traditions in the south were also venerated. For instance, Chen Baochi was a frequent chanter of *Great Cave True Scripture*, and his disciple Hou Kai strongly believed in chanting *Inner Scripture of Three Emperors*. Another Lou Guan Master Ma Jian was a recipient of *Lingbao Five Talismans Scripture*. In sum, all the three scriptural traditions in the south had their representative scriptures found in Lou Guan. That indicated that the Lou Guan Tradition had some communication with the scriptural traditions in the south after it flourished in northern China. However, as Lou Guan Taoism developed independently and was occasioned by the circumstances in the north, in the 11th century when Taoism began to fork into two major sects, the Lou Guan Tradition merged into the Quanzhen School flourishing in the north, rather than the Zhengyi School centered in southern China.

# Section VII Lu Xiujing and the Southern Celestial Master Movement

Not long after Kou Qianzhi launched his reform campaign in the north, Lu Xiujing (406-477) carried out a series of measures to reform the Taoist traditions in the south, especially the Jiangnan region.

## 1. Lu Xiujing, a Life Story

Lu Xiujing, native of Wuxing in present Jiangsu Province, was said to be a descendant of Lu Kai who once was a premier in the Kingdom of Wu. Being a son of a family of good social standing, Lu Xiujing married young and accepted official appointment early. Though he was engaged in worldly affairs, deep down he remained simple, innocent and unaffected. Before long, he learned how to "abstain from eating rice" and lived in a separate room from his wife. Once he said to his colleague, "Time and Tide wait for no man." And then he quit his office and abandoned his wife and children in order to concentrate himself on Taoist cultivation in a mountain retreat.

Once when he went down the mountain to look for medicine, he happened to reach his hometown. He stayed home for a few days when his daughter fell into serious illness. Some family member asked him to see about her daughter's health. Lu heaved a sigh and said, "When I first decided to leave my wife and children, my life had been entrusted to the Tao. The fact that I stopped by the home is just like a traveller going in the reverse direction. How could I possibly have parental love for my daughter?" With these words, he flicked his sleeve and left, his head never turning back. The next day, his daughter recovered from her illness.

At another time, Lu brought medical herbs with him to the mountain, because he had a chronic disease which according to the

doctors had something to do with some "vital energy." When he was boiling the herbs in a secluded room, they caught fire and got burned. His disciple rushed in to his aid, but was stopped. Lu explained, "You don't have to put out the fire. It is the mysterious Tao that doesn't allow me to take medicine, I will soon be cured of my disease." A few days later his word came true.

Lu Xiujing was an ardent learner of Taoist arts. Whenever he learned of an eminent master somewhere, he would go out of his way to visit him. Whenever he learned the art, he would find a quiet cave to practice it. In this way, he visited many different places in China. The more secluded his life was, the wider his fame spread. Once he was chasing medical herbs on a market in the capital city when he was summoned by the Song Emperor Wen Di to the court. There he lectured the emperor about the theories and practices of Taoism from dawn to dusk, but never seemed to be exhausted. The emperor respected him all the more. Empress Wang, a faithful follower of the Huang-Lao Tradition, condescended to receive him as a disciple would his master. Later he left the capital for the south and was attracted by the landscape of Mt. Lushan in present Jiangxi Province, where he built a monastery near a waterfall and resided there for quite a few years.

The Song Emperor Ming Di (r. 465-472) was a promoter of Taoist teachings, and wished to rope in all the men of virtue. Lu Xiujing was one of the men he wanted to summon to his court. Many times, Lu refused to answer his summons. When he finally agreed to see the emperor, Lu said, "Our Lord is very bright, but he has gone out of his way to find me, a disloyal person... When Lao Zi quit his office to serve the Zhou government, Master Xiangong (Ge Xuan) abandoned his position to serve the state of Wu, what's the point of striving for individual moral perfection for a humble person like me?" For many times, Lu was invited to debate with Buddhist monks on the issue concerning similarity and difference between Taoism and Buddhism. His witty answers always won the

hearts of his audience including the emperor, high-ranking officials as well as his Buddhist rivals. Lu announced that "Buddhism and Taoism reached the same goal by following different routes." When the emperor decided to appoint him to a high position, he was not at all interested. Therefore, the emperor had a Congxu Monastery built for Lu. There Lu invited more eminent Taoists to come and practice the Tao. It was there that Lu passed away in the year 477. There is no clear evidence to show into which specific Taoist tradition Lu was initiated. Perhaps, Buddhist Monk Dao Xuan of the Tang Dynasty was right in his commentary recorded in *Guang Hong Ming Ji* (*Enlarged Collection of Expositions of Truth*):

> In the past there was a Taoist from Jinling (present Nanjing, the capital city of Jiangsu Province) whose name was Lu Xiujing. Lu was the pride of Taoists. He was a preacher of the teachings of the Three Zhangs (namely Zhang Ling, Zhang Heng and Zhang Lu), and a promoter of the arts of the Two Ges (namely Ge Xuan and Ge Hong).

## 2. Lu Xiujing's Major Contributions to Taoism

Lu Xiujing's efforts to spread the teachings of the Three Zhangs or the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism were reflected in his noted scripture called *Dao Men Ke Lue* (*Concise Disciplines of Taoism*). In the previous chapter we mentioned that the early Five Bushels of Rice Taoism was pretty well organized. Three times a year Taoist converts would assemble at the center of their community where the members of their families were registered. In addition, they must contribute a certain amount of rice or something as a token of membership. But in Lu's time, the Taoist converts were loosely organized, just as Lu said in *Dao Men Ke Lue*.

> Most of the Taoist followers today don't attend the assembly. Some excuse themselves by saying that it is too far away; others claim that

> their families never attend any assembly. Luxurious dinners are held to attract pilgrims. The law and regulations are no longer issued, and so fall out of use. When the guiding principles are loose, all behavior is in disorder.

In this context, Lu attempted to restore to order the practices prevailing in the early Five Bushels of Rice Taoism. Lacking substantial evidence, we are not in a position to know how successful his attempt turned out to be. But his other attempts like cataloguing Taoist scriptures and formulating Taoist rituals are recorded in other documents. From them, we can see their main contents and understand Lu's contributions to the development of Taoism.

**Scriptural Systematization**

In Section IV of this chapter we mentioned that the three scriptural traditions emerged during the Eastern Jin Dynasty. In one way or another the scriptures of these three traditions were obtained by Lu Xiujing. However, there were so many scriptures which were either misarranged or falsified that Lu Xiujing first did much editorial work and then invented a way of cataloging all these scriptures.

We do not know exactly how many volumes of scriptures were listed in the *Sandong Jingshu Mulu* (*Catalogue of the Three Caves Scriptures*) Lu compiled. The approximate number may be 1,228. It is more significant that we know about his way of cataloging the scriptures than the exact number of volumes. "San Dong" or "Three Caves or Grottoes" originally referred to the three celestial grottoes where the three supreme deities of Taoism were believed to reside. But Lu used this expression to distinguish the three main groups of scriptures he had collected. Dong Zhen, "Grotto of Perfection," included the scriptures belonging to the original Shangqing, or High Purity, Tradition; Dong Xuan, "Grotto of Mystery," included the scriptures belonging to the original Lingbao, or Numinous Treasure, Tradition; Dong Shen, "Grotto of Divinity," included the original

Sanhuang, or Three Emperors, Tradition. This cataloguing method became the basis upon which Taoist scriptures were arranged into a larger collection or canon.

As there were still other scriptures, old and new, which could not fall into any of the "Three Caves" categories, a Master Meng who was probably active during the period of the Southern Dynasties, created four *fu* or supplements to include the rest of the scriptures. Tai Xuan, which included *The Book of Lao Zi* and related works, supplemented "Dong Zhen" scriptures; Tai Ping, which included *Taipingjing* or the *Scripture of Great Peace*, supplemented "Dong Xuan" scriptures; Tai Qing, which included alchemical works like *Tai Qing Scripture of Gold Liquid and Divine Elixir* (*Taiqing Jinye Shendan Jing*), supplemented the Dong Shen scriptures. Zheng Yi, which included most of the works written for and circulated by the Five Bushels of Rice Tradition, supplemented all the three main groups of scriptures.

And since there was an increasing number of scriptures in each of the three main groups, as time went by, it was necessary that further classifications of the scriptures within each group be introduced. In *Daojiao Yishu*, a compendium of the Taoist scriptures whose compilation was attributable to Meng Anpai of the early Tang Dynasty, we find the introduction of a "Twelve-Type Method." The so-called Twelve-Type Method classified all the scriptures within each of the three main groups of scriptures into twelve types, namely, scriptural texts (Ben Wen), magic figures and signs (Shen Fu), commentaries on scriptural text (Yu Jue), pictures and diagrams (Ling Tu), activities of the deities (Pu Lu), rules and commandments (Jie Lu), rites (Wei Yi), spiritual cultivation (Fang Fa), magic arts and others (Zhong Shu), hagiography (Ji Zhuan), psalms and hymns (Zan Song) and prayers and oracles (Zhang Biao).

Another significance about Lu Xiujing's method of cataloguing was that it actually differentiated the degrees of importance of each category of the scriptures as he saw it. In his eyes, Dong Zhen

scriptures were the most important, followed by Dong Xuan scriptures and Dong Shen scriptures, with Zheng Yi scriptures at the bottom of the list of priority. Lu's method of differentiating scriptural priority was followed by the Taoist masters of the Tang Dynasty, who initiated their adepts first to Zheng Yi scriptures, then Tai Xuan, Dong Shen and finally to Dong Zhen scriptures. They convinced themselves and their disciples that a higher degree of immortality would be reached as the teachings of the more important scriptures were followed. The order of scriptural arrangements also showed that the teachings of Taoist religion became more and more cultured and refined.

**Systematization of "Fasts" or "Retreats" and Scriptural Rites**

In addition to the systematization of Taoist scriptures, Lu greatly contributed to the systematization of the "fasts," "retreats" or commandments and sacrificial rites.

Every religion involves rituals and liturgies, Taoism is no exception. Religious ritual is a means through which humanity relates to the sacred. In Taoist religion, ritual is often called *zhaijiao.*

Originally *zhai* and *jiao* mean different things. *Zhai*, a synonym of *qi* (neatness), is required of the Taoist ritualist. There are three kinds of "neatness," namely the neatness in mouth, the neatness in body and the neatness in heart. The activities which mean to bring about the "neatness" are also called *zhai* (often translated as "fast" in English), for instance the Fast of the Mind (Xin Zhai). The purpose of practicing *zhai* or "fast" is to enable the ritualist to remain pious toward the sacred he is going to relate so that the sacred or deity may meet his requests. *Jiao*, on the other hand, means offering sacrifices. As both *zhai* and *jiao* are means to communicate with the deity, by and by they form one Chinese term *zhaijiao.*

The Taoist rituals were much emphasized as early as the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism. A quotation from *San Tian Nei Jie Jing* in *Juan* 37 of *Yunji Qiqian* reads:

> A Taoist adept must first learn to practice retreats. In this way, externally he will not be covered by dust, internally he will be purified in his vital organs. The perfected will descend and make the adept perfected and thus the deity and the Tao live in one. He who can practice a long-term retreat will see the Tao united with the perfected and will not violate what is forbidden or commanded. Therefore, our Celestial Master taught us that a Tao learner who doesn't learn to practice fasts is just like a person who walks in the dark without carrying a lighted candle.

At the beginning, the Taoist fasts were very primitive and usually involved bodily tortures. Take for instance Tu Tan Zhai, the Fast of Mud and Soot, which was in practice among the people of the Five Bushels of Rice Tradition. An altar was first built in the open field and was surrounded by a fence. The retreaters would apply mud to their foreheads, their hair tied to the fence, hands bound in the back, a piece of jade between the teeth. Then they would lie on the stomach, their legs forking, then they would repent their sins by kowtowing. The retreats in other traditions such as Lingbao and Shangqing traditions appeared more refined and served wider purposes. For instance, Jin Lu Zhai, the Fast of the Golden Register, from Lingbao Tradition served to avert disasters for emperors; Xin Zhai, the Fast of Heart from Shangqing Tradition, was intended for purification of heart and mind.

Like what he did to the existing Taoist scriptures, Lu systematized the existing Taoist fasts. According to *Dong Xuan Lingbao Scriptures of Five Gratitudes* (*Wu Gan Wen*), one of the few scriptures extant, compiled by Lu Xiujing, there were 12 main fasts originated from three different traditions, serving different purposes or employing different methods:

Firstly, Dong Zhen, Shangqing Tradition, which emphasized *wuwei* (non-action), which had two fasts:

One, the Fast of Tai Zhen, Great Perfection. Through practicing celibacy and hermitage and meditation, the fasters would finally be united with the Tao.

Two, the Fast of the Mind (*Xin Zhai*). The retreaters would clean their hearts and purify their souls.

Secondly, Dong Xuan Lingbao Tradition, which emphasized *youwei* (action), includes nine fasts:

One, the Fast of the Golden Register (*Jin Lu Zhai*). Through harmonizing Yin and Yang and warding off evil influences, the fasters elicited blessings and prolonged life expectancy for their emperor or king.

Two, the Fast of the Yellow Register (*Huang Lu Zhai*). Through the Fast, the ritualists could save their ancestors from punishment.

Three, the Fast of Enlightened Perfection (*Ming Zhen Zhai*). The fasters themselves could salvage the souls of all their ancestors.

Four, the Fast of Three Origins (*San Yuan Zhai*). Taoists repented their sins through this.

Five, the Fast of Eight Solar Terms (*Ba Jie Zhai*). Through this, the Taoists expected to be pardoned of their sins and to be shown the way to immortality.

Six, the Fast of Nature (*Zi Ran Zhai*). Through this, the Taoists could either improve their cultivation or help others to gain blessings.

Seven, the Fast of Three Emperors (*San Huang Zhai*). This was too vague characterized by the conciseness of its ceremony.

Eight, the Fast of Supreme One (*Tai Yi Zhai*). This was characterized by the solemnity of the ceremony.

Nine, the Fast of Preaching Purports (*Zhi Jiao Zhai*). This was characterized by the plainness and simplicity of the ceremony.

Thirdly, the Celestial Master Tradition, which was represented by the Fast of Mud and Soot (*Tu Tan Zhai*). This was characterized by strict self-restraint on the part of the ritualists. By self-discipline or even self-torture, the ritualists could atone for numerous sins or crimes committed by their remote or near ancestors on the one hand, and relieve other people in peril or distress on the other.

As we can see from the order in the arrangement, Lu Xiujing venerated the fasts from Shangqing Tradition most highly, followed

by those from Lingbao, Sanhuang and Celestial Master Tradition. According to *Maoshan Zhi* (*Annals of Mt. Maoshan*), Lu Xiujing wrote or compiled over one hundred scriptures on fasts and other rituals. Besides, Lu added grandeur and solemnity to the Taoist rituals by introducing standardized patterns of garments, flags and some other things used in the ritual ceremony. In a word, Lu made the paraphernalia of the Taoist religion more elaborate. As Lingbao Tradition was the richest in fasts and other rituals, Lu Xiujing may well be regarded as the greatest promoter of Lingbao Tradition, though we have not yet found any evidence of his being initiated in that tradition.

The movement initiated by Lu Xiujing was a development from either the Talismanic Tradition initiated by Celestial Master Zhang, or the Alchemical Tradition initiated by Ge Hong, or the Meditational Tradition initiated by Yang Xi. This movement which was characterized by ritual conjuration was generally called Southern Celestial Master Movement in distinction from the Northern Celestial Master Movement initiated by Kou Qianzhi in the north.

# Section VIII Tao Hongjing and the Maoshan Tradition

## 1. Tao Hongjing, a Life Story

Tao Hongjing witnessed the rise and decline of three short-lived dynasties, namely Liu Song (420-479), Qi (479-502) and Liang (502-557). One biography of his was kept in the official history of the Southern Dynasties. He was a native of the present city of Nanjing in Jiangsu Province. He was a very diligent and conscientious student as a little child. He would feel deep guilt whenever he failed to understand something. His autobiography recounts that he admired the life of an immortal after he read Ge Hong's *Shenxian*

*Zhuan* (*Hagiography of Deities and Immortals*). He once said, "Look up to the blue cloud and the white sun above my head, I don't feel they are too far beyond."

When he was still a teenager, he was already recommended to assist young princes in learning. However, he seemed not quite successful in his early career. At the age of 36, he was still a minor official of low rank. He was very disappointed as he recalled later in a letter to his brother:

> I had wished to become an official of rather high rank around the age of 40 and then make my office in a county with beautiful landscapes in eastern Zhejiang Province where I would finally settle. Now I am 36, but I am no more than a minor official. I had better resign in case I further humiliate myself.

Paradoxically, his popularity was all the more increased as he resigned his post. The Emperor, who approved of his resignation, offered him a regular amount of *fuling poria* peel and honey for his macrobiotic practice every month. That was an unprecedented move on the part of the emperor, so many people including some high-ranking officials paid him courtesy visits. Soon Tao Hongjing began his search for esoteric Taoist scriptures of the High Purity Tradition as well as the trails of the Perfect Beings. He visited many mountains in Zhejiang Province, but he finally settled in Huayang Cave, Mt. Maoshan. Therefore, he used Huayang Hermit as his pen name.

Tao Hongjing was not a hermit in the strict sense of the word, as we shall know soon. When Xiao Yan, who later became the first emperor of the Liang Dynasty, rose in arms, Tao Hongjing sent his disciples to greet him as a token of his support. Again when he learned that Xiao had succeeded in overthrowing the Qi Dynasty and that he was deciding on a name for his new dynasty, Tao Hongjing tactfully offered his choice of the name Liang. His offer was eventually accepted. After Xiao was enthroned as the first emperor of the new dynasty, he began to consult Tao Hongjing frequently

through correspondence. People of his time fondly called him "Mountain Prime Minister." His fame reached its zenith.

Tao Hongjing's fame did not just happen. He was a man of rare versatility; he was a poet, calligrapher, musician, astronomer, mathematician, alchemist, pharmacologist as well as a Taoist thinker. By one estimate, Tao Hongjing wrote or compiled over 70 books on various subjects, about 50 of them related to Taoism. Among those works on Taoism, *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhen Kao*), *Chart of the Ranks and Functions of the Gods* (*Zhenling Weiye Tu*), *Secret Instructions for Ascent to Perfection* (*Deng Zhen Yin Jue*) and *Abstracts for Cultivating and Prolonging Life* (*Yangxing Yanming Lu*) were the most important.

## 2. Declaration of the Perfected

This book might well be regarded as an official history of the High Purity Tradition. In it, the author made an account of the history of this scriptural tradition and gave a description of the supernatural origin of the High Purity scriptures. The *Declarations of the Perfected*, as the author Tao Hongjing explained, served similar purposes to that of the sayings of the Buddha in Buddhist scriptures. It was an improvement compared with the *Trails of the Perfected* (*Zhen Ji*), a book compiled by Taoist master Gu Huan, in which Tao Hongjing found many flaws. In the Ming edition of the *Taoist Canon*, the *Declarations of the Perfected* includes 20 *juan*. The first sixteen *juan* record the revelations of the Perfect Beings led by Lady Wei Huacun to Yang Xi and Xu Mi between 363 and 365 A.D. *Juan* 17 and 18 are Yang and Xu's notes and correspondence. The last two *juan* were about the contents of each *juan* and the layout of the book. Detailed descriptions of the origin and circulation of High Purity scriptures as well as personal and family stories of Yang and Xu were given in this scripture.

Two *juan* are ascribed to Tao Hongjing himself. The *Declara-*

*tions of the Perfected* is a very important document for the study of the origin of the Maoshan Tradition and history of Taoism as a whole. Worth noting is its absorption of the Buddhist concepts of hell and reincarnation from the *42-Chapter Sutra* written by Buddhist monk Tao An (312-385). It was characteristic of the teachings of Maoshan Tradition to incorporate some Buddhist ideas.

## 3. *Chart of the Ranks and Functions of the Gods*

As a polytheistic religion, Taoism inherited many older beliefs. Each tradition, however, had its own supreme deity to worship. The Lord of Great Tao, the deified Lao Zi, was venerated as the supreme deity in the early Five Bushels of Rice Tradition. The Celestial Master Zhang Daoling, for instance, claimed that it was Lord Lao who revealed to him the Way of Orthodox-Unity Covenant (*Zhengyi Mengwei Zhi Dao*) on Mt. Heming. The veneration of the deified Lao Zi as the supreme deity came down in the Celestial Master Tradition, just as Lu Xiujing said in his *Concise Disciplines of Taoism* (*Dao Men Ke Lue*):

> All the spiritual beings, all the other celestial and terrestrial deities must be abandoned to the veneration of Lord Lao and the Three Celestial Masters. Hence Celestial Master Taoism is an orthodox religion.

On the other hand, in the region of Jiangnan, the supremacy of the deified Lao Zi was gradually taken over by some other deities. Ge Hong seemed to be the first to make this endeavor. In his *Books Between Pillows* (*Zhen Zhong Shu*), Ge Hong gave a vivid description of how Celestial King of Original Beginnings (Yuanshi Tianwang) created the universe and revealed the *Words of Three Emperors* (*Sanhuangwen*) to some Perfect Beings. Lord Lao was relegated relatively to a less important position. The relegation of Lord Lao continued in both the Lingbao and Shangqing traditions where the Celestial Worthy of Original Beginning (Yuanshi Tianzun)

and Lord of the Tao, the Highest (Taishang Daojun) were generally venerated as the supreme deity.

As far as the Shangqing Tradition was concerned, by Tao Hongjing's time already over 700 deities, spirits, immortals and so forth had already been created. It seemed necessary that not only the position of a supreme deity be established, the less important deities should also be assigned to their respective positions, so that faithful believers would not be bewildered. Besides, by transposing the feudal hierarchical system of the human world into the supernatural world of the spirit-immortals, Tao Hongjing was able to use the religious authority of Taoism to strengthen the political power of the feudal regime. These are the main reasons why Tao Hongjing composed his *Chart of the Ranks and Functions of the Deities.*

Tao Hongjing assigned all the names of deities he knew of to seven different levels or ranks. At the center of each level in the chart there was one leading deity. From Level One to Level Seven the leading deities respectively were the Celestial Worthy of Original Beginning (Yuanshi Tianzun) reigning in the Land of Jade Purity, the Lord of Great Tao (Dadaojun) reigning in the Land of High Purity, the Golden Palace Lord of Emperor Jinque Dijun) reigning in the golden palaces of the Land of High Purity, Lord Lao the Highest reigning in the Land of High Purity, the Nine Palaces Minister Zhang Feng reigning over all the celestial officials in Heaven, the True Lord of Administering Registers Mao Gu reigning over all the immortals on Earth and the Great Emperor of Feng Du reigning over all the officials in the netherworld.

From the chart we can see that the world, as Tao Hongjing viewed it, was multidimensional. Traditionally Chinese believed the world to be two-dimensional, Heaven and Earth. The deities were generally believed to reside in Heaven, the people on Earth and the immortals in between. There was no place that was believed to be higher than Heaven, and the stars were believed to be part of it including the Sun and the Moon. Many legendary palaces, say, the

one for the Moon Goddess Chang'e, were built just in some of these stars within Heaven. If they died, they believed they would go to the Yellow Springs (*Huangquan*) not far beneath Earth. But here in the chart it was suggested that there were places beyond both Heaven and Earth. The Land of Jade Purity, Supreme Purity and Great Purity all stood above heaven, and there lived a multitude of deities. Also, there existed a netherworld or hell with many officials in charge of various affairs.

From the chart, we can also see many of Tao Hongjing's sectarian biases. He placed the deities worshipped by his own tradition on unreasonably high levels. For instance, he assigned Lady Wei to Level Two on a par with, though, subordinate to, the Lord of Great Tao; he assigned Mao Gu, an otherwise little-known immortal, the central position on Level Six. But some of his biases did last and influenced the later systematization of the deities. For instance, the Triad of Purity Deities, namely, Celestial Worthy of Original Beginning, Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure, and Celestial Worthy of the Tao and Its Power, which are now venerated in almost all the Taoist temples in China, are possibly an inspiration from Tao Hongjing.

Finally we see in the chart the synthesis of beliefs in different traditions and the synthesis of Confucianism and Taoism. For instance, Zhang Daoling venerated in the Five Bushels of Rice Tradition, the Guardian of the Pass Yin Xi venerated in the Lou Guan Tradition, Ge Xuan and Ge Hong venerated in the Lingbao Tradition were all found in the chart. Confucius, Yan Hui, his favorite disciple, and those sagely kings like Yao, Shun and Yu were also there to stay on the same level with Lao Dan, another name for Lao Zi.

## 4. Tao Hongjing and His Theory on Cultivation and Prolongation of Life

While we cannot say that all the ancient theories and practices

concerning *Yangsheng* cultivation or prolongation of life were attributable to Taoists, no doubt they have become one of the greatest contributions of Taoism to the people living in this century and beyond. Both Qigong, breathing exercise, and Wushu, martial arts, which have once become very popular even in some Western countries, are in one way or another related to this heritage. As far as Taoism is concerned, almost all the arts practiced in various traditions, such as alchemy, macrobiotics and the "arts of the bedchamber" were at first intended for cultivation or prolongation of life, for a sound and long life was believed to be the precondition for an ascent to the land of the perfected or the immortals. Many theories have been discussed, and methods tried to cultivate or prolong life by both Taoists and non-Taoists up to the time of Tao Hongjing. But it was Tao who systematized many of the theories, including the theory based on his own practice, perhaps described in his *Abstracts for Cultivating and Prolonging Life*.

At the very beginning of the preface to his book, the author made his thesis clear:

> Of all the intelligent beings which are made out of *qi*, human beings are the most precious. The most precious thing about human beings is life itself. Life is something the spirit cannot stay without, the physical appearance is what the spirit shows to be. If the spirit is overused, the person will feel exhausted; if the physical body is overexercised, the person will die. If a person is able to transport his heart to a state of tranquility, free himself from worry or action, wait for the primordial *qi* at the first hour of the day, practice gymnastics in a vacant room, cultivate and ingest the vitality adequately and consume good medicines, it will not be surprising that he lives up to the age of one hundred. On the contrary, if a person abandons himself to music and sex, strains his brain to get rich and powerful, broods over loss or gain, works himself up easily, pays no attention to the etiquette nor controls his diet, how can he possibly avoid the harmful effects and prevent dying young!

Tao Hongjing then started to refute the fatalistic view about the lifespan of a human being. He said,

> Fate decides whether a person is born a genius or an idiot, but whether he is strong or weak, whether he will die young or old is determined by the person himself. The Tao of Heaven follows its own course of action and the Tao of Man follows his own. If a person is born with sufficient embryonic *qi*, is well fed with milk and food in his infancy, grows up without eating undue amounts of tasty food and is well restrained in music and sex in his prime of life, then he will be strong and enjoy a long life. The contrary is true if he does the opposite.

His advice on how to practice restraint follows with a quotation from an ancient scripture *Xiaoyoujing*:

> Think less, obsess less, desire less, act less, speak less, laugh less, worry less, amuse less, enjoy less, irritate less, love less and hate less. These twelve "less" are the key to life cultivation. If one thinks too much, he will bore his spirit (mind); if one is obsessed too much, he will be weakened; if one desires too much, he will harm his brain; if one acts too much, he will exhaust his body; if he speaks too much, the *qi* (breath or vital energy) will struggle; if one laughs too much, he will hurt his internal organs; if one worries too much, he will inspire awe in his heart; if one amuses himself too much, his intention will be spilled; if one enjoys himself too much, he will get bewildered; if one is irritated too much, his pulses will beat irregularly; if one loves too much, he will find it incurably hard to get away from his infatuation; and if he hates too much, he will always torture himself, finding no pleasure in life. These twelve "too much" arc the main causes for the loss of life, and so, they must by all means be removed.

Finally, Tao Hongjing summarizes the essentials of the ways of life cultivation by quoting another scripture entitled *Yang Sheng Ji Xu* (*Collected Narrations of Life Cultivation*) by Zhang Zhan:

> The essentials of life cultivation are as follows: first, use your spirit (mind) sparingly; secondly, preserve the *qi*; thirdly, nurture your

physique; fourthly, practice Daoyin (a kind of breathing gymnastics); fifthly, don't speak too much; sixthly, be moderate in taking drinks and food; seventhly, pay attention to the "arts of the bed-chamber" (sex hygiene); eighthly, disregard conventional beliefs; ninthly, take proper medicine; and tenthly, do not do things under taboo.

Besides the theoretical and scholarly contributions to the High Purity Tradition and Taoism at large, Tao Hongjing was responsible for the construction of a number of Taoist monasteries on Mt. Maoshan. He gathered around him many disciples, and some of them were quite famous. Because Mt. Maoshan received so much limelight after Tao Hongjing arrived, the Maoshan Tradition became a more popular term than the High Purity Tradition. The emergence of the Maoshan Tradition was a hallmark in the development of Taoism, for both theoretically and institutionally Taoism became a mature religion. In the next chapter we see more Taoist masters belonging to this tradition, who worked together to raise Taoism to new heights. As for Tao Hongjing, he died at the age of 81. Because of his early friendly relationship with Buddhism, at his funeral both Taoist priests and Buddhist monks were present.

## *Chapter Four*

# The Prime Time of Taoism (581-960)

There was no marked development in Taoism during the short-lived Sui Dynasty which lasted no more than 37 years. The Maoshan Tradition was still the dominant influence. Yuanshi Tianzun, the Celestial Worthy of Original Beginning, was still venerated in most Taoist traditions as the supreme deity. The writers of the official *History of the Sui Dynasty* recorded that the practices of initiation and ritual performances almost remained the same. Worthy adepts were first initiated to the "Register of Five Thousand Characters," then to the "Sandong Lu" (Register of Three Grottos), then to the "Dongxuan Lu" (Register of the Grotto of Mystery) and finally to the "Shangqing Lu (Register of High Purity). The popular fasts practiced were the "Fast of the Yellow Register," "Fast of the Jade Register," "Fast of the Golden Register" and "Fast of Mud and Soot."

But after the Tang Dynasty was ushered in, Taoism enjoyed spectacular prosperity. During nearly three hundred years of the dynastic rule (618-907), Taoism was under official patronage. Even some emperors themselves such as Xuan Zong and Wu Zong were converted to Taoism. Taoist theories developed and became much more profound and mature than ever before. Theoreticians like Wu

Yun and Sima Chengzhen aptly applied the teachings of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi to the pursuit of immortality, and offered, as they believed, a sound justification for the latter. Within the institutions of Taoism, rituals and rules of conduct were further systematized. As more and more scriptures came out in this long period, an effort was made to systematize them. The result was Kaiyuan Taozang, the earliest edition of the Taoist Canon. Taoist arts, especially alchemy, as ways to mortality were popular especially among the upper class people. But gradually doubts began to be cast on their efficacy, for many of the Tang emperors who took the alchemical elixir either suffered from a poorer health or died before long. Inner alchemy emerged as a response and was accepted as a major Taoist art practiced by Taoists during the Five Dynasties (907-960). So influential were the inner alchemists like Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin that they were often immortalized in Chinese popular literature. The Chinese idiom "Baxian Guohai, Ge Xian Shentong" (the Eight Immortals crossing the sea, each one showing his or her own prowess) is still in popular use in Chinese language.

# Section I Taoism as the Religion of the Tang Royal Family

## 1. Relation Between Taoism and the Imperial Family in the Early Tang Period (618-712)

### Early Political Flirts

The political flirt of Taoists with the imperial Li family may have commenced a few years before the founding of the new Tang Dynasty. *Hunyuan Shengji* records that in 611 a Taoist priest Qi Hui from Louguan Monastery already spread the prophesy that a new dynasty ruled by the Li family would overthrow the ruling dynasty of Sui.

> In 611 when the Sui Emperor Yang Di went on a military expedition to the state of Liao, Qi Hui said to his disciples, "The Tao of Heaven is going to change in a few years. I have the time to see it happen." "How will that happen?" one of his disciples asked. "The descendants of Lord Lao will rule the world. After that, our teachings will flourish. But I am afraid I can not survive the day," Qi answered.

When Li Yuan, who later became the first emperor of the Tang Dynasty, rose in revolt against the Sui Dynasty, Qi Hui did not hesitate to render his service. As Li's army approached a pass near his monastery, Qi sent his priests to greet them and offered them all the grain they had in reserve. Qi said, "The True Lord is coming, and he will bring peace to all the four corners of the country." He even went so far as to change his name into "Ping Ding" (Peace and Stability).

Wang Yuanzhi, a Taoist priest from Maoshan, was also enthusiastic in currying favor with the Li family. In the "Biography of Wang Yuanzhi," *History of the Former Tang Dynasty*, Wang was said to have prophesized a good political fortune for Li Yuan. And when Li Shiming, who later was enthroned as Emperor Tai Zong, went to see him with his close officials, all in plain clothes, Wang greeted them, saying, "There is a sage among the three of you. Isn't that the Prince of Qin (the title for Li Shimin before he became emperor)? Emperor Tai Zong told him the truth. And Wang said, "You are going to be an emperor in peace, I wish you would make good use of the opportunity."

The efforts on the part of individual Taoist masters contributed to improving the relationship between Taoism and the imperial Li family. But the maturation of Taoism itself and the need to raise social status on the part of the Li clan who was generally believed to be of a humble origin did more. By the seventh century, Taoism had already grown into a well developed religion accepted both by the common people and by many official-literati, and Lao Zi had been generally deified as a very important celestial worthy of the

supreme deity in certain traditions. Therefore, if Lao Zi, whose family name was Li, were established as its ancestor, the Li clan would suddenly rise in social status in a culture which highly valued noble origins. Besides, the notion that there was a kinship between Lao Zi and the Li clan was already spread by individual Taoist priests to the public who was accustomed to believing in divine prophesy. Small wonder that an edict issued by Emperor Xuan Zong in 637 acknowledged Lao Zi to be his ancestor. In the same year, he ordered to have a temple built for Lao Zi in his native place Bozhou. The expenses incurred in offering sacrifices was reimbursed with the taxes on the 20 households in the community.

**Emperor Tai Zong's Support of Taoism**

The Taoist priests were the ones to benefit from the imperial decisions. In one stroke, their fate changed. Now they were allowed to stand in front of Buddhist monks on official occasions and their faith was considered superior to Buddhism. In Volume 28 of *Guang Hong Ming Ji* (*Enlarged Collection of Exposition of Truth*), we have the following record:

> In 637 Emperor Tai Zong was on an inspection tour of the city of Lou when he heard of the debate between Taoist priests and Buddhist monks. So he passed an edict which read, "The gist of Laojun's teachings is emptiness of mind, while the essence of Sakyamuni's teachings is the existence of causality. They have followed a totally different path, but they all mean to benefit the people. As far as the Great Tao is concerned, it can be traced back to the remote past. It originates from the unnamable beginnings, standing beyond the things tangible or with form; it moves by the principle of Yin and Yang, encompassing and breeding all things on earth; therefore, it does good to our government and enables us to return to simplicity. As for Buddhism, it flourished in the Western Regions (Xi Yu, including present Xinjiang and part of Central Asia), and not until the Eastern Han Dynasty did it begin to spread to China proper. It lists various ways of reincarnation and explains many causes for retribution. Up till the

present time, it commands more and more followers, because the people either wish for a blessing brought to them in this life or fear misfortune falling on them in the afterlife. Conventionalists often have a good laugh as they hear the profound teaching; the unconventionalists are often eager to be converted when they hear the truth. At first it attracts people in the local communities, and then it spread to the royal court. As a consequence, the books of an alien culture are preferred to the book of *All Wonders* (referring to the *Dao De Jing*); all the Chinese teachings are considered inferior to the teaching of "Vehicles" (referring to Buddhism). Things have been like this for years. Day and night I have been pondering over the ultimate Tao respectfully in order to find a way to abolish the long-held malpractices and to normalize the existing activities. Anyhow, our family are descendants of Lao Zi. We owe our success in overthrowing the old dynasty to his much proclaimed "highest virtue." We owe the great peace and stability in our country to his power of "non-action." We need to change our way of moral inculcation. From now on, on all the following ceremonies such as fasting, sacrifice offering, parading, cheering and praying, Taoist priests and priestesses will have precedence over Buddhist monks and nuns. It has been a custom in all the world to promote the things belonging to the place of one's birth; it has been a practice of people of all generations to venerate one's ancestry. Make my words known to the people under Heaven and have those responsible carry out my orders.

Emperor Tai Zong's edict aroused strong opposition from the Buddhist monks. They went out of their way to persuade the emperor to withdraw his decision. While they respected Lao Zi as the royal ancestor, they singled out the teachings and practices of the Three Zhangs for attack. In a memorial presented to the emperor, Zhi Shi, a leading Buddhist monk of the time, states:

I have humbly read the edict of Your Majesty. It is true that the origin of our nation can be traced back to Lao Zi and that the practice of venerating one's ancestry has been recorded in the classics. You have made it known to the public that the Taoist priests should have

> precedence over Buddhist monks. We are just mulling over the edict. Who dares to turn it down? ... The Taoist priests nowadays ... are not descendants of Lord Lao. They practice the dirty arts passed on from the Three Zhangs and deviate from the wonderful teaching of the "Register of Five Thousand Characters," ... they have alleged to be the descendants of Lord Lao, but in fact they are the offspring of heretics. If they are placed above Buddhist monks, we are afraid that the true and false teachings will be mixed up, which will do harm to our country.

The emperor refused to consider this memorial, instead, he ordered to whip him and then sent him into exile, as he stuck to his own guns. When Fa Lin, another leading Buddhist monk, refused to submit to the imperial decision, he met a similar fate. Now the die was cast: Taoism got the upper hand over Buddhism.

**Veneration of Taoism by Emperor Gao Zong**

The veneration of Lao Zi and Taoism became more obvious in the reign of Emperor Gao Zong (r. 650-683). In 666, the emperor went on a pilgrimage in person to the temple of Lao Zi in Bozhou and conferred to Lao Zi a more dignified title "Taishang Xuanyuan Huangdi," which literally means "Supreme Emperor of Profound Origin." In 675, he accepted Empress Wu Zetian's proposals and urged all the gentry and officials to study *The Book of Lao Zi*. In 678, he ordered that the Taoist priests be placed under direct administration of the bureau "Zong Zheng Shi," which was in charge of the affairs of the royal family. In the same year, he listed the *Dao De Jing* as one of the most important scriptures that the examinees for the national civil service examination should be conversant with. In 680, he granted a respectful posthumous title and official position to Taoist master Wang Yuanzhi who had died 45 years earlier. All this shows that Taoism had become the imperial faith and that its fate was closely linked to the fate of the imperial Li family.

Things took a change after Empress Wu Zetian (r. 690-705)

usurped the throne and declared the name of the new dynasty as Zhou. Partly because Buddhism had played an important role in legitimatizing the new state and partly because Taoism had almost become the symbol of imperial power, Empress Wu adopted a reverse policy with regard to the relationship between Buddhism and Taoism. In 690, she proclaimed that Buddhism was superior to Taoism and that Buddhist monks and nuns have precedence over Taoist priests and priestesses. In the same year she ordered to stop using the honorific title "Emperor of Profound Origin" for Lao Zi and to stop putting *The Book of Lao Zi* on the list of books to be examined in the civil service examination. After she died in 705, Emperor Zhong Zong resumed the imperial power and the name of the Tang Dynasty. The above honorific title of Lao Zi's was also resumed, so was the listing of *The Book of Lao Zi* for the national civil service examination.

### 3. Veneration of Taoism by Emperor Xuan Zong (r. 712-756)

The veneration of Taoism reached its climax during the reign of Emperor Xuan Zong. In the first decade of his reign, he had already begun to take an attitude in favor of Taoism and against Buddhism, because he realized that the latter had often been used by powers opposing the royal Li family, as in the case of Empress Wu Zetian and Empress Wei. In 714, he ordered the removal of bad elements within Buddhist institutions and as a result "over 20,000 Buddhist monks and nuns returned to secular life." In 715, he wrote an ode to the "Emperor of Profound Origin," in which he said, "The Father of all teachings was called *Xuanyuan*, ("Profound Origin"), who taught Confucius in the east and converted the Buddha in the west." Obviously Taoism was placed above both Confucianism and Buddhism.

In the second decade of his reign, the veneration of Taoism intensified. In 721, Emperor Xuan Zong summoned Sima Chengzhen, a leading Taoist master of the Maoshan Tradition, to the capital and received initiation to become a Taoist priest himself. In the next

year he ordered to have one temple for the Emperor of Profound Origin built in each of the prefectures and the capitals.

The next two and half decades of his reign saw continuing favoritism toward Lao Zi and Taoism. In 731, the Emperor ordered to have one temple built for Lao Zi at each of the Five Sacred Mountains. In 733, he ordered that every household throughout the country keep one copy of *The Book of Lao Zi* and that the book could be used as a substitute for two Confucian classics listed in the national civil service examination. In 737, he proclaimed that Taoist priests and priestesses should be placed under the jurisdiction of the Zong Zheng Shi. This proclamation indicated that the Emperor regarded the Taoist priests and priestesses as members of the imperial family. In 741, he ordered to have one temple dedicated to Lao Zi, the Emperor of Profound Origin, in each of the prefectures and the two capitals throughout the country. The portrait of Lao Zi was painted and hung up in the temple together with the portraits of the five preceding Tang emperors. In one of the national academies called Congxuan Guang, the five Taoist classics (of Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi, Wen Zi, Lie Zi and Geng Zi) were studied. The most eminent students of Taoist classics could also be appointed officials. In the next year, the authors of the four classics except Lao Zi were recognized as "Perfect Beings," and the four classics "True Scriptures." Of course, Lao Zi was not to be neglected. More grandiose titles were conferred on him. In 749, Lao Zi was titled "Sagely Ancestor Great Tao Emperor of Profound Origin." In 754, Lao Zi was entitled "Great Sagely Ancestor, Supreme High, Great Tao, Golden Palace Celestial Emperor and Great King of Profound Origin." In the same year, Emperor Xuan Zong personally wrote a commentary on *The Book of Lao Zi* and had it distributed throughout the country for all to study.

Of all the reasons behind Emperor Xuan Zong's veneration of Lao Zi in the first half of his political career, one was the most conspicuous. For the Emperor, the teaching of Lao Zi could not

only serve as a guidance for self-cultivation, but also as a philosophy of government. In two of the imperial edicts recorded in the *Longjiaoshan Ji* (*Accounts of Dragon Horn Mountain*), Emperor Xuan Zong made his intention clear. In the edict concerning Qingtang Monastery, the Emperor said:

> "... therefore, the Tao is the gate to all wonders, the heart is the commander of all things. If one grasps the essence of the Tao, he can help other people; if one loses its essence he cannot keep himself intact. Therefore, our Emperor of Profound Origin wrote five thousand characters on the Tao and its Virtue, which as a "true origin" could wonderfully be applied to many things. How could those in office who do not learn it, practice quietism and reach a perfect political state of affairs like the one in the ancient past?

In the edict concerning the Monastery for Lord Lao the Highest, Emperor Xuan Zong said:

> The School of Tao and Virtue is the head of all schools of thought; the quietude and emptiness of mind is the origin of all transformations; getting to the roots of the matter is essential for setting up standards; non-action is the gate to great harmony. I have inherited a career which promises a land of plenty for the people, how could I forget the admonition to have my wings of ambition lifted high? So I have invited those erudite persons to explain the subtle meanings [of Lao Zi] so as to benefit the running of the government and my physical health. I have been long wishing for a time when people from both high and low strata of society would follow "the teachings of Lao Zi." How could I alone possibly make all the people in the country drunken with the Virtues, enjoying the Great Harmony and coming round to the Tao all of a sudden? ... A few years ago, I ordered every household to keep one copy of the *Dao De Jing* in the hope that moral standards would be set up and followed countrywide and that the Tao would be found and applied to daily use. If consequently my ancestor's career is known, my familial book is made popular and the people I meet in strange places are all my comrades, then I will not feel guilty in front of the people in my country.

The "laissez-faire" policy based on Lao Zi's teachings contributed greatly to the heyday of the Tang Dynasty in the period of his reign called Kaiyuan, which lasted for nearly thirty years (713-742). But the freewheeling way of living inspired by Lao Zi's philosophy also cost him dear, for it was partly responsible for the rebellion of two generals called An Lushan and Shi Siming, which broke out in 753. And it was owing to this rebellion that the power of the Tang empire was greatly undermined. Since then the empire began to decline.

### 3. Veneration of Taoism by Emperor Wu Zong (r. 841-846)

Finally, Emperor Wu Zong was most enthusiastic in the veneration of Taoism in the later part of the Tang Dynasty. In the year 840, at the age of 27, when he was enthroned, he summoned Zhao Guizhen and 80 other Taoist priests to his Court to perform a grand Taoist ritual. He received Taoist initiation and became a Taoist priest himself. Partly because of the instigation from Zhao Guizhen, who had a strong aversion to Buddhism, partly because of his own indignation over the expansion of Buddhist influence, in 845 Emperor Wu Zong began with a great suppression of Buddhism, referred to by the Buddhists as the "Disaster of Huichang" (Huichang was the reign title of Emperor Wu Zong). Death took a too early toll on the Emperor. The next year the Emperor was poisoned after he consumed the "alchemical elixir" in which he believed strongly. Here ends the episode of veneration of Taoism.

Under the general atmosphere of Taoist veneration throughout the Tang Dynasty, Taoism gained much influence and attracted a large following especially among the upper class families and scholar-gentlemen. It was recorded that many imperial princesses and consorts joined the Taoist order and that many court ministers asked to be relieved of their duties in order to become Taoist priests. With more and more scholars joining the order, Taoist doctrines developed.

# Section II Development of Taoist Doctrines

## 1. Background

The Tang Dynasty was a golden age in Chinese history. The nation was united and its economy prospered. The trade and cultural exchanges with other countries and regions were frequent. It was in this period that many of the major religious traditions came to China one after another. With general toleration of different ideologies on the part of the Tang emperors, discussion seminars on the Three Teachings, namely Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, were often organized at the imperial court. Being a state ideology, Confucianism could often stay aloof in the discussion, while Buddhism and Taoism competed for official patronage. As we have mentioned in the former section, Taoism often gained the upper hand over Buddhism because of its special relation with the imperial Li family. But Buddhist influences were very strong in most periods of the Tang Dynasty. One of the greatest attractions of Buddhism, especially among the educated elite, was its sophisticated philosophy, something Taoism was weak in. The development of Taoist doctrine was no doubt inspired by the different schools of Buddhist thought.

For instance, the Tiantai Buddhist Tradition initiated by Zhi Yi (538-597) proposed the theory of "the universe in one thought" (*yinian sanqian*) and "triple truth as a unity" (*sandi yuanrong*). He believed that there were three thousand realms in the universe, and that whether they really existed or not depended on one thought (*yi nian*), that is, if you think that they do exist, they exist; if you don't think they exist, they do not exist. By triple truth (*san di*), he meant the truth of the void (*kong di*), the truth of falsehood (*jia di*) and the truth of the mean (*zhong di*). All the world phenomena were, he believed, void in nature, the appearance of the things people could

see was false, so the golden mean attitude would be that everything was void and false. How could people practice to attain the absolute truth or wisdom? Zhi Yi recommended two methods, namely *samatha* (halting the active mind) and *vispasyana* (discernment). In *Essentials of Buddhist Meditations* (*Xiuxi Zhiguan Zouchan Fayao*), Zhi Yi said:

> There are various ways to reach the state of nirvana. There are no more than two essential methods, namely *samatha* and *vipasyana*. Why is it so? *Samatha* is the first step to unite the knot, *vispasyana* is essential to remove bewilderment of mind; *samatha* is the source of mental nourishment, *vispasyana* is a wonderful art for inspiring mental enlightenment; *samatha* is the primary cause of *dhyana* (complete contemplation), *vispasyana* is the gateway to wisdom.

In a word, by halting one's active mind, a person is expected to discern the absolute truth or wisdom about the nature of the real existence as the Buddhists view it.

The Faxiang (*Dharmalaksana*) School initiated by Xuan Zang (602-664) proposed that there is a reality of nothing other than the mind (*wei shi wu jing*) and that everything we see, hear, smell, taste, touch and perceive is a product of the *Alaya-vijnana* or storage consciousness of our mind. Within our mind there are seeds of *anasrava* (passionlessness) and *bhavasrava* (mortality). It is the "seed of mortality" that causes human sufferings. *To uproot the seed of immortality* and to get rid of the misconception about the world that it is real, the Buddhists of this school proposed that we accept the concepts of "three kinds of unreality." The first is the unreality of phenomena, the second is the unreality of life and the third, unreality of reality. In so doing, we will reach an ideal world of *bhutatathata* (reality).

As can be seen, the Buddhist schools had touched the fundamental issues like the relationship between nature and phenomenon, cause and effect, life transience and eternity and the ways to reach the ultimate goal. Inspired by the Buddhist thinking, Taoists began

to think more deeply on these similar issues, especially when they were confronted by the questions during official or unofficial debates with their Buddhist counterparts. Among the Taoist scholar-priests, many of whom were followers of Lu Xiujing and Tao Hongjing of the Southern Dynasties, Wang Xuanlan, Sima Chengzhen and Wu Yun were most noteworthy.

## 2. Wang Xuanlan and *Abstracts from Pearls of Profundity* (*Xuan Zhu Lu*)

### A Life Story

Had it not been for his disciple Wang Taixiao who collected the records of his discourses, Wang Xuanlan would have remained in obscurity. We know about the lifestory of Wang Xuanlan only through the preface his disciple wrote to his work called *Abstracts from Pearls of Profundity* or *Xuan Zhu Lu.*

Wang Xuanlan was born in 626 during the reign of the first Tang Emperor Gao Zu. Wang was an introvert as a boy, but he was said to be able to foretell things by his intuition unmistakenly. After he reached 30, he began to take great interest in the arts of divination. To his disappointment, he found that the arts of divination worked far worse than the intuition of his boyhood. Then his interest shifted to the arts of immortality. As these were often esoteric, which could be decoded by a master who practiced them, he decided to find a good master. One day he brought with him several fellow townspeople from a place belonging to the present city of Mianyang, Sichuan Province, to look for Taoist masters on Maoshan. On the way he discovered that those fellow townspeople were not good material for immortals. Therefore he returned home, feeling more frustrated than ever. When he was about 40, he experienced a sudden enlightenment, possibly inspired by the Taoist scriptures and a Buddhist sutra he had read. He was enlightened to the realization that Taoist cultivation should be directed to the mind

rather than the outer form of life. The enlightenment also caused a profound change in his personality. Now he became an eloquent speaker, whose arguments were well received by both Buddhists and Taoists. In 637, he was converted and became a Taoist priest. He died at the age of 72.

***Xuan Zhu Lu***

In *Xuan Zhu Lu*, Wang Xuanlan addressed some fundamental questions such as why the Tao, which created all things including man himself, can be cultivated by man and whether every person has the nature of the Tao and how a person can grasp the Tao. It had been an oft-quoted sentence from *The Book of Lao Zi* that "The Tao creates the One, the One creates Two, the Two create Three and the Three create myriads of things in the world." As a creator, the Tao naturally is understood as something external to man. If it is so, how can a person reach the Tao which is external to himself? Wang offered his explanation. He observed that there are two aspects of the Tao, namely *Ke Dao* (Speakable Tao) and *Chang Dao* (Constant Tao). These two terms are taken from the words of Lao Zi "the Tao which is speakable is not the permanent Tao." While the *Chang Dao* creates the everlasting universe, the *Ke Dao* creates all the things within it, including men and is internalized in them. Therefore it can be cultivated. Then another question arises: since the Tao is internalized in all things that exist, is it possible for them to grasp the Tao without cultivation? Now here is how Wang Xuanlan answered the question: "The Tao and all beings are the same as well as different; they are different in that all beings pass through life and death, but the Tao never perishes."

In other words, all beings depend on the Tao for creation, but all beings are not the Tao itself and so cultivation is indispensable. Finally how can a person cultivate himself to grasp the Tao? Here Buddhist influences are easily discernible. Wang argued that all phenomena exist just because our mind thinks so:

> Whether you view nothing or something depends on your mind alone. If there is no mind, where is the view? ...Therefore, as the mind starts to work, all things appear; as the mind stops to work, all the things disappear. If you contemplate to the extent that you feel "no mind," there is no appearance or disappearance of all things.

Since all things are created out of a person's mind, Wang observed that the cultivation of *Shi Ti* or "Conscious Self" will finally lead to an immortality of *Zhen Ti* or "True Self."

## 3. Sima Chengzhen and His "*Sitting in Forgetfulness*"

### A Life Story

Sima Chengzhen (647-735) was a native of Wen (Wenxian County in present Henan Province). Though he was born into a family with a tradition of serving as officials, he found a hermit life more attractive. At the age of 21, he left home for Mt. Songshan where he was initiated by Pan Shizheng, a great Taoist master of the Maoshan Tradition. Pan must have been very proud to have a disciple like him, as he said "You are the fourth generation of Maoshan Taoist priest since I was initiated into Zhengyi Taoism by Tao Hongjing."

After that Sima made a tour of famous mountains throughout the country and finally settled on Mt. Tiantai. Empress Wu Zetian summoned him to the capital when she heard of his name and commended him highly. In 711, when Sima was already 65 years old, Emperor Rui Zong (r. 684) sent his brother Sima Chenwei to find him and invited him back to the capital. When he was in Court, the emperor asked him some questions about the arts like divination and numerology, and Sima answered:

> *The Book of Lao Zi* has made it dear: "The essence of the Taoist pursuit is to decrease [human knowledge] day after day. Through constant decreasing, one will reach a state of *Wuwei* (non-action)." We have not yet decreased to naught what we see and know, how can we take the unorthodox belief and further bother our mind?

When the emperor asked the question about how to run the government by the principle of "non-action," Sima answered.

> Running a government is just like cultivating a person's body. Lao Zi said, "If all people transport their heart to quietude, harmonize their *qi* with tranquility and follow the natural courses of action without artificiality, then the country will run smoothly." *The Book of Changes* said, "The sages are persons who share the virtues of Heaven and Earth." Therefore, Heaven which does not speak is trustable; Heaven which takes no action accomplishes many things. The essence of "*Wuwei*" is the Tao of government.

The Emperor was very satisfied with his answer and compared it with the words of the Yellow Emperor's teacher Guang Chengzi.

In 722, Emperor Xuan Zong sent for Sima Chengzhen and received initiation from him and became a Taoist priest himself. In 727, when Sima was 80 years old, the Emperor sent for him again and consulted him about which deity of the Five Sacred Mountains should receive a sacrifice. Sima told him that in every sacred mountain resided Perfect Beings and suggested that shrine halls for Perfect Beings be built on each of the Five Sacred Mountains. The Emperor followed his advice. Since then, the sacrifices in the Five Sacred Mountains were incorporated into Taoist system of worship. Sima Chengzhen died at the age of 89 and was granted great imperial honors.

These are what the official history of the Tang, *Jiu Tang Shu* (*An Old History of the Tang Dynasty*), records about the life of Sima Chengzhen. From some other sources we learn that there were over a dozen of books to the credit of Sima Chengzhen. Some books were about the arts practiced by the Taoist priests of the Maoshan Tradition, some were concerned with Taoist theories. Among these books, *Zuo Wang Lun* (*On Sitting in Forgetfulness*), was a most representative piece.

### The *Zuo Wang Lun*

The phrase "sitting in forgetfulness" was borrowed from *The*

*Book of Zhuang Zi*. In chapter six of the book, we have the following dialogue between Confucius and his favorite disciple Yan Hui:

> Another day Yan Hui again saw Confucius and said:
> "I have made some progress."
> "What do you mean?" asked Confucius.
> "I sit in forgetfulness," replied Yan Hui.
> At this Confucius changed countenance and asked:
> "What do you mean by sitting in forgetfulness?"
> To which Yan Hui replied:
> "My limbs are nerveless and my intelligence is dimmed. I have abandoned my body and discarded my knowledge. Thus I become one with the infinite. This is what I mean by "sitting in forgetfulness."

In the preface to his book *Sitting in Forgetfulness*, Sima Chengzhen first pointed out the importance of the Tao for one's life. He made an analogy by saying that a person's life without the Tao is just like a fish without water. Then he listed a few cases of worldly attractions leading to a loss of the Tao and consequently a person's life. He emphasized the importance of a man's own efforts for obtaining the Tao and life itself by quoting the words from the *Scripture of Western Ascension*: "My life is in my own hand rather than in the hand of a deity." Finally he introduced us to the body of his book which discusses in detail seven steps toward the attainment of the Tao.

**Step One:** Cultivating Faithfulness and Respectfulness

Sima Chengzhen believed that a faithful and respectful heart is essential for success in Taoist cultivation. He compared "faithfulness" to the root of a tree and "respectfulness" to its fruit. The stronger one's faith is, the longer the Tao in him will last; the more respectful a person is for the Tao, the more powerful his Tao will grow. If a person can remain faithful and respectful for long and exert his efforts, it is a matter of time before he attains the Tao.

**Step Two:** Cutting Off Secular Relations

After one establishes faithfulness and respectfulness for Taoist

cultivation, the next step is to cut off secular relations as much as possible. He said, "If one cuts off his secular relations, he will not become fatigued. As he is 'doing nothing' he will have a peace of mind. The simpler his life is, the less he will be burdened. Then he will be farther and farther removed from the secular world and get nearer and nearer to the Tao."

**Step Three:** Closing One's Heart

After one has cut off all secular relations, the next step to take is no less arduous. "Closing one's heart from the things of the world" (*shou xing li jing*) is tinged with Buddhist influence. The author said: "A learner of Taoism must first seat himself unperturbed, closing his heart away from the things of the world, that is, letting not a thing creep into his mind, then he will enter into a state of void and nothinglessness (*xu wu*). In this way his heart is one with the Tao." The author realized the difficulties involved in not letting a thing creeping into one's mind, therefore warned against the danger of being "unduly persistent." He said that if one is too persistent in reaching a state of "void," the heart can not be considered completely free. If his heart has something, he will become fatigued and his *qi* scattered. This state of affairs is irrational and will consequently cause illness on the part of the cultivator. If the person lets nothing creep into his mind but his heart still feels free, then we may call it "True *Samatha*" (intent contemplation). In the "True *Samatha*," one's heart and *qi* are harmonized, and he will be relaxed and refreshed.

**Step Four:** Getting Less Involved in Worldly Affairs

Sima Chengzhen realized that for most people cutting off all the worldly relations would be difficult, therefore he recommended to average people the way of "getting less involved in worldly affairs" as a compromise. He said:

> Every person must take up one thing or another in this world, but he must realize that he is not responsible for all. "The tit, building its nest in the mighty forest, occupies but a single twig. The tapir, slaking

its thirst from the river, drinks only enough to fill its belly." (*The Book of Zhuang Zi*). When he is pursuing things outside, he must keep a clear self-consciousness inside. One must learn that every one has his own share of things and that he should not go beyond it. One must realize that there exist appropriate and inappropriate things and that he should do the appropriate things. Otherwise his intellect, body and spirit will all suffer. If a person does not have a sound health, how can he begin to cultivate the Tao?

Therefore, the author argued that a Taoist cultivator must not overstretch himself for money, power or other worldly attractions.

**Step Five:** True Discernment (*zhen-guan*, S, *vispasyana*)

After a person succeeds in closing his heart from the things of the world and in decreasing his active involvement in the world of business, he can embark upon the fifth step called "True Discernment." By this the author meant "the prophetic vision of a man of intelligence or the keen observation of a man of capability," which in fact was a new perspective in viewing things. Sima Chengzhen said: "If a person looks at the circumstance in which he is, he will never find anything evil related to it. Only after he stays away from the circumstance, can he discern what is right and what is wrong." The author then listed a few cases where this way of discernment could be applied.

In view of *se* (a Chinese term which means either physical phenomenon or beauty), the author believed it exists because our mind thinks so. He said: "If we do not have the mind, where are we to find it?" Then he elaborated on one aspect of the *se* which means physical attraction especially in women. "Sex is not a life necessity, it is a life enemy."

In view of the moral issue like good or evil, the author adopted a way of transcending it. He said:

> If one person sees another person doing something wicked, and then experiences a feeling of "wickedness" in himself, he is not different from the person who kills himself just because he has

> seen another person committing suicide.... Therefore, if he sees another person doing a good deed, he must harbor a wicked feeling. Why? The feeling, be it good or wicked, all arises from outside circumstances.

In view of other issues like poverty, illness and death, the author offered the "true discernments," the ways of transcendence which finally leads to an approximation to the Tao.

**Step Six:** Ultimate Contemplation

"Ultimate Contemplation" (*tai-ding*, S, *samatht*) is the ultimate step of cultivation. The *ding* (*samathi*, to use a Sanskrit term), the author explained, "is the ultimate state away from the secular world, and also the basis for the attainment of the Tao. It comes only after the cultivator has begun with his meditation, his body like a withered tree, his heart like burned ashes." It is a state in which the person loses all his senses and powers, and ultimate tranquility prevails. After the person reaches the state of the Ultimate or *samathi*, his wisdom (*hui*) will emerge. But he should not be contented with what he has done thus far, because the "wisdom" only "knows the Tao but does not attain it." Therefore the cultivator should continue to nurture wisdom with a tranquilizing mind. Gradually he will reach the final goal of Taoist cultivation: attainment of the Tao.

**Final Goal:** Attainment of the Tao

After completing the above six steps, the cultivator will finally reach his goal — attainment of the Tao. What is the Tao? The author said:

> The Tao is miraculous. It is numinous and always makes its presence felt, but at the same time it is void and shapeless. It comes and goes without any trails, therefore it can not be followed either through sound or shadow. It is not known why it is so, perhaps because it leads to immortal life, it is called Tao (Way).

The person who attains the Tao enjoys an immortality of physical life, because the spirit or soul is immortal itself. And the Tao, Sima Chengzhen said:

> Has the power to influence spirit and body. Through the Tao, spirit and body become one. If a person has his spirit and body in one, he is called "Spiritual Man" (*shen ren*). As the spirit itself is void, harmonious and imperishable, when in oneness with it, the body becomes eternal too.

Sima Chengzhen's theory of cultivation becomes one of the foundations for later Taoist practice, especially the *neidan* or Inner Alchemy. (A detailed discussion of Inner Alchemy will be offered in Section III of this chapter.)

## 4. Wu Yun, a Great Apologist for Taoism

### A Life Story

A short biography of Wu Yun (?-778) was kept in the official history of the Tang Dynasty. We have as yet no evidence to establish the exact year of his birth, neither can we say exactly where his native place was. The official history of the Tang identified his native place as Lu in present Shandong Province. When he was a little child, as his biography continues, he was good at Confucian classics and writings. But he failed to pass the civil service examination for *jinshi* (scholarship of middle ranking). Later he went to Mt. Songshan and was converted as a Taoist priest in a monastery founded by Pan Shizheng, a Taoist master of Maoshan Tradition. As he was a very diligent learner, before long he mastered all the arts that were passed on to him. During the years 713-742 when Emperor Xuan Zong was ruling, he made a trip to Maoshan and then to Mt. Tiantai in present Zhejiang Province. There in Zhejiang he turned out many poems which made him very popular among the literati of his time. His fame soon spread to the capital and Emperor Xuan Zong summoned him to court. When asked about the theory of Taoist cultivation, Wu replied: "The essence of Taoist theory is all to be found in the 'Register of Five Thousand Characters.' All the other works are rubbish." When asked about the culti-

vation for immortality, Wu told the Emperor: "This is the business for those out of office. Besides, it takes years of practice and therefore it is not a proper thing to do for you as our Lord." Perhaps because of his uprightness and integrity as well as his poetic talent, the Emperor liked him very much. Predicting an imminent turmoil in the country, Wu asked to leave for Mt. Songshan where the Emperor ordered to build a special monastery for him. He emigrated to the areas near Mt. Tiantai, where he had a good relation with the noted poets like Li Bai and Kong Caofu. He passed away in 778.

***Xuan Gang Lun***

Wu Yun was a great poet, his poems are comparable with those of Li Bai and Du Fu, the two greatest poets of the Tang Dynasty. But above all, Wu Yun was a Taoist. His masterpieces *Xuan Gang Lun* (*On Essentials of "Xuan"*) and *Shenxian Kexuan Lun* (*On Seekability of Immortality*) represented his principal views of Taoism. Through them we can learn about his major contributions to the theoretical development of Taoism.

Firstly, Wu was a great apologist for the possibility of immortality by resorting to the teachings of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. Linking the teachings of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi to the Taoist pursuits began early in the history of Taoism. Zhang Lu wrote a commentary on *The Book of Lao Zi*, which served as a main scripture for his followers. But as his commentary was geared to the illiterate or semi-illiterate masses, his adaptation of Lao Zi's teachings seemed a bit too artificial and superficial and thus did not appeal to the cultured elite very much.

In the Eastern Jin Dynasty, there emerged a school of thought called *Xuan Xue*, "Mystery Learning." By commenting on the teachings of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, the thinkers of Xuan Xue philosophized on the relationship between "nature" and "art," a free style of living and living according to conventional norms. But as their commentaries seemed quite unrelated to the pursuit of im-

mortality, Ge Hong, a contemporary Taoist master, did not have high regard for them and less so for the teachings of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. We have already mentioned that in Section II of the previous chapter when we discussed Ge Hong.

But Wu Yun lived in a different era. Now Lao Zi was venerated as the protector of the imperial Li family, his book and the book of Zhuang Zi were listed as scriptures of great importance for scholars. As a Taoist master noted for a wide association with the men of letters, Wu Yun could not afford to ignore the teachings of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. Besides, the tradition of resorting to the words of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi to explain the theory and practice of Taoist cultivation had begun earlier. For instance, Wang Xuanlan distinguished the internal "Speakable Tao" from the external "Permanent Tao" by alluding to the words of Lao Zi. Sima Chengzhen's masterpiece *Zuo Wang Lun* was undeniably inspired by the words of Zhuang Zi. Therefore we will not be surprized to read the dialogue as such, which is taken from Wu Yun's *Xuan Gang Lun*:

> Someone asked me, "Nowhere else is the essence of the Tao better expressed than in the books of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. There Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi do not recommend the pursuit of immortality, why do you recommend it strongly, Master.?" I replied, "How can you say that they don't recommend it? Lao Zi says, '.... When the roots are deep and the stalks firm, this is the Tao of maintaining a long life and permanent eyesight.' [Ch.59] 'The spirit of the Valley is immortal.' [Ch.6] Zhuang Zi says, 'One gets bored after living on Earth for one thousand years. He leaves it and becomes an immortal. Riding the white cloud, he reaches the land of the Celestial Emperor.' 'I have cultivated my life for one thousand and two hundred years but my skin gets no wrinkles.' .... Can you say that Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi never talk about immortals?"

Wu Yun did more than just relate the words of the two masters to the pursuit of immortality. He strengthened his arguments by pointing at their intrinsic relation, that is the emphasis on the culti-

vation of *xing* or human nature. While Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi did not mention the concrete steps toward immortality, they taught people to temper their mind, which Wu Yun believed to be an inseparable part of immortality pursuits. Wu Yun argued:

> The Sages [Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi] intend their writings for people of average intelligence. The people of average intelligence will not necessarily become immortals after they get initiated into Taoism. Therefore, the Sages first teach them to nurse their dispositions. The persons whose dispositions are thus nursed will have a peace of mind. When their minds become peaceful and their spirits harmonious, the Tao is expected. Life and death are what human beings care about most. Who has not got emotions? When a person shows emotions, his disposition wanes, which will only shorten his life. When people like him feel no joy in life, have no fear of death, free themselves of all cares and forget about happiness and sorrow, then it means that their emotions disappear but their *xing* stays, their forms fade out but their spirits remain. Isn't it better than the disappearance of both the outer forms and inner nature? That's why an equality of life and death is proposed (as a way of thinking by Zhuang Zi). How can you say that they don't recommend the pursuit of immortality? Well, when people pass away, it is their forms that die, but their *xing* stay alive. The reason why the Sages don't regard the human body as of importance is that they believe it is a house holding the spirit, an implement for the *xing*. What they really cherish are the spirit and *xing*. If you think of death as something fearsome, the human body as something "true," you are grasping the Tao of physical cultivation, but you have failed to get the best of the Cultivation of the True.

Wu Yun's emphasis on cultivation of the *xing* or what he regards as the "True" broadens our view of what Taoists consider to be a "real immortal." In fact, many of Wu's views were echoed in the Perfect Realization Taoism, which flourished in the 12th century.

### *Shenxian Kexue Lun*

The *Shenxian Kexue Lun*, on the other hand, offered a synthetic

view concerning attainability of immortality, an issue of top concern for all Taoists.

As early as the first century A.D., *Taipingjing*, the *Great Peace Scripture*, already emphasized the importance of learning as a means to immortality. In the volumes 150-170, we read:

> An ignoramus will become a worthy through learning. A worthy will become a sage if he keeps on learning. A sage will become a man of the Tao if he doesn't stop learning. A man of the Tao will become an immortal if he learns on and on. An immortal will become a "True Being" if he doesn't quit his learning. A "True Being" will become a "Spiritual Being" if he continues with his learning. All these transformations are caused by persistent learning.

In the third century, Ji Kang (224-263), a Neo-Taoist (a term borrowed from Fung Yu-lan) and one of the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove (seven famous scholars who gathered for frequent convivial conversations in a certain bamboo grove), said in his *Yang Sheng Lun* (*On Life Cultivation*):

> Although we have never seen immortals with our eyes, many texts including ancient historical records all mention them. We may conclude that they do exist. Those immortals originally must have been the persons endowed with special *qi*. They were born to be immortals, no acquired.

In the fourth century A.D., Ge Hong had a seemingly conflicting view of whether immortality could be pursued. On the one hand, he believed that whether a man had a disposition for immortality, its pursuit was predetermined. For instance, he said:

> If one was born at the time when the Planet of Life dominated, he is destined to like immortality pursuits and he will inevitably succeed. If one was born at the time when the Planet of Death dominated, he is doomed not to believe in immortality, let alone to seek it. (Chapter 7)

On the other hand, Ge Hong observed that immortality was undoubtedly attainable through learning. For instance, he said:

> Just as millet can be reaped through planting, immortality can be sought through learning. This is an obvious fact. Just as no good crop is harvested without cultivating the land, no life of immortality is attained without persistent self-cultivation. (Chapter. 14)

Tao Hongjing made his point in Part Two of *Zhen Kao*: "The people like Master Qing Guang, Gu Xizi...did not have to learn the Tao, they were all born immortals. As for other people, they all have to pursue immortality persistently."

Wu Yun seemed to have synthesized all these remarks on this issue in his *On Attainability of Immortals*. He divided people into three different grades, each grade of whom had a different chance of success. He wrote,

> Some people neither cultivate themselves nor learn hard, but they become immortals, because they were endowed at their birth with a special *qi*. Some people become immortals only after they learn the hard way, because they need "merits" to offset their "karma." Still some others do not become immortals even though they do learn the way, because they give up halfway.

Obviously, in Wu Yun's thinking, immortality is attainable for all people, despite the fact that some make no effort, some much effort and some every effort to this end. Therefore Wu Yun recommended especially to those who need to make efforts the "seven dos and seven don'ts," which if properly followed, the author believed, would transport the people well on the way to the Tao and immortality. For instance, he dissuaded people from thinking that immortals themselves were not infinite and that human souls were transmigratable; he discouraged them from pursuing money, power and sex at the cost of their health, to name just a few.

There were still more Taoist priests and Taoist scholars during the Tang period, who contributed significantly to scholarship. For example: Li Quan propagated the *Yinfujing* and Zhang Zhihe wrote *Xuanzhenzi*. But there are too many to discuss in detail here.

# Section III Emergence of the Inner-Alchemical Tradition in the Tang and Five Dynasties Periods

## 1. An Overview of Alchemical Theories and Practices in the Tang Dynasty

Parallel to the general respect for Taoism in the Tang Dynasty, there was a craze for the alchemical elixir among the people of upper classes including many emperors. The large number of books on alchemy, which appeared in this dynasty, testifies to our belief.

From the existing books on alchemy in this period, we find that different alchemists had different views as to the essential substances used for the purpose. Some believed that cinnabar should be used as the major substance because it could be changed into gold, which had the quality of imperishability. The alchemists holding this belief were followers of Ge Hong.

Some other alchemists believed that the essential substance should be lead and mercury. The alchemists holding this belief may have relied on the records of the experiments kept in Wei Boyang's *Can Tong Qi*. Wei observed that the final product of what we know as lead oxide or mercury oxide was just the "Elixir" wanted.

Still some other alchemists believed that sulphur and mercury should be the right substances. In "Dahuandan Geyue" ("Songs of Great Elixir") in the *Taiqing Yubei Zi* (*Jade Tablet of Supreme Purity*), we have the lines like these: "Sulphur is the essence of the Great Yang, mercury is the essence of the Great Yin. One Yang and one Yin make Heaven and Earth." The alchemists holding this belief might have been influenced by *Taiqing Shibi Ji* (*Writings on the Stone Wall of Great Purity*), a book attributed to Su Yuanlang of the early sixth century.

Taoist alchemists of various persuasions, therefore, attempted in

their own ways to concoct the "elixir," but to no avail. The evidence coming from the Tang emperors was especially astonishing. According to Zhao Yi, who authored *Notes of the Many Tang Emperors Taking Alchemical Medicines*, poisoned to death were Emperor Tai Zong (r. 627-649), Emperor Xian Zong (r. 806-820), Emperor Mu Zong (r. 821-824), Emperor Jing Zong (r. 825-827), Emperor Wu Zong (r. 841-846) and Emperor Xuan Zong (r. 847-859), not to mention a few others who took the pills but narrowly escaped death.

However discouraging the cases were, the Taoists did not question their faith that an immortality pill does exist. Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin were good cases in point. In their inner alchemical work — *Zhongli-Lü Chuandao Ji*, they pointed out some of the causes for their predecessors' failures in the attempt for the immortality pill, and offered their own methods for gaining it.

> Three factors have caused the failure of making elixir: first, genuine and false substances were mixed together and the proper method of controlling heat was not used, so that no matter how much time was spent, no significant result was obtained, as all the substances were burned to ashes. Second, good substances were found but the method of controlling heat was not grasped or the proper method of controlling the heat was used but there was a lack of proper substances. Third, good substances were found, a correct method was used to control the heat, that is, the heating was increased or decreased properly to the year, to the month and to the day, and the pill was made. But as the alchemist was not yet fully prepared for it (when the lid was lifted), it exploded and burst out like a crane flying out of hand. Besides, the medical substances are originally formed out of the refined air of Heaven and Earth, the heating-control technique is a secret from immortals. In the reign of the Three Emperors, the Yellow Emperor succeeded in making the elixir only after he completed the "nine reversions." After the reign of the Five August Emperors, it took Hun Yuan three years to concoct his elixir. When the period of the Warring States set in, vicious airs predominated; corpses filled the

fields; plants and minerals absorbed no refined air, and so there was a scarcity of good medical substances and those who knew the way of alchemy could not avoid old age and death. The bamboo and silk scrolls, which recorded the ways of elixir making and were hidden in cliffs and valleys, decayed with the time and were nowhere on Earth to be found. Had there been any alchemical substance available, the First Emperor of Qin would not have bothered to seek the pill in the sea isles; had there been any alchemical technique, Wei Boyang would not have referred his readers to *The Book of Changes* for understanding. There were some people who considered themselves resourceful, but they only deceived their followers into abandoning their homes. There was not a single case of success. Hence, seeking other people for advice too led the seekers astray.

## 2. Emergence of the Zhongli-Lü Inner-Alchemical School

*Neidan* or Inner Alchemy was Zhongli and Lü's response to the general failure of *waidan* or outer alchemy that was in vogue during the Tang Dynasty. The *neidan* is so called because the process of outer alchemy is modeled after and carried out in the human body. The main body serves as a "furnace," *jing* and *qi* are used as "alchemical substances" and *shen* provides "heating" to *jing* and *qi*. Finally they will form a "pill" inside the body which frees the immortal inner self. The theories behind outer alchemy and inner alchemy are basically the same in that they are all based on the ancient Chinese ideas such as "Heaven and Man as one substance" and "mutual responsiveness between Heaven and Man," as we have mentioned in Chapter One. However, their practices originally evolve from different traditions which were somehow combined. A brief review of the inner alchemical practices is necessary for a better understanding of the Zhongli-Lü Alchemical School.

### Inner Alchemy, a Brief Review

The earliest available evidence about the "internal" quest for

immortality is a small 12-sided jade cylinder dating from 308 B.C. This jade cylinder was unearthed in Jingcun Village, Louyang, Henan Province. On it 45 characters in ancient Chinese style are engraved. The English translation of the engravings has been cited by Joseph Needham in his monumental *Science and Civilization in China* as follows:

> In breathing one must proceed [as follows]. One holds [the breath] and it is collected together. If it is collected, it expands. When it expands, it goes down. When it goes down it becomes quiet. When it becomes quiet it will solidify. When it becomes solidified it will begin to sprout. After it has sprouted it will grow. As it has sprouted it will grow. As it grows it will be pulled back again (to the upper regions). When it has been pulled back it will reach the crown of the head. Above it will press against the crown of the head. Below it will press downward. Whoever follows this will live; whoever acts contrary to it will die. (Needham II: 144)

From the version, we can see that the engravings record a process of breathing exercise. But if we read more carefully we will find that it suggested not a kind of breathing exercise or Qigong which simply means to keep the exerciser in good shape, but rather a higher stage of exercise which means avoiding death.

It should not be too much a surprise that the Chinese had started the internal quest for immortality as early as 380 B.C. if we consider the fact that this jade cylinder was made about 150 years after the time when Lao Zi died and that it was discovered in a place near Lao Zi's center of activity and that Lao Zi mentioned the idea of immortality repeatedly in his "Register of Five Thousand Characters." For instance, in Chapter 16, Lao Zi emphasizes the importance of *jing* (tranquility of mind) for a life of eternity. He said:

> Empty the mind to the greatest extent possible and make it quiet and peaceful, then I will see all creatures beginning to move cyclically. Every creature will return to its own root. We attribute its returning to quietude. When a creature is in quietude, it will return to its original

> life. After it returns to the original life, it will become eternal. Those of us who know the law of eternity are called men of enlightenment....

The breathing exercises of other variations such as "embryonic breathing" (*taixi*) and other arts such as "introspection" (*neiguan*) seemed to develop all along. They were all considered to contribute to attainment of ultimate immortality. But it was not until the publication of Wei Boyang's *Can Tong Qi* that a systematic account of the internal quest for immortality appeared.

In Chapter Three of this book we have already discussed Wei Boyang and his book *Can Tong Qi*. Though considered by many as a book on *waidan* (outer alchemy), historically *Can Tong Qi* was relied on as a theoretical basis by many inner alchemists. In fact, there are many passages in the book which can be interpreted in that way. For instance, we have the following passage from the book:

> .... The face gets lubricated, the bones get stronger. When all the evil influences are warded off, the true Yang force begins to dominate. As cultivation goes on, the air is turned over and over again. It moves continually like a spring rain, it gradually turns into liquid like melting ice. It runs from head to toe and reverses its course upward. It goes to and from the Infinite, but still is contained (in its physical self)....

What is more significant about the *Can Tong Qi*, however, is its usage of the *Yi Jing's* terminology and other symbols to describe the complex process of alchemy, both external and internal. For instance, *kan* (one of the Eight Diagrams in the *Yi Jing*, with one unbroken line sandwiched by two broken lines) and dragon represent "lead" in outer alchemy, "water" in inner alchemy; *li* (also one of the Eight Diagrams, with one broken line sandwiched by two unbroken lines) and tiger represent "mercury" in alchemy and "fire" in inner alchemy.

The inner alchemical aspect of the *Can Tong Qi* was not made known until the early sixth century when Su Yuanlang explained

the inner alchemical meanings of the alchemical terms used by Wei Boyang. The "Biography of Su Yuanlang" in the *History of Me Luofu* reports the following saying of Su:

> Heaven and Earth are great and long-lasting, the sages speak in similitude. The essence (for both alchemies) is expressed in terms of Sun and Moon, the increase and decrease (in *huo hou*, heating for alchemy and "will assertion" for inner alchemy) are demonstrated in terms of Water and Fire. Therefore, the same Tao runs through the cultivation of life (alchemical) and self (inner alchemical). The alchemical terms, such as *long* (dragon), *hu* (tiger) and *ding* (tripod), can also be used for inner alchemy. For instance, the term *lu ding* (furnace and tripod) refers to the body, *shen shi* (divine chamber) refers to the heart and *hua chi* (flower pond) refers to saliva or body fluid....

The same biography reported that the term *neidan* came to be known to the Taoists since Su's publication of his *Zhi Dao Pian* (*Treatise on Essence of the Tao*). Throughout the Tang Dynasty, there appeared a few important works on *neidan* such as *Ru Yao Jing* (*Mirror Reflecting Medicinal Refining*) by Cui Xifan and *Riyue Xuanshu Pian* (*Treatise on the Essences of the Sun and Moon*) by Liu Zhigu. But somehow they were outshone by the general climate of alchemical pursuit among the Taoists. In contrast, Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin gained increasing popularity because their time favored the pursuit of inner alchemy rather than alchemy.

### *Zhong Lü Chuandao Ji*

The Zhongli-Lü Inner-Alchemical School was founded by Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin, whose lives overlapped the period between the Tang Dynasty and the Five Dynasties (907- 960). Being a worthy disciple of Zhongli, Lü wrote down what his master said in two very important books called *Lingbao Bifa* (*Complete Ways of Numinous Treasure*) and *Zhong Lü Chuandao Ji* (*Homily of*

*Zhongli and Lü*). These two books covered many areas of inner alchemical theory and practice and thus far gave the most systematic account of *neidan*. As all the later inner alchemists claimed Zhongli and Lü as their patriarchs, we generally consider that as a tradition with systematic theory and practice, *neidan* Taoism started from them. In the following passages, we will offer a brief introduction to their theory and practice as they appeared in the above-mentioned two major works.

*Zhong Lü Chuandao Ji* is organized in a mode of question and answer between Lü Dongbin and Zhongli Quan. The whole book is divided into three parts with six topical discussions in each part. The first part addresses general questions concerning the Tao of immortality. For instance, under the topic "True Immortals," Lü raises the following question:

"What is the Tao of remaining unsusceptible to illness, aging and death in all one's life?"

Zhongli answers Lü's question by first explaining evolution of a human fetus and form:

> When parents have intercourse, the two opposite *qi* will merge. The semen and blood make the fetus. After this period called Tai Chu, comes another period called Tai Zhi when the Yin and Yang elements in the fetus are born and the *qi* transformed. After 300 days, the fetus assumes the human form. When a light of spirit passes through to it, it separates from its mother. After a period called Tai Su, its gender is determined and Yellow Sprout (referring to anterior *qi* as against posterior *qi* or air we breathe) is grown. After 5,000 days, the *qi* grows to its fullest, a length of 81 *zhang* (a Chinese unit of measurement, one unit equals 3 1/3 meters). By the time, it is 15 years old, it is called Virgin Boy (if it is a male). There is half Yin and half Yang in him, comparable to the (midday) sunshine. From then on, the original Yang element begins to lose, the true *qi* begins to dissipate. As the *qi* is weakened, disease comes; as it disappears, the person becomes old and dies....

To avoid disease, aging and death, Zhongli's advice is to "strive for immortality out of a living mortal and then to ascend to Heaven after that.

Under the other topics in Part One, Zhongli offers his own view of the true Great Tao by first pointing out what he thought of as Petty Ways such as fasting and retreats, abstaining from grains and alchemy. Then he explained the Ways governing the permanent running of Heaven and Earth, the alternation of the Sun and Moon and seasons, the mutual promotion and restraint between the Five Agents and applied them to the workings of the microcosm — human body. For instance, under the topic "On Five Agents," Zhongli compared the relationship between the Five Vital Organs namely, kidneys, liver, heart, spleen and lungs to that of the Five Agents, one being a promotion (analogous to "mother to son") and the other being a restraint (analogous to "husband to wife"), and pointed out that the Original Yang *Qi* is essential for the creation and workings of the internal organs, and so, basic to inner alchemy:

> The One *Qi* is born when a father and mother have intercourse, that is, their semen and blood make the form. The kidney(s) promote the birth of spleen; spleen, liver; liver, lungs; lungs, heart; heart, small intestine; small intestine, large intestine; large intestine, gallbladder; gallbladder, stomach; stomach, urinary bladder....The Yang *Qi* originates when the creation of the internal organs starts and it is embodied in the two kidneys. The kidney(s) represent Water. (When cultivation begins,) the Water is burned by the Fire (in it) and turned into Air and goes up to the heart. The heart which bears the Yang element interacts with the Air which also bears the Yang element and the Yin *Qi* (air) is produced, because whenever a thing goes to the extreme, it reserves itself. When the Yin air accumulates and condenses into liquid (fluid), the liquid goes down from the heart to the kidney(s). Originally the "mother" of heart, the "son" of kidney(s), the liver conducts the "air" of kidney(s) to the heart. Originally the "wife" of the heart, the "mother" of kidney(s), the lungs conduct the liquid of the heart to the kidney(s). The ascent and descent of air and liquid are just like the

(ascent and descent of) Yin and Yang of Heaven and Earth; the conducting (of air and liquid) by the liver and lungs is just like the alternating of the Sun and Moon. The Five Agents are but designated names for the five numbers. In terms of their interactions and creations, the One *Qi* of Original Yang is the basis. The liquid is produced out of the air and the air is produced out of the liquid. The kidney(s) is the root of the air and the heart is the source of the liquid. When the root (of kidney) is deep and firm, the True Water will naturally be produced out of the air. When the source of the heart is clean and neat, the True Fire will be produced out of the liquid. Extract the True Dragon from the Fire and the True Tiger from the Water. When the Dragon and Tiger interact, they will turn into Yellow Sprout. The Great Medicinal Material produced out of the Yellow Sprout is called Gold Elixir. When the Gold Elixir is formed, immortality ensues.

In Part Two of the book, Zhongli further discusses the terms like True Water, True Fire, True Dragon and True Tiger, Gold Elixir, and the inner alchemical implication of the alchemical terms like *qian* (lead) and *gong* (mercury), *cou* and *tian* (increasing and decreasing of temperature) and finally came to the exclusively inner alchemical term *he che* (river carrier or ferry cart). The name of River Carrier is rather interesting. It is used figuratively to refer to the circular movement along the Governor Vessel Meridian and Conception Vessel Meridian lying within the body, because the cultivated air has to be carried from one major occupant to another and from one *Dan Tian* (cinnabar field) or pubic region to another. Up to this point, the practice like this has proven to be effective in preventing certain kinds of disease and maintaining good health on the part of the practitioners, if it is done properly. But Zhongli has gone a bit further. In Part Three of the book, Zhongli discusses ways to make elixir and to become immortal, and further, to ascend to Heaven. As the ways he recommended are too mysterious and quite unacceptable to us who tend to think scientifically, we will just stop here.

In sum, the inner alchemical tradition founded by Zhongli and

Lü had a great impact on the later development of Taoism. Many of the ideas and practices are still followed by Taoists today.

## Section IV *Kaiyuan Daozang;* the Earliest Edition of the *Taoist Canon*

It is often an event of great importance to collect all the scriptures available into one large canon. As it takes enormous efforts, time and money to complete the work, usually it would not be possible if it received no support from the government. Therefore in Chinese history, the *Taoist Canon* was often compiled at a time when Taoism enjoyed great imperial favor. Considering the fact that Taoism was so much venerated by the Tang emperors, we are not surprised to find that the first *Taoist Canon* was compiled during the reign of the Tang Emperor Xuan Zong (712-756). And as the Emperor ordered to compile the *Canon* in the years called *Kaiyuan* (713-741), this *Canon* is generally called *Kaiyuan Daozang* (*Kaiyuan Taoist Canon*).

### 1. Sources of the First Taoist *Canon*

The earliest Taoist Canon was compiled in the Kaiyuan era, yet the Taoist scriptures and their cataloguing system appeared much earlier. In the following passages we will give a brief account of the evolution of Taoist scriptures and cataloguing system, according to which the *Kaiyuan Daozang* was compiled.

**The Records in *Yi Wen Zhi***

The earliest classification of Taoist scriptures seemed to appear in the chapter "Yi Wen Zhi," *History of the Han Dynasty*. There the author mentioned that *Daojia* (School of Taoist Philosophy) branched

off into 37 sects with 993 *pian* (chapters) of scriptures credited to them. Fangzhong (School of Sex Hygiene) branched off into 8 sects with 186 *juan* of scriptures to their credit; Shenxian (School of Spirit-Immortals) was divided into 10 sects with 250 *juan* of scriptures to their credit. However, we do not know how many of the scriptures or what scriptures continued to exist and became part of the scriptural tradition of Taoist Religion emerging in the second century A.D.

**The Record in *Xia Lan Pian* by Ge Hong**

*Xia Lan Pian* (which literally means "chapter of extensive reading"), one of the chapters in *The Book of Master Baopu*, is the earliest work ever found to have Taoist literature recorded extensively. It is a record of the titles of the books Ge Hong had read or found. By rough estimate, all the works recorded added up to 1,299 *juan*. Among them, 137 books had a title of *jing* (scripture), totaling 443 *juan*; 29 books had a title of *ji* (notes), totaling 51 *juan*; five books had a title of *fa* (method of cultivation), totaling 15 *juan*; four books had a title of *wen* (scriptural texts), totaling 10 *juan*; three books had a title of *lu* (activities of the deities), totaling 4 *juan*; two books had a title of *ji* (collected works), totaling 2 *juan*; 13 books had a title of *tu* (pictures and diagrams), totaling 13 *juan*; 56 books had a title of *fu* (talisman), totaling 620 *juan* and there were 12 kinds of miscellaneous books, totaling 150 *juan*.

*Xia Lan Pian* did not record the scriptures on sacrificial rites or liturgy nor did it record the books of Lao-Zhuang and other philosophers or those on medicine. Ge Hong had one comment in *Xia Lan Pian* as follows:

> "There were very few works actually written by Huang Di and Lao Zi. Now the scriptures are so many that they can be piled up as high as a hill just because those of later generations who venerated them created the scriptures expressing their own reflections."

### *Sandong Jingshu Mulu* by Lu Xiujing

After Ge Hong's death, Taoism entered a period of development. This is seen from the three scriptural traditions which emerged one after another in the fourth and early fifth centuries. On the one hand, Taoist literature as recorded in Ge Hong's *Xia Lan Pian* and the new works written by Ge Hong and his contemporary Taoists were inherited and passed on to next generations; on the other hand, a great number of new scriptures were produced through revelation. Yang Xi, Xu Mi, Wang Lingqi and Ge Caofu were the greatest creators of the new scriptures. Up to the time of Lu Xiujing (406-477), Taoist literature seemed too unsystematic for the new initiates to follow, therefore, Lu started to systematize it by dividing all the scriptures into "Three Caves (divisions)," namely, Dong Zhen, Dong Xuan and Dong Shen, each heading a group of scriptures belonging to the High Purity, Numinous Treasure and Three Emperors Traditions. The Catalogue to the Three Caves Scriptures was written with this purpose. The cataloguing system was adopted by the *Kaiyuan Daozang*, as can be seen from the title of the catalogue prepared for the *Canon — Sandong Qionggang* (*Precious Outlines of Three Caves*).

Lu's Catalogue is not extant now. The records from the Taoist side say that Lu listed over 10,000 *juan* of scriptures in the Catalogue, while the record from the Buddhist side approximated the number to over 1,000. As the official *History of the Sui Dynasty* recorded the number of Taoist scriptures during the Sui Dynasty, which came about one hundred years after the death of Lu, to be 1,226 *juan*, the Buddhist record may be truer to the fact. But still we find it hard to tell which of the scriptures Ge Hong recorded had disappeared and exactly which new scriptures had been created and found their ways into Lu's Catalogue.

### Other Scriptures and Catalogues

After Lu Xiujing, a Taoist master Meng prepared *Yuwei Qibu-*

*jing Shumu* (*Jade Belt Seven-Division Scriptural Catalogue*) which added the Four Supplements to Lu's original Three Caves Division in his classification of the Taoist scriptures, as we already mentioned in Section V of last chapter. While this seven division system was probably not adopted by the *Kaiyuan Daozang*, most later canons were based on this system. The other people who had prepared catalogues or recorded Taoist scriptures included Tao Hongjing, Ruan Xiaoxu, Wang Yan and so on. Their works reflect Taoist scriptural developments in different periods of time.

## 3. Compilation of the *Kaiyuan Daozang*

During the periods of the Sui, Tang and Five Dynasties (581-960) under discussion, a great number of Taoist scriptures and books were produced. The records from the *History of the Sui Dynasty* say that there were a total of 1,216 *juan* of Taoist scriptures in that dynasty (581-618). In the reign of the Tang Emperor Gao Zong (r. 650-683), the number of scriptures was recorded to reach 7,300 *juan*. That was what Yin Wencao, a Taoist master from the Lou Guan Tradition, wrote in his *Yuwei Jingmu*. Though we should take into consideration the fact that the figure might have been exaggerated or what the author of the *History of the Sui Dynasty* counted as one *juan* differed from Yin Wencao, we believe that the increase of a large number of Taoist scriptures in the early Tang period was plausible.

With an increasing number of Taoist scriptures, in 712 the Tang Emperor Xuan Zong ordered the abbot of Taiqing Monastery, Shi Chongxuan, and some other Taoist masters from other monasteries to compile *Yiqie Daojing Yinyi* (*Interpretations of All Taoist Scriptures*) based on the scriptures preserved in the monasteries in the capital. In the Kaiyuan era (713-741), the emperor sent his men to search for Taoist scriptures throughout the country and to make all the available scriptures into a canon. The catalogue for the canon

was called *Sandong Qionggang*. Because the canon was not extant, we don't know for sure the exact number of the scriptures it contained. Some said there were 3,744 *juan*, some others said the number was 5,700, and still some others said 7,300. The *Kaiyuan Daozang* did not start to circulate until after the era of Tianbao (742-756). The *Kaiyuan Daozang* suffered a great loss during successive wars. Though it was reconstructed several times afterward, its complete version did not survive.

## *Chapter Five*

# The Growth of Taoist Schools (960-1368)

The Tang Dynasty lasting for nearly three hundred years collapsed in the early tenth century. China was again plunged into civil wars. Fifteen kingdoms rose and declined in a span of seven decades. The national economic and military strength was severely weakened when the nation was brought to unity in the late tenth century by Zhao Kuangyin. The new dynasty, called Song, was facing ever-present threats from the Khitans, Jurchens and Mongols who rose in power one after another in the northern parts of China proper. In 1127, the Song capital moved from the north to the southern city of Hangzhou. The Southern Song Dynasty began, which lasted until 1279. From 1279 to 1368, China was ruled by the Mongols.

Taoism, which had developed for many centuries, became in a sense a national spirit for the Han Chinese and was often appealed to arouse the patriotic sentiment in the Han Chinese whenever the tribal threats from the north seemed too great. On the intellectual level, there was a syncretic tendency among the Three Schools of Teachings, namely Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Each school absorbed what was valuable in the other two and developed along its own line. There was a schism in the Inner Alchemical Tradition. The southern branch of the tradition led by Zhang Boduan and others

emphasized that Taoist cultivation should properly begin with the body — physical self, while the northern branch of the tradition led by Wang Chongyang believed that cultivation of the spiritual self should precede that of the physical self.

This period also witnessed the emergence of many new schools of Taoist establishments. In the north, three Taoist lineages: Taiyi, Dadao or Zhendadao and Quanzhen appeared one after another. They finally merged and joined as the Quanzhen Tradition. In the south, the Jingming and Qingwei Taoist lineages emerged. They finally merged and joined as Zhengyi School, together with other schools of talismanic tradition in the south. In China, as perhaps in most other countries, the royal attitude played a very important part in the development of religion, therefore our discussion of Taoism in this period will start with the support of Taoism by the Song emperors.

# Section I Support of Taoism by the Song Emperors

## 1. The Song Emperor Zhen Zong and Taoism

It should be said that the first two Song emperors, Tai Zu (r. 960-976) and Tai Zong (r. 976-997), treated Taoist Religion on an equal footing with Buddhism. No special favor was given to Taoism as a religious force, though they did a few things like offering sacrifices to Lao Zi, ordering to build some Taoist monasteries and granting honorific titles to some eminent Taoist masters they liked, such as Chen Tuan.

The true support of Taoism began with Emperor Zhen Zong (r. 998-1022), especially since 1008, the first year of the reign title Dazhong Xiangfu (which literally means "large and medium auspicious talismans"). The official *History of the Song Dynasty* records

the words of the emperor speaking to his ministers in January of 1008 as follows:

> Near midnight on the 27th day of the 11th month last year, when I had just fallen asleep, the room became very bright. I heard a divine being donned in a star-shaped crown and red clothes speaking: "On the third day of next month, you should perform a one-month Yellow Register Taoist service, then you will receive the three large and medium divine talismans." When I rose in fear to answer him, he already had disappeared and so I ordered to have his words noted down. Since the first day of the lunar month, I have been fasting and retreating in the Chaoyang Palace, performing the Taoist service in expectation of the divine gift. Just now I have heard the report that in the south corner of the roof over the left gate of the royal city there hangs a piece of yellow silk. The silk is about seven meters long. It wraps something which looks like a writing scroll, with three blue bands running across. There seem to be some words written on the seal. Probably it is the very thing that the divine being has revealed to me.

The auspicious words or talismans on silk were none other than the "divine oracle" which was intended to justify Song's sovereignty in general and Zhen Zong's right to rule in particular. As for the writing scroll, the record said that written on it were words from three ancient classics, namely *Shu Jing* and *Hong Fan*, two Confucian classics and the *Dao De Jing* of Lao Zi. The intended message was something like this: as the emperor (Zhen Zong) was known as a man of supreme filial piety, who followed the ultimate principle of the Tao, he would perpetuate his life and the life of his dynasty as well if he followed the Taoist teachings of quietude and frugality.

That was but the first instance of divine revelation to Emperor Zhen Zong. As the years went by, more and more revelations were proclaimed to have appeared. Among them, the 1013 revelation was most distinctly Taoist in contents. In the official *History of the Song Dynasty*, we have the following record:

> In the tenth month, 1013, the Emperor (Zhen Zong) said to his

close ministers: "I dreamt of the former divine being conveying the message of the Jade Emperor to me: Formerly I asked your ancestor Zhao [Yuanlang] to transmit you the divine revelations. Now I ask him to meet you again. You must venerate him in the same way as the Tang emperors venerated their Emperor Xuanyuan (referring to Lao Zi). The next day, I dreamt of the divine being again, carrying the message of the Celestial Worthy: I will be sitting in the west, prepare six seats for me. On that day, the Taoist service was performed at Yan En Palace. After the first round of drum beating was over, an exotic smell penetrated the nose. Then a yellow light outshone the candle-light and filled the whole palace. There I witnessed with my own eyes the descending of the Celestial Worthy accompanied by his guards. I began to kowtow to him. Soon a yellow fog appeared and then it scattered and moved way up the western flight of steps leading to the palace chamber while the guards were staying on the eastern flight of steps. After the Celestial Worthy settled down, six persons made bows with their hands clasped and sat behind him. Before I made a bow to the six persons, I was stopped by the Celestial Worthy who asked me to move forward and said: "...I am the first ancestor of Zhao (family). I have become Emperor Xuanyuan by reincarnation.... During the Later Tang Dynasty (923-936) I received an order from the Jade Emperor to descend on the first day of the seventh month to administer all regions beneath and lead the clan of Zhao. One hundred years have passed since then. You as an emperor must learn to take care of your people and must not fail to make your previous ambition come true." With these words, he left his seat, rode on the clouds and left.

His ministers seemed to believe him or at least pretended to believe him, for, as the record goes, some of them later went to the aforesaid palace and bore the Emperor their testimony. The Emperor was all the more encouraged. The following month, he granted the ancestor of his own creation an even longer title than the one the Tang Emperor Xuan Zong gave to Lao Zi. Loosely translated, the title reads: Sagely Ancestor, the Numinous of Supremacy, the Highest Tao, Nine Heavens, Life Administrator, Immortality Pro-

tector, Celestial Worthy, Great August." Now his Sagely Ancestor Zhao Yuanlang was invested as a very important deity second only to the Jade Emperor, and took the place of Lao Zi as the supreme deity in the Taoist pantheon throughout the Song Dynasty.

One of the major reasons behind Emperor Zhen Zong's veneration of Taoism as shown in the above quotations was that he needed the spiritual power in order to strengthen his political status. The following passage from "Chronicle of Emperor Zhen Zong," *History of the Song Dynasty*, expresses this idea clearly:

> Since Emperor Tai Zong's defeat in Youzhou Prefecture, the Song emperors hate to resort to war. The Khitans called their emperor Tian (Heaven) and empress Di (Earth). It is not known how many times a year they offered sacrifices to Heaven. Whenever they shot down a wild goose and got hold of it before it fell down to the ground or whenever a bustard threw itself down to the ground, they would all call it a gift of Heaven. They would offer their sacrifices to Heaven and bragged about their feats. Some Song officials who were familiar with the Khitans' customs and understood their emperor's hatred for war gave their emperor the advice of "making propaganda through the Spiritual Way," so as to impress their enemy. How could it possibly weaken the determination of their enemy to invade their land? The Emperor, who did not do anything to subdue his enemy but followed the above advice, was only grasping the "branch" (nonessentials) of the matter.

The "Spiritual Way" seemed not to have helped Emperor Zhen Zong much: the threats from the northern tribes were always there to stay. But there was one good thing which was attributable to him. Under his aegis, a second *Taoist Canon* was compiled. A detailed discussion of the *Canon* will be offered in Section V of this chapter.

## 2. Support of Taoism by Emperor Hui Zong

The support of Taoism was pushed to a new height by Emperor

Hui Zong (r. 1101-1125). During his over 20 years of reign, the limelight Taoism received to a certain extent outshone that during the reign of the Tang Emperor Xuan Zong.

Emperor Hui Zong's good personal impression of Taoism might have been formed early in his reign because Liu Hunkang, the 25th patriarch of the Maoshan Taoism, cured him of his infertility. At the time, his faith in Taoism was rather personal, for what he sought after was no more than things such as "elixir prescription" and talismans. But after the year 1111, his faith in Taoism was tinged with a strong political color. Since then tension between his government and the northern tribes became more and more unbearable for the Emperor. He shared his predecessor Emperor Zhen Zong's belief that resorting to spiritual support would ease the tension. But Emperor Hui Zong certainly went farther than his predecessor.

First, he proclaimed himself to be the "Divine Emperor of Life", as well as the head of "religion and state." In 1116 he summoned to his court a Taoist priest called Lin Lingsu, who convinced him that he was originally the eldest son of the Jade Emperor, who had descended from the highest realm of Heaven called Shenxiao and who was later made head of the highest Taoist institution Tao Lu Yuan. The next year, he suggested to Lin that he be made the trinity of Spiritual Head, Lord Lao and Emperor (on Earth). The sequence to *Zi Zhi Tong Jian* (*History as a Mirror*) had the following record of the words of Emperor Hui Zong:

> I was formerly the eldest son of the Jade Emperor and the Lord of the great Shenxiao. Seeing that the religion of the barbarian Jurchen Jin (referring to Buddhism) had penetrated into China and made people there burn their fingers, puncture their arms and abandon their life to gain Buddhahood, I began to have a great pity on them. Therefore I begged the Supreme Lord to make me a human emperor, so that all the people under Heaven would be converted to the True Tao. The Supreme Lord acceded to my request and had my younger brother Lord Qinghui take charge of the Shenxiao Palace. I have always been

> in fear that the revision of our teaching (referring to Taoism) is not careful and comprehensive enough. You may present your memorial and make me Spiritual Head — Lord Lao — Emperor.

What the Emperor really did as the spiritual head was nothing more than reviewing some Taoist scriptures, however, the status of Taoism as an official religion was clearly defined.

Secondly, Emperor Hui Zong tried many means to raise the status of Taoist priests.

Many times, he issued an order to have well-accomplished Taoist priests recommended to his service and heaped favors upon them. For instance, the above-mentioned Lin Lingsu was one of the beneficiaries. The "Biography of Lin Lingsu" in the official History of the Song Dynasty said that Lin "contended with the princes for the right of way" and that he "well fed and clothed over 20,000 disciples." And just because of him, his hometown, Wenzhou, was raised to a higher level of administration. In addition, Emperor Hui Zong paid much attention to training Taoist priests. He had Taoist academies established in every county and prefecture along with Confucian academies, and selected Taoist scholars through a kind of examination modeled after that for Confucian scholars. In the sequence to *Zi Zhi Tong Jian*, again we have the following record:

> From now on, Taoist learners are allowed to receive training in the academies in counties or prefectures. They will study the major Taoist classics such as the *Inner Scripture of the Yellow Emperor* (*Huangdi Neijing*), the *Dao De Jing* and the minor Taoist scriptures like *The Book of Zhuang Zi* and *The Book of Lie Zi* as well as the major Confucian classics such as *The Book of Changes* and the minor Confucian classics like *The Book of Mencius*. The Taoist learners will be granted different levels of certificate, comparable to official ranks, such as Primary Taoist, Higher Taoist, Supreme Taoist... on the basis of their performance in the examinations....

Because of his preferential policy on Taoism, many Confucian scholars turned to Taoist academies for learning.

What is more, Emperor Hui Zong adopted a very biased policy against Buddhism in order to raise the status of Taoism. In 1107, he passed an order that Taoist priests and priestesses be placed above Buddhist monks and nuns. In 1117, he issued an order encouraging the conversion of Buddhists to Taoism. In 1119, he went to the extreme of attempting to eliminate all traces of Buddhism. In the sequence to *Zi Zhi Tong Jian*, we have the following report:

> The Buddha should be changed into Gold Immortal of Great Enlightenment [*Da Jue Jin Xian*], all the other Buddhist deities should be called Immortal Being [*Xian Ren*] or Great Scholar [*Da Shi*], Buddhist monks should be called Scholar of Virtue [*De Shi*], their attire should be changed and Chinese family names should be used for them. Buddhist temples should change their names into *Gong* or *Guan* [two popular names for Taoist monasteries]... And *De Shi Si*, [the governmental department in charge of Buddhist affairs] should be subordinated to *Tao Te Yuan* [the governmental department in charge of Taoist affairs.]

Finally, Emperor Hui Zong was eager to promote the compilation of Taoist literature and the construction of Taoist monasteries.

Soon after he was enthroned, Emperor Hui Zong issued several times the order to search for Taoist scriptures throughout the country. During his reign years called *Zhenghe* (1111-1118), he invited eminent Taoist scholars from many places to compile a Taoist canon called *Zhenghe Wanshou Taoist Canon*. More will be said about this in Section V of this chapter. As a last instance, like the Tang Emperor Xuan Zong, the Song Emperor Hui Zong venerated *The Book of Lao Zi*. He wrote his own commentary on it and had it published. And Emperor Hui Zong had more: he also wrote commentaries on *The Book of Zhuang Zi* and *The Book of Lao Zi* and a few other writings related to Taoism.

In addition, as a move to promote Taoism, Emperor Hui Zong had many Taoist monasteries built in the national capital and other areas. For instance, he had a Shenxiao Monastery built in every

prefecture where he himself was offered sacrifices. Some of the monasteries built at the time are still preserved in part today: Yuanfu Monastery on Mt. Maoshan is a good case in point.

The promotion of Taoism by Emperor Hui Zong did not save his government nor his own life. When the troops of the Jurchen Jin moved across the Yellow River, Taoist deities seemed to have deserted him in his time of need. In the end, Emperor Hui Zong was captured and died in the prison the Jurchen Jin prepared for him. His government, unable to resist the enemy forces, moved the capital south of the Yangtze River to the present city of Hangzhou. There began the Southern Song Dynasty. As far as Taoism itself is concerned, though the over enthusiasm on the part of Emperor Hui Zong spread Taoist influence, it also ruined the reputation of Taoism as a respectable religious tradition. One of the direct consequences was a shift from practical Taoist arts to a more spiritualized Taoist cultivation. The growth of new Taoist schools in this period was a right response to the circumstances.

## Section II Flourishing of the Inner Alchemical School in the Song-Yuan Period

Though inner alchemy as a Taoist tradition is generally believed to have emerged at the end of the Tang Dynasty and during the Five Dynasties, it truly flourished in Song and Yuan periods. Quite a few eminent inner alchemists were active in this period. Some spread the theory on inner alchemy with easy-to-grasp illustrations, some incorporated the cultivation of other religious traditions such as Buddhism into inner alchemy and still some others organized new Taoist schools. The inner alchemical theory and practice gained overall maturity in this period.

## 1. Chen Tuan (870?—988) and His *Diagram of the Ultimateless* (*Wuji Tu*)

### A Lift Story

We do not know for sure exactly when and where Chen Tuan was born. The *History of the Song Dynasty* records his birthplace as Zhenyuan, Bozhou, in present Luyi County, Henan Province. Legend has it that once, at the age of four or five, when he was playing beside a river near his home, an old woman in green fed him with her milk and Chen grew brighter and brighter ever since. It is also recorded that he had a photographic memory and a literary genius. During 930-933 he took the middle-level imperial civil service examination, but did not pass it. This setback might have greatly influenced his decision to lead a life of a hermit. For the next 20 years he practiced Taoist arts such as breath control and abstention from eating grain on Wudang Mountain in present Hubei Province. Later he moved to Yuntai Monastery on Mt. Huashan in present Shaanxi Province where he often practiced the "art of sleeping." He would sleep for a hundred days, and on some occasion for three years. This appears to be exaggerated. In fact, as he was such a famous sleeper, later a play called *Chen Tuan in Sound Sleep* was written and acted out based on this theme. It was said that Emperor Ming Zong (926-933) of the Later Tang Dynasty had invited Chen Tuan to his court and offered Chen three girls as a gift, but Chen kindly declined his offer.

Chen Yuan was a person who never wanted to fawn on his superiors. When Emperor Shi Zong summoned him to court and asked him about alchemy, Chen Tuan answered, "You are the lord of the four seas, you should be concerned about how to govern your country. Why are you so interested in alchemy?' In another instance, when Premier Song Qi asked him, "Master, you have attained the Tao of meditation and cultivation, can you be our teacher?" Chen replied,

> I am "a man of mountains and fields," I am useless to society. Besides, I really do not know about alchemy and the theory of life preservation through breath control, and I have no arts to pass on to you. Even if a person can ascend to Heaven in broad daylight, what good does it do to this world? The present emperor of ours has well-chiseled features, which represent the perfection of Heaven and Man. He has a thorough knowledge of the past and present and of the laws governing social stability and disorder, he is a real sagely and benevolent lord. It is the right time for you, officials, to share one heart with the emperor in governing the country. The arts of cultivation lie just here.

Chen Tuan died in 989. Some records say that at the time he died he was already 118 years old. That is not altogether impossible considering the fact that Taoists usually lead a long life. If the records are true, Chen must have been born in 871. During his long years of hermit life, Chen wrote many books: some were about alchemy and practical arts, some were about divination and still some others employed diagrams to express his philosophical idea about nature and to show the process of inner alchemy to be followed. The *Wuji Tu* was one of his great inventions.

### The *Wuji Tu* and Its Inner Alchemical Meaning

The *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* (*Taiji Tu*) with two fish representing Yin and Yang forming a circle, has become very familiar in the West. But most Westerners do not know that this diagram, called *Taiji Tu*, was directly inspired by the *Wuji Tu*, the *Diagram of the Ultimateless*, an invention made by Chen Tuan.

The *Diagram of the Ultimateless* as shown below is a picture of cosmic and human evolution, if we read it from top to bottom. The blank circle on the top symbolizes the evolution of the universe from a state of the Ultimateless (*Wuji*) to the Ultimate. The second circle from the top with mixed black and white stripes symbolizes the interaction between Yin and Yang. The third part of the picture (middle) with a few lines joining the small circles symbolizes the

interaction between the Five Agents. The small circle down below in the picture represents something born from the interaction of the Five Agents. That something creates two opposite forces of masculinity and femininity, symbolized by the blank circle down below. The two opposite forces in turn produce all the creatures in the universe, and the last circle at the bottom is used to represent this last stage of evolution.

That was how a cosmologist would interpret the diagram. But Chen Tuan saw a deeper meaning in it. What he wanted to teach us to do was to read from the bottom up in order to get the essence of inner alchemy. Huang Zongyan, a scholar of the early Qing Dynasty, has the following explanations on the *Diagram of the Ultimateless* (*Xuanpin Zhimen Lianjing Huaqi Lianqi Huashen Wuqi Chaoyuan Qukan Tianli Lianshen Huanxu Fugui Wuji*):

> The diagram is to be read from the bottom up, then the proccess of making elixir is made clear .... As far as the diagram is concerned, the circle at the bottom is called Xuanpin Zhimen (Gate to Mystic Femininity) or *Gu Shen* (Valley Spirit). The *Pin* (feminity) is characterized by "aperture," the *Gu* (valley) is characterized by "void." For an inner alchemist, it refers to the hollow place between the two kidneys, the life gate to a human body. It is also the place where the *qi* (human energy) originates. The *qi* is an anterior one, which has a gestating power. The five sense organs (ears, eyes, lips, nose and tongue) and all the bones are based on it. As a next step, the anterior *qi* is raised, which is symbolized by the upper circle. This step is called *Lianjing Huaqi*, *Lianqi Huashen*, by which it means to convert the tangible *jing* (male semen) to the intangible *qi* and then to convert the intangible *qi* into *shen*, a magic free-moving spiritual force. The force penetrates to ail the five internal organs, then we have the central part of the diagram, with Wood and Fire at the left, Metal and Water at the right, and Earth in the center joining all the other four agents. This part of the diagram is called *Wuqi Chaoyuan* (five *qi* heading for the origin). If this step is followed properly, Water and Fire (within the body) will have interaction or intercourse, then "pregnancy" ensues.

> Then we come to the next circle with black and white in between. This is called *Qukan Tianli* (taking the Yang element from *Kan* represented by two Yin and one Yang in between to fill in on *Li* represented by two Yang and one Yin). A "Sagely Fetus" (with pure Yang) is then formed. As it returns to the origin, we have the last circle as the symbol. This last stage is called *Lianshen Huanxu, Fugui Wuji*, which just means to cultivate the *shen* to a state of void and to return to the Ultimateless. Hence the goal is reached. To sum up, first find the "aperture," then cultivate the (physical) self, then harmonize (the agents), then get the "medicine," and finally cast off one's old self and become an immortal. The secret to true immortality lies just here.
>
> — *Taiji Tu Shuo Bian, Yi Xue Bian Hou*

As can be seen, Chen Tuan's diagram and his conception of inner alchemy inherited much of the preceding inner alchemical tradition. The cosmic evolution as expressed in the diagram was inspired by *The Book of Changes*; the idea of reversion to the origin was inspired by Lao Zi's teachings. For instance, Lao Zi said, "Reversion is the movement of Tao" (Chapter 40), "Return to the root, then tranquility prevails; when tranquility prevails, there will be a returning of life" (Chapter 16). Chen's inner alchemical theory was based on Wei Boyang's *Can Tong Qi*, in that immortality of a human being was possible as long as one followed the eternal law of the universe. Chen's inner alchemical practice itself, however, followed directly the teachings of Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin. In their representative work *Zhong Lü Chuan Tao Ji*, a detailed discussion of the process of inner alchemical practice was offered. And the five steps Chen suggested epitomize the whole process of the practice.

Chen's contributions to the development of Taoism were original in some respects. By employing the diagram like the *Wuji Tu*, Chen was able to make his inner alchemical practice both philosophical and easy to grasp. Because a deeper meaning was expressed in a simple method, the diagram gained popularity especially among the educated elite. In fact, the whole school of Neo-Confucianism

of the Song Dynasty was in some way inspired by this diagram, though we know Chen Tuan's diagram was reinterpreted along the line of Confucianism by the earliest Neo-Confucianist, Zhou Dunyi. The following is the translation from Zhou Dunyi's explanation of the diagram which he called *Taiji Tu* (*Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate*).

> The Ultimateless (*Wuji*) produces the Supreme Ultimate (*Taiji*)! The Supreme Ultimate through Movement produces the Yang. This Movement, having reached its limit, is followed by Quiescence, and by this Quiescence, it produces the Yin. When Quiescence has reached its limit, there is a return to Movement. Thus Movement and Quiescence, in alternation, become each the source of the other. The distinction between Yin and Yang is determined and the Two Forms (i.e. the Yin and Yang) stand revealed.
>
> By the transformation of Yang and the union therewith of Yin, Water, Fire, Wood, Metal and Earth are produced. These Five Agents become diffused in harmonious order and the four seasons proceed in their course.
>
> The Five Agents are the one Yin and Yang; the Yin and Yang are the one Supreme Ultimate; the Supreme Ultimate is fundamentally the Ultimateless. The Five Agents come into being, each having its particular nature.
>
> The true substance of the Ultimateless and the essence of the Two (Forms) and Five (Agents) unite in mysterious union, so that solidification ensues. The principle of *Qian* (the trigram symbolizing Yang) becomes the male element, and the principle of *Kun* (the trigram symbolizing Yin) becomes the female element. The Two Ethers (*qi*) by their interaction produce all things, and these in turn produce and reproduce, so that transformation and change continue without end.
>
> (— Translation adapted from Fung Yu-lan's *A History of Chinese Philosophy*)

From this passage, we can see that Zhou seemed to explain Chen's diagram. Little doubt, Zhou Dunyi's *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* was based on, if not copied from, Chen Tuan's

*Diagram of the Ultimateless*. As we read on, we will find that the central idea which Zhou wanted to illustrate was different from that of Chen in his original diagram of *Wuji*. Let us go on reading what Zhou said:

> It is man alone, however, who receives these in their highest excellence and hence is the most intelligent (of all beings). His bodily form thereupon is produced and his spirit develops intelligence and consciousness. The five principles of his nature (the five constant virtues corresponding to the Five Agents) react (to external phenomena), so that the distinction between good and evil emerges and the myriad phenomena of conduct appear. The sage regulates himself by means of the mean, correctness, human-heartedness, and righteousness, and takes Quiescence as the essence. [Zhou Dunyi himself comments on this: "Having no desire (*Wu Yu*), he is therefore in a state of Quiescence."] Thus he establishes himself as the highest standard for mankind....

Because of his dual contribution, as a Taoist inner alchemist and an inspirer of Neo-Confucianism, Chen Tuan's fame increased and reached farther and wider as time went on.

## 2. Zhang Boduan and the Southern School of Inner Alchemy

As an inner alchemist, Zhang Boduan (948-1082) inherited the Zhongli-Lü Inner Alchemical Tradition through his master Liu Haichan, but he developed the theory and practice so much that he is often regarded as the founder of the new branch of the Zhongli-Lü Tradition. Perhaps, Chen Tuan's teachings may also have exerted some influence on Zhang Boduan. In one of his poems, Zhang mentioned that a Perfect Being passed to him *Zhi Xuan Pian* (*Dissertation on the Gist of Profoundness*) in his dream and Chen Tuan had a book bearing this title. In addition, in Zhang Boduan's masterpiece, *Wu Zhen Pian* (*Dissertation on Perceiving Reality*), we

find hints to three major phases of cultivation, namely *Lian Jing Hua Qi* (transform the *Jing* into *qi* through cultivation), *Lian Qi Hua Shen* (transform the *qi* into *shen* through cultivation) and *Lian Shen Huan Xu* (return to the void through cultivation of the *shen*) as was demonstrated in Chen Tuan's *Diagram of the Ultimateless.*

**A Life Story**

Zhang Boduan was a native of Tiantai in present Linhai County, Zhejiang Province. When he was young, he had an insatiable desire for learning. He pored over the books on the Three Teachings (Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism) and books on other subjects like law, military strategy, medicine, and so forth. Once he served as a minor official, but one incident changed his life. The *Annals of Linhai County* has a record of this incident:

> When Zhang served as a minor official, he had a strong liking for eating fish. Once, while in office, his family had his meal sent there. His colleagues made a sport of him by hiding the cooked fish between two roof beams. Pingshu [a courtesy name for Zhang Boduan] thought it must have been his servant girl who did the stealing, and so whipped her after he returned home. Thus humiliated, the girl hanged herself. A few days later, he saw a horde of insects moving downward along a pillar between the beams. When he took a more careful look, he was startled to find that the insects were moving out of the decayed fish. Pingshu heaved a sigh and murmured to himself: The bamboo slips I have so far written on could have filled a whole case, but I could not find out the truth about the fish stealing! With this, he wrote a poem as follows:
>
> *I have carried with me the knife-pen for forty years,*
> *I have encountered thousands of rights and wrongs.*
> *While one family is fed and clothed,*
> *Thousands of other families complain.*
> *While one enjoys half a lifetime's honor as an official literatus,*
> *He is committing a transgression beyond all redemption for a hundred generations.*

*I have seen enough of the purple ribbon and golden seal,*
*Wearing awn shoes, carrying a bamboo stick I am as free as a bird.*
*When someone asks me the may to the Isle Penglai,*
*Follow the clouds on the green mountains and the moon in the sky.*

After he finished the poem, he set fire to the official documents. Because of this offense, he was exiled to Lingnan, in present Guangdong Province. Later, he accompanied an official named Lu Shen to Chengdu, Sichuan, where Liu Haichan, a disciple of Lü Dongbin, transmitted to him the secret of inner alchemy. It was said that he was punished three times because he passed the secret to unworthy adepts. But his works survived in the end, though his ambivalence in telling the secret was reflected in his works, typically in his masterpiece *Wu Zhen Pian*. Zhang Boduah passed away in Tiantai. During the Qing Dynasty Emperor Yong Zheng (r. 1723-1735) granted him the posthumous title Ziyang Perfect Being and a Taoist monastery called Tongbai was dedicated to him. Today part of the monastery buildings and complex still remain and are inhabited by a few Taoist priests of the Quanzhen Tradition.

### *Wu Zhen Pian*

The *Wu Zhen Pian* literally means "a dissertation on perceiving reality." The author adopted *shi*, *ci* and *qu*, three popular forms of poetry to express his ideas. In this work we find that Zhang generally follows the teachings of Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin as well as Chen Tuan's conception of three stages of cultivation, namely *Lian Jing Hua Qi*, *Lian Qi Hua Shen* and *Lian Shen Huan Xu*. As the *jing*, *qi* and *shen* are three important terms used in the Wu Zhen Pian, and in fact, in almost all the books on inner alchemy, we will try to explain these three terms before we discuss Zhang Boduan's place in the history of Taoism.

It is a Taoist belief that the three vitalities *jing*, *qi* and *shen* are essential for one's life. Each of these three has a hidden and a manifest ramification. For instance, there is a hidden or anterior *jing* and a manifest or posterior *jing* in one's body. In modern sci-

entific terms, the anterior *jing* to a large extent refers to a hormone, while the posterior *jing* to a large extent refers to semen. There are also a hidden or anterior *qi* and a manifest or posterior *qi* in a person. While the anterior *qi* is hard to define in modern scientific terms, it might just refer to inner breath inducing substance. The posterior *qi* to a large extent refers to ordinary human breath. Finally every person is believed to have a hidden or anterior *shen*. While the hidden or anterior *shen* to a large extent refers to the spirit which is believed to reside in the human heart, the posterior *shen* to a large extent refers to the active, mental power to think and will. The secrets in all stages of inner alchemy lie in regulating the three vitalities, hidden and manifest, so that, as many inner alchemists believed, the true, immortal self will finally be freed from the constraint of the body and united with the Great Tao.

While inheriting the preceding Inner Alchemical Tradition, Zhang Boduan displayed some distinctive features of his own.

Firstly, Zhang upheld the syncretism of the Three Teachings. In his preface to *Wu Zhen Pian*, Zhang said:

> ....Therefore, Lao Zi and Sakyamuni with their teachings on *ming* (physical self) and *xing* (spiritual self) lead people to cultivate the life-seed and gain easy access to the gate of immortality. For Sakyamuni, the goal of cultivation is *kong* (S. *Sunya*, void). If only a person experiences a sudden and perfect enlightenment, he will reach the goal. If a person has not exhausted his karma, he will be in a continuing stream of transmigration. For Lao Zi, the goal of cultivation is *zhen* (perfection). If a person grasps the essence of cultivation, he will immediately ascend to the throne of perfect sageliness. If he is still unaware of his natural self, he is really under delusion. Further, *The Book of Changes* can be understood as an exploration of the fundamental issues concerning *xing* and *ming*. The Lu edition of *Analects* says "no fancying, no desiring the undesirable, no sticking to a wrong course, no promoting of self-interest." These are the mysteries of *xing* and *ming* which Confucius implies.... Though the teachings are three, the Tao is one. It is a pity that Taoists and Buddhists of later genera-

tions stick to their own views and oppose each other. As a result, the same essence implied in the Three Teachings is misunderstood as being divergent.

Secondly, while the cultivation of both *xing* and *ming* were both considered to be important, Zhang emphasized that at the initial stage, cultivation of *ming* should have priority.

In the text of *Wu Zhen Pian*, Zhang said, "If there is no *ming*, where does *xing* stay?" In his afterword Zhang explained:

> ...In fact, people in this world have a blunt sense of the true Tao. They firmly believe that their physical bodies are all what they have. They hate to see their bodies perish and wish to live a physically immortal life. Ultimately it will be hard for them to gain enlightenment. To satiate their excessive wish, Huang Di and Lao Zi, out of mercy, first taught them the arts of cultivating physical life, then led them on to the right path. The essence of physical cultivation is to make *jin dan* (gold elixir). The primary elements used to make *jin dan* are *shen shui* (spiritual water, a metaphor for anterior *jing*) and *hua chi* ("flower pool," a metaphor for anterior *qi*). Therefore the teachings of the *Dao De Jing* and *Yin Fu Jing* (*Scripture of Secret Revelations*) gained popularity in the world.

In fact, the conception as to whether the cultivation of *ming* should come before or after the cultivation of *xing* distinguishes the Southern Inner Alchemical School, of which Zhang Boduan is regarded as the founder, and the Northern Inner Alchemical School, of which Wang Chongyang is considered the initiator. More will be said about the Southern Inner Alchemical School in a later part of this section and still more of the Northern Inner Alchemical School will be dealt with in Section IV of this chapter.

Thirdly, Zhang Boduan regarded the *Yin Fu Jing* as one of the major sources of inner alchemy, of equal importance as the *Dao De Jing*.

Before the Song Dynasty, Wei Boyang's *Can Tong Qi* was usually taken as the most important guide for alchemical and inner

alchemical practices. While most practitioners of the Song Dynasty still felt that way, Zhang Boduan turned to the *Yin Fu Jing* and *Dao De Jing* for guidance and theoretical justification. In *Juan* 58 of *Wu Zhen Pian*, Zhang said: "The number of precious characters in the *Yin Fu Jing* exceeds 300, the number of numinous words of the *Dao De Jing* reaches 5,000. There has been a countless number of immortals, who find the true essence in these two books."

As the *Dao De Jing* had long been venerated as a holy scripture, it is no surprise that Zhang Boduan used it as one of his guides. But why exactly did he venerate so highly the *Yin Fu Jing*, a book rediscovered and commented on by Li Quan and circulated during the reign of the Tang emperor Xuan Zong? Because the *Yin Fu Jing* had been credited to the Yellow Emperor, any quotation from it would be regarded as indisputable truth. Besides, the book is so compact, that it can be interpreted almost to anyone's advantage.

Lastly, Zhang Boduan incorporated the teachings of Buddhism, especially Chan (Zen) Buddhism, into his overall scheme of inner alchemy.

In the Appendix to the *Wu Zhen Pian*, he listed a number of Zen poems in order that the readers would better understand the later and the final stage of inner alchemical cultivation, that is, the cultivation of *xing*. This is not surprising since Zhang Boduan was enthusiastic in preaching Buddhist teachings in his later years and since Zen Buddhism had much to teach Taoists in the way of *xing* cultivation. It is now also easier to understand why the Qing Emperor Shi Zong (r. 1723-1735) called Zhang Boduan *Chan Xian* (Zen Immortal) and the Appendix to the *Wu Zhen Pian* was incorporated into the Buddhist canon.

## 3. Branches of the Southern Inner Alchemical School

The Southern Inner Alchemical School was actually founded during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) in the areas south

of the Yangtze River. Though Zhang Boduan lived during the Northern Song (960-1127), he is often venerated as its founder. Here the word "branch" should be understood broadly, because Zhang Boduan and few of his disciples had established any religious establishments with monasteries. But most of them distinguished themselves with theoretical and practical knowledge of inner alchemy and they all identified themselves as inheritors of Zhang Boduan's teachings, hence it is considered as a distinctive inner alchemical branch. From the existing records, four branches of the sect seemed to have continued after the death of Zhang Boduan.

The first lineage started with Shi Tai, followed by Xue Daoguang, Chen Nan, Bai Yutang, Peng Si and so forth. Shi, Xue and Chen were not professional Taoist priests, nor did they establish any religious organization. But each of them had published important works on inner alchemy, for instance Shi Tai had written *Huan Yuan Pian* (*Dissertation on Returning to the Origin*); Xue Daoguang had published *Fu Ming Pian* (*Dissertation on Returning Life*) and *Dan Sui Song* (*Song of the Quintessence of Elixir*); Chen Nan had published *Cui Xu Pian* (*Dissertation on "Green Void"*).

Besides inner alchemical practices, some of them were engaged in other kinds of activities. Chen Nan and Bai Yutang were also known for their "thunder magic" (*Lei Fa*), a magical conjuration meant to drive away evil influences. Bai Yutang, the most famous of all, established a center in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, where he spread his "thunder magic" and alchemy. Among many of his disciples, Peng Si was perhaps the most influential. It is said that Peng established his own lineage in Fuzhou.

The second lineage started with Liu Yongnian, who is said to have received instructions from Zhang Boduan in person. This seems quite unlikely to be true, for Zhang Boduan died well before the life of Liu. Anyhow, Taoists of this branch believed so. The most famous master of this branch was Weng Baoguang, whose

*Commentary on the "Wu Zhen Pian"* interpreted Zhang Boduan's theory in a new light. He believed that the *Wu Zhen Pian* should be understood as a guidance for dual cultivation by a male and female together. And he practiced what he preached.

The third lineage is generally considered to have started with Zhao Yuandu, who was originally initiated in the Quanzhen School in the north. When he made an itinerary around the country, Zhao met Shi Tai, who passed on to him the true teachings of Zhang Boduan. Zhao published *Jin Dan Da Yao* (*Essentials of Gold Elixir*) and *Three Commentaries on the "Wu Zhen Pian."* He combined the teachings from both the Northern and Southern Inner Alchemical Schools and gave more prominence to the arts of the latter. His works are now regarded as important guides for the cultivation involving Yin and Yang (Female and Male). His immediate disciple was Chen Zhixu.

The fourth lineage is said to be active in Zhang Boduan's native place Tiantai. We have no idea about who belonged to this lineage and whether there existed any representative work on inner alchemy. Our only knowledge of its existence is derived from the book *General Directory of True Taoist Schools and Branches*. In entry No. 7, we find the title "Zi Yang branch," under which 12 five-character lines are listed. Each of the characters represents one of the generational names assigned to each initiated disciple of this branch. The Southern Inner Alchemical School with all its lineages was finally incorporated into the Quanzhen School upon the recommendation of Chen Zhixu, who inherited both traditions of the north and south. Zhang Boduan, Xue Daoguang, Chen Nan and Bai Yutang, who had formerly been venerated as the Patriarchs of the Southern School, were listed as Perfect Beings together with Liu Yongnian and Peng Si. The Seven Perfect Beings of the South were placed on a par with the Seven Perfect Beings of the North. The stories of the Seven Perfect Beings of the North will be told in more detail in Section IV of this chapter.

# Section III Development of New Talismanic Schools in the South

Conventionally, we divide Taoism of all traditions into two major groups: Immortalist Tradition and Talismanic Tradition. This is based on the major Taoist arts employed in each lineage. While Immortalist Tradition tends to be more individualistic in their pursuits, Talismanic Tradition tends to serve the community. Though there were mutual borrowings of arts between these two, the distinction existed. Among the Taoist traditions we have covered, so far Five Bushels of Rice Taoism, Northern Celestial Master Taoism, Southern Celestial Master Taoism, including the Lingbao Tradition and the Maoshan Tradition, all belong to the Talismanic Tradition.

During the Song Dynasty, there were some new developments of talismanic traditions. Firstly, Confucian ethics were incorporated into the Taoist practice, which resulted in Jing Ming Zhong Xiao Tao (Taoism of Purity, Brightness, Loyalty and Filial Piety), called briefly Jing Ming Tao. Secondly, inner alchemy was introduced into Taoist ritual conjurations, which resulted in new form of Taoist arts such as "thunder magic" and "the orthodox art of heavenly heart." The Taoist priests applying these arts formed new talismanic schools. Thirdly, the Taoism of the Zhang lineage, which had remained in almost absolute obscurity since the third century, began to receive imperial attention during Song and Yuan periods. As its influence grew, the talismanic schools in the south gradually came to accept this lineage as the orthodox tradition.

## 1. Jing Ming Tao

In a Taoist monastery called Yunong Wanshou Gong on the Western Hill near the city of Nanchang in present Jiangxi Province, a board hangs over the gate, inscribed with the four Chinese char-

acters *Zhong Xiao Shen Xian* (Loyalty, Filial Piety, Spirit-Immortal). About 700 years ago, it was the very center of Jing Ming Tao.

Taoists of the Jing Ming Tradition generally worshiped Xu Xun, a Taoist master of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, as their founding father. There are many legends and stories about Xu Xun. More than ten scriptures in the Taoist Canon contain an account of his biography, but they do not agree about many facts. According to *Xu Zhen Jun Xian Zhuan* (*An Immortalist Biography of Xu, the True Lord*), Xu was born in 239 in Nanchang. He once served as on official of Jingyang County. After predicting an imminent national crisis, he left his office and moved to the Western Hill. There he performed many deeds for the people in his community and was thus highly venerated after his death. It is not known what Xu Xun actually did. But from the existing books written by Hu Huichao, who claimed to preach Xu's message about the year 683, we may conclude that Xu's teachings attached great importance to loyalty and filial piety as a means of cultivation.

After the start of the Song Dynasty, the cult of Xu Xun began to receive official attention. Xu Xun was deified as a powerful god who was capable of doing things like killing flood dragons and other mythical animals, invoking storms and floods or controlling plague. Emperors Tai Zong (r. 976-997), Zhen Zong (r. 998-1022) and Ren Zong (r. 1023-1063) all granted names to Xu's temple and Emperor Hui Zong granted Xu Xun a grand title called "True Lord of Magical Treats."

In 1126 when the Jurchen Jin army stormed Kaifeng, capital of the Northern Song Dynasty, the imperial court moved to the southern city of Hangzhou and made its new capital there. But the threat from the north was never completely alleviated. In this context, He Zhengong (or Zhou Zhengong) began to spread Xu Xun's teachings. In Volume One of the *Complete Works of Purity, Brightness, Loyalty and Filial Piety,* we have the following recording:

> In 1128, ... the disasters caused by war were widespread and the

> people were plunged into the depth of suffering. He Zhengong prayed to the True Lord, begging him to salvage the people. Before long, the True Lord Xu descended to Yuchuang, saying that he would come down to Yunong Monastery on the 15th day of the eighth moon in 1131. At noon on that day, He Zhengong was waiting in the monastery for his arrival, when the True Lord descended through thick clouds ... passing on to He Zhengong the *Salvational Scripture of the Flying Immortal* and the *Great Way of Purity, Brightness, Loyalty and Filial Piety*. He Zhengong built an altar and initiated over 500 disciples. He also performed grand rituals to ward off evil influences so that the people would enjoy a peaceful life.

As can be seen, this is a made-up story. The story was created because He Zhengong wanted to make his teachings more popular and acceptable by the people who had already faith in Xu Xun. His teachings at the time appealed to many people including those from the upper strata of society. It is understandable that at times of a national crisis something is needed to unite the people. The Taoist teachings emphasized loyalty and filial piety, the basis of Confucian ethics, and was thus able to gain popularity for a time. A dozen scriptures were created either by He or his disciples. Many of them can still be found in the Ming edition of the *Taoist Canon*.

As matter of fact, as a new Taoist school, Jing Ming, Purity and Brightness, was initiated by a Taoist master named Liu Yu (1257-1308). Liu was a native of Zhangchang, in present Fengxin County, Jiangxi Province. Several times, Liu Yu claimed to have received revelations from Xu Xun, Hu Huichao and other Perfect Beings. For instance, in 1282, Liu claimed that Xu had told him through revelation: "You should urge your disciples not to do things against their conscience, not to kill living beings and to remain loyal and pious toward parents and emperors and to help people as much as they can."

In addition, Liu Yu had systematized the teachings of He Zhengong, but proposed something of his own. That was reflected in his main work *Analects of Yuzhen* (Yuzhen was another name for Liu

Yu). For instance, he originated the idea of *jing* (purity) and *ming* (brightness) and considered this state of cultivation essential for becoming loyal and pious. Here is how he explained the two terms: "What is *jing*? Not stained by anything. What is *ming*? Not touched by anything. If a person has not been stained nor touched by anything, he will naturally acquire loyalty and filial piety."

Further, Liu criticized the methods of inner alchemy based on substances like *jing* and *qi*. In the same book, Liu Yu quoted Xu Xun by saying:

> The True Lord says: The great teachings of Jing Ming emphasize cultivation of heart and body, they are by far different from the so-called cultivation of *jing* and *qi*... During the Golden Age, people were as plain as uncarved wood. What need did they have to make restoration or practice cultivations? Their words and actions were all made in accordance with the Tao. Just because the people of later generations became more and more crafty, everything they did was against their conscience without their realization. Occasionally, there were some people who really admired the Tao, but they did not know how to discipline their hearts, which is the basis of cultivation. Instead, they would consider cultivation of *jing* and *qi* to be the supreme stage of practice...The Jing Ming Tradition teaches the way of going "back to the ancients".... Loyalty and filial piety are taken as basic to all other stages of practice. As the people's hearts became purified and enlightened, they will be filled with "Four Virtues" (referring to duty to parents, respect for one's elder brothers, loyalty to emperors and sincerity to friends), their inner spirit (*shen*) will communicate with the spirit of the universe (*ling*), and they attain the Two without the cultivation of it.

All in all, with its emphasis on ethical values, the Jing Ming Tradition became quite popular for a time. Parallel to this trend of syncretism with Confucianism was the emergence of a few "good books" (*shanshu*) such as *Taishang Ganying Pian* (*Tract of the Most Exalted One on Actions and Retributions*). More will be said about those "good books" in the next chapter.

## 2. New Talismanic Schools: Shenxiao, Qingwei and Tianxin

Another development of Taoism during the Song Dynasty was the flourishing of a few new schools, which combined talismans with the arts of inner alchemy. While Shenxiao and Qingwei were descendants of the Lingbao Scriptural Tradition, the Tianxin school had much to do with the Five Bushels of Rice Tradition. The Taoists of all these traditions believed that proper cultivation of "inner light" in themselves would greatly add to the magic power of whatever arts or means employed to ward off evil influences and solicit blessings. While the Tianxin lineage could not be identified after the mid-Yuan period, the Shenxiao and Qingwei schools were vaguely identifiable through the generation names recorded in "General Directory of Taoist Schools and Branches."

All those talismanic schools and branches finally merged into the Zhengyi Tradition, which regained acceptance and orthodoxy during the Yuan Dynasty.

## 3. Zhengyi Tradition Regaining Orthodoxy

We have mentioned earlier that Taoist Religion was initiated by the Three Zhangs at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty. The name of this earliest religious tradition changed over time. It was first called "Five Bushels of Rice Taoism" during the Eastern and Western Jin Dynasty. Then it was called "Celestial Master Taoism" during the Southern and Northern Dynasties, but it began to be called "Orthodoxy Unity (One) (Zhengyi) Taoism" since the late-Yuan period. This name is still retained today to distinguish it from Quanzhen Taoism.

According to the *History of the Yuan Dynasty*, Zhang Sheng, the third successor of Zhang Daoling, moved to the Dragon-Tiger Mountain in present Jiangxi Province. According to the Zhang

Family's own genealogy, the Celestial Masters were active in this area and continued unbroken. But the Zhang Family have been almost completely eclipsed from the Taoist historical scene since it surrendered to Cao Cao, the founder of the Wei Kingdom. During the reform movements in the Southern and Northern Dynasties, there were few records of the Zhang Family's activities. During the Tang Dynasty, the Maoshan Tradition received the limelight. During the Song Dynasty, things began to improve for the Zhang Family, but not much, except for an occasional granting of titles by some emperors. It suddenly gained official recognition and then orthodox status from Yuan emperors. Why? Here is what the *History of the Yuan Dynasty* says:

> By the year 1276, the Yuan Emperor Shi Zu (Kublai Khan) had already conquered southern China. He sent his messenger for Zhang Zongyan, the 36th Celestial Master (on Dragon-Tiger Mountain). Before the Celestial Master arrived at the capital city, the Emperor ordered his court officials to greet him and received him as an honored guest. As he met the Master, he told him: "In 1259 when I stationed my army on a small island in Er Zhou Prefecture [present Hubei Province], I had Wang Yiqing to visit your father. Your father reported to the Emperor through Wang that within twenty years the country would be united." The words of the immortal finally come true today. So, ...he entrusted the Master to lead Taoism in southern China.

The fundamental reason behind Khan's favoritism toward Taoism of the Zhang lineage in our opinion was to maintain a safe rule. As a Mongol, the Emperor needed collaboration with a religious faith which enjoyed a traditional reputation and influence among the Han people. Taoism of the Zhang lineage met this requirement. After his death, this preferential policy continued virtually unchanged. In 1304, the formal title of the Zhengyi (Orthodoxy-Unity) Tradition was granted to the 38th Celestial Master Zhang Yucai, who assumed the leadership among the three major talismanic schools in the south. The other two talismanic schools were centered at Mt.

Gezao (in present Jiangxi Province) and Mt. Mao (in present Jiangsu Province) respectively. While the former belonged to the Lingbao Tradition, the latter belonged to Shangqing Taoism. These three major schools finally merged, and the name Zhengyi Tao was used since the Ming Dynasty for all the Taoist talismanic schools and branches.

## Section IV Emergence of New Taoist Schools in Northern China

During the early years of the Southern Song Dynasty, the Chinese people in the north were under the harsh rule of the Jurchen Jin. In response, three Taoist schools emerged one after another, namely Taiyi, Zhenda and Quanzhen, which commanded a large following among the people who sought spiritual refuge. In this section, we will give a brief account of the first two schools and a more detailed account of the third one.

### 1. Taiyi School

According to "Shi Lao Zhuang," *History of the Yuan Dynasty*, the Taiyi Taoist Order was founded during 1138-1140 by a Taoist priest called Xiao Baozhen. This tradition was so called because Xiao and his disciples practiced a kind of talismanic art named Taiyi. Taiyi originally was the name of the supreme deity venerated in northern China.

Xiao was a native of Weizhou (present Jixian County, Henan Province). The Taiyi Order he initiated was similar to the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism in that both based their self-cultivation on Lao Zi's teachings and served the community with their talismanic arts. At the beginning, Xiao preached in his own house, later he

moved to a monastery where he initiated even more people from far and near. In 1148, Jin Emperor Xi Zong (r. 1136-1149) granted him an audience and respected him even more after that. The Emperor donated a horizontal board inscribed with his calligraphy of four Chinese characters *Taiyi Wanshou* (Everlasting Taiyi) to the monastery. In 1166, Xiao Baozhen died in the monastery. His disciple Xiao Daoxi succeeded him.

Xiao Daoxi's family name was Han. The Taiyi Order, however, imitated Buddhism in the way of changing to the family name of its patriarch; hence Xiao became his family name. Xiao Daoxi was very eloquent and had very high literary and artistic talents. He enjoyed popularity among the educated elite. Xiao was a philanthropist and a great master of talismanic arts. As a result, his followers were numerous and his influence reached as far as the East Sea. He died in 1186. Jin Emperor Shi Zong (r. 1161-1189) granted him the posthumous title of Perfect Being of Chongming.

The other identifiable five successors to Xiao Daoxi all received imperial favors in one way or another. But after that, we have found few traces of its existence. The Taiyi School declined at the end of the Yuan Dynasty.

## 2. Zhenda School

Almost simultaneously another Taoist order was initiated in northern China by Liu Deren (1122-1180). Liu was a native to Leling (in present Cangzhou, Hebei Province). A Tianbao Monastery Tablet, unearthed in 1984, and written by Liu Deren's disciple, gives us a brief account of his early story.

> When Master Liu was seven years old, he began to develop an interest in reading Taoist scriptures. As he came across the line "Empty their heart and fill their belly" [from *The Book of Lao Zi*], he gained a sudden enlightenment. He soon cut off all his worldly ties and left home. When he reached the south of Wengkou Valley, in

Yancheng, Zizhou (to the south of the present city of Zibo, Shandong Province), Liu was so attracted by the scenery there that he began to uproot thorns and bushes, leveled the land and built houses. That was where my master stopped.

However, the initiation of the Zhenda Taoist Order can be better understood if it is placed in wider context. In 1126, when Liu was only five years old, the Northern Song Dynasty collapsed. North China was occupied by the Jurchen Jin. The continuous wars in the area impoverished the people materially and spiritually. Liu, like the rest of Han Chinese, was unable to escape from this historical fate. A few rebelled against their new rulers, but their uprisings were put down. Many expected that the Han army in the south would come and rescue them, but they were disappointed. Under these circumstances, the Zhenda Taoist Order, which emphasized moral discipline and a puritanical way of living, offered a new way of escape for the desperate people. The nine commandments recorded in Song Lian's *Story of Perfect Beijing Liu* told much about Liu's teachings:

1) Treat animals as if they were of your own kind. Do not foster the intention of killing them.

2) Be loyal to the Emperor, dutiful to parents and sincere to friends. No flowery language nor spiteful remarks are permitted.

3) Abstain from obscene ideas and actions. Remain tranquil and peaceful.

4) Stay away from wealth and power. Be content with paucity and humbleness. Toil to eat and make ends meet.

5) Gambling, playing chess, and stealing are not permitted.

6) Abstain from drinking alcohol and eating meat. Food and clothes should be consumed just for survival, not for a show off.

7) Be modest and not ambitious. Be one with the universe.

8) Do not resort to external or superior powers for advantage; humbleness and self-respect will bring more glory.

9) One will not be humiliated if he is self-contented. One will not fail if he knows where to stop.

— *Song Lian Wenji*, "Shu Liuzhenren Shi"

As can be seen from the above, Liu's teachings such as self-contentment, oneness with the universe, were to a great extent influenced by Lao Zi's teachings. In fact, internally, the Taoists of the Zhenda Order emphasized self-cultivation more than any other acts such as inner alchemy or talismans. When people came to them for medical advice, they would only recommend prayers to the "Void and Emptiness" and did not resort to medical herbs, nor to acupuncture or talismans. Perhaps, it is because of their unique way of action, which was believed to be in strict accordance with Lao Zi's teachings, that this tradition was called *Zhenda Dao*, meaning literally "True Great Taoism."

Liu Deren died in 1180 and was succeeded by Chen Shizheng, who in turn was succeeded by Zhang Xinzhen, the third patriarch, and Mao Xizong, the fourth patriarch. When the fifth patriarch Li Xicheng was in charge, it was pushed to prominence. The Yuan Emperor Xian Zong (r. 1251-1259) gave him an audience and heaped great favors upon him and his successors. For a time, Zhenda Taoism spread to the East Sea, to the Yangtze region in the south and Sichuan and Gansu in the west. At the end of the Yuan Dynasty, the Zhenda Tradition disappeared.

## 3. Quanzhen School

The Quanzhen Ordre was the most important Taoist tradition to emerge in northern China. As the Taiyi and Zhenda Orders gradually disappeared from the scene, the Quanzhen Order survived and became more and more influential. In fact, it assimilated practices of Taiyi and Zhenda and from the Ming Dynasty, became one of the two most important Taoist traditions. The other tradition was the Zhengyi Tradition.

### Wang Zhe, Founder of the Quanzhen Tradition

The initiator of the Quanzhen Tradition was a man called Wang

Zhe, styled Chongyang. He was born in 1112 at a Dawei Village in Xianyang in present Shaanxi Province. He was a gifted writer as well as a great master of martial arts. In 1138 he took the middle level of the imperial examination run by Jin rulers, and passed it. But he had a quite unsuccessful political career. When he was 47 years old, he was no more than a minor official. The following year, he pretended to be insane and quit his office and home and moved to Nanshi Village on Mt. Zhongnan in present Shaanxi Province. There, he dug a cave underground for cultivation. He named the cave "Living Dead Man's Tomb." Three years later he moved to another village called Liujiang in the mountains and continued with his cultivation together with some of his comrades.

In 1167 when the Jin Emperor Shi Zong granted an audience to Liu Deren, founder of Zhenda Taoism, and expressed his support and encouragement for Liu's efforts, Wang Zhe set out on a trip to the east. When he reached Ninghai (in present Mouping County, Shandong Province), he stopped and initiated seven great disciples, namely Ma Yu, Tan Chuduan, Liu Chuxuan, Qiu Chuji, Wang Chuyi, Hao Datong and Sun Bu'er, the only female disciple. With the assistance of these seven disciples, Wang Zhe's teachings spread widely. In what is present Shandong Province, Wang and his disciples established five religious communities, all of which took the title of *San Jiao* (three teachings). The title itself suggested Wang's intention to harmonize Buddhism and Confucianism with Taoism. Wang died in 1170. In the Ming edition of the *Taoist Canon*, there are quite a few works ascribed to him.

**Seven Perfect Beings**

After Wang's death, Ma Yu directed the affairs of the Quanzhen Order. After Ma and three of his fellow disciples, Qiu Chuji, Liu Chuxuan and Tan Chuduan, escorted their master Wang Zhe's coffin to Liujiang Village, and the center of the Quanzhen Tradition

shifted to Wang's native place. In 1174, when their terms of guarding their master's tomb were over, they said goodbye to each other. Each found a new place around the region either for cultivation or preaching. Among them, Ma Yu was the first person to preach and initiate disciples. After the Chongyang Wanshou Monastery was built at the foot of Mt. Zhongnan, Ma Yu began his propagation work in the nearby provinces. He would often beg in streets and markets in order to attract new followers. His ascetic way of living and his artistic way of preaching converted many intellectuals to his belief. The popularity of his preaching, however, aroused the suspicion of the Jin rulers. In 1181 he was driven back to his native place in Shandong Province. Ma Yu established the Yuxian branch of the Quanzhen Tradition. In the "General Directory of Taoist Schools and Branches," there is a record of the generational names for the Taoist priests of this branch.

Tan Chuduan first moved to Chaoyuan Monastery to the south of the Weihe River after he said goodbye to his fellow masters. Then he made a journey eastward to the present Hebei Province. It was said that Tan had the art of making himself appear in different places at the same time and that he did not discriminate against his disciples because of their social status. Later he went back to Chunyang Cave in Huayin County, Shaanxi Province. He died in 1183. Tan established the Nanwu branch of the Quanzhen Tradition. The generational names for this branch can also be found in the "General Directory."

Hao Datong joined his fellow Taoist masters in 1171 attending the burial of their master Wang Zhe. After that, he traveled eastward. In 1175, he reached Wozhou (in present Zhaoxian County, Hebei Province), where he practiced meditation under an ancient bridge. He remained silent all the time. It is said that neither the hitting of broken tiles on his head, nor the rising flood of the river would make him move an inch. In 1212, he died in his native place Ninghai. The 15-volume *Tai Gu Ji* represents his main

teachings. The branch he established is called Huashan, the generational names of which also appear in the "General Directory."

Since 1169, Wang Chuyi had been staying for nine years in a cave named Yunguang in Wendeng, Shandong Province. After that, he left and was able to perform many magical treats. Many people followed him because of that. But some local officials distrusted him. It is said that once an official tested him by letting him drink poison. Wang did as he was told, but he was not affected in the least. That incidence won him more fame. Wang was several times summoned by the Jin emperors to the capital (in present Beijing) either for consultation in personal affairs or to perform rituals for national wellbeing. Wang died in 1217. His representative work is the four-volume *Yunguang Ji*. The branch he founded is called Yushan, which also left the generational names in the "General Directory."

Liu Chuxuan left for Luoyang in present Henan Province not long after his master Wang's funeral. He practiced cultivation amidst the busy city streets. Nothing whatever seemed to divert his attention. In 1176, he went back to his hometown to see his mother, but was falsely accused of murder by the town folk. Liu did not try to defend himself and was put in prison for nearly one hundred days. Later, the man who had committed the murder confessed and so Liu was set free. After Tan Chuduan died in 1185, Liu began to direct the affairs of the Quanzhen Tradition. He died in 1203. In his life, Liu wrote commentaries on many important Taoist scriptures such as *The Book of Lao Zi, Yinfujing* and *Huangtingjing*. His own teachings are preserved in *Xian Le Ji* (*Collection of Immortal Bliss*). Liu was the founder of the Suishan branch. In the "General Directory" we can find its generational names.

Sun Bu'er was the only woman among Wang Zhe's seven disciples. She was formerly the wife of Ma Yu. In 1169, she left her husband and cultivated by herself in a monastery in her hometown.

In 1176, she traveled westward in order to consult Ma Yu about cultivation. Ma did not meet her, but wrote her a poem about the secrets of cultivation. Then Sun moved to Luoyang in present Henan Province, where she found a comrade called Feng. She commanded a good following among the women there. She died in 1182. Her teachings are reflected in *The Words of Woman Immortal Bu'er*, probably the earliest woman's work on inner alchemy. She founded the Qingjing branch, whose generational names in the "General Directory" start with the line "Quanzhen Tong Xuan Li" (literally meaning "the messages of all profound teachings running through Quanzhen Taoism").

Qiu Chuji, the youngest of Wang Zhe's seven disciples, was to become the most influential figure of all. Qiu was a native of Qixia, Dengzhou in present Shandong Province. He was apprenticed to Wang at the age of 19. After he escorted his master's coffin and buried it in Liujiang Village in 1169, he resided in a cave in Panxi in the present city of Baoji, Shaanxi Province. In the daytime he would beg for one meal. Wherever he went, he wore a straw hat. It is said that for six years he did not sleep a wink. Later he moved to Longmen Mountain (to the southeast of the present city of Baoji) where he cultivated for another seven years. His ascetic life won respect from an official of rather high rank, who asked him to preside over the Chongyang Monastery.

In 1190 Qiu left for his native place Qixia because the Jin Emperor Zhang Zong (r. 1190-1209) placed a ban on Taoism. In 1214, Qiu persuaded the Yang An'er Rebel Army into surrender and made a big name for himself. The Jin government, the Southern Song government and Genghis Khan all sent people to invite him. Qiu had a very keen political insight. He accepted the invitation from Genghis Khan and declined the invitations from the other parties. In the spring of 1220, when he was already 72 years old, Qiu, together with 18 disciples, made a hazardous trip to see the Khan. It took them two long years to finally reach the camp on

the Kush Mountain (near Samarkand in present Afghanistan), where Genghis Khan was planning a new military campaign. Genghis Khan granted him several audiences. When asked about how to conquer the world, Qiu responded that the key was to stop killing. When asked about how to govern a country, Qiu advised on venerating Heaven and loving the people. When asked about how to live a long and immortal life, Qiu recommended a way of living based on peace of mind and curbing desire. Genghis Khan was very pleased with his answers and began to call him "Living Immortal." The following year when Qiu asked to go back to China, Genghi Khan entrusted him with the direction of all the Taoist priests and allowed him to preach in all the regions of his domain. In addition, Qiu and his disciples were all exempted from taxation. In *Perfect Being Changchun's Journey to the West*, Li Zhichang gives a detailed account of this journey and Qiu's meetings with Genghis Khan.

In 1224, Qiu stayed in Tianchang Monastery in Yanjing (present Beijing's White Cloud Monastery) whose name was later changed into Changchun Monastery (Changchun is Qiu's alternative name). There Qiu established eight religious communities to spread his teachings. As the war between Mongols and the Jurchen Jin went on in northern China, Qiu started to offer refuge to the war-torn people by issuing Taoist credentials. His popularity became very great among the people in the region. The Longmen branch Qiu founded became the most prosperous among all branches of the Quanzhen Tradition. In the "General Directory of Taoist Schools and Branches," we can find a long list of generational names of this branch. Qiu Chuji died in 1227, leaving a few works such as *Da Dan Zhi Zhi* (*The Right Points to Great Elixir*) and the *Collection of Panxi*.

### The Teachings and Practices of the Quanzhen Tradition

The basic teachings of the Quanzhen Order were first shaped by

Wang Chongyang, who set forth the following 15 rules of conduct for his disciples:

1) A priest must live in a monastery, for when one has a place to accommodate the body, he will have peace of mind and heart and a smooth flow of *qi* and *shen*.

2) A priest must often travel in order to meet the masters who will help him understand the essence of life and self.

3) When one does his readings one should never be led astray by the words themselves. Read with one's mind's eye.

4) Study herbs and pharmacy and cure people's disease wherever and whenever possible.

5) A thatched hut should be enough to make a monastery, for it provides shelter. Over decoration will only make the matter worse.

6) A priest should join company with his betters. The public monastery is a place where he can stay.

7) When meditating, one should concentrate the mind. Don't let wild thinking divert attention.

8) Empty impure ideas from one's mind so that one will remain peaceful.

9) Regulate *jing* and *qi* within one's body to match the workings of the five natural agents.

10) Cultivate oneself in an easy manner.

11) Cultivate both physical life and the self.

12) To find the way to sagehood, one must determine to spend years doing hard work and morally good deeds.

13) One must transcend the Realm of Desire, the Material Realm and the Immaterial Realm.

14) The art of life preservation lies in a correct understanding of the Tao and sufficient self-nurturing.

15) As long as one strips off the layer of dust on one's heart, he will immediately ascend from the mortal world.

As these rules of conduct were generally followed by members of the Quanzhen Tradition, we are able to formulate some of its distinctive characteristics:

First, there was a strong tendency to harmonize Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. For in Rule 12, Taoist priests were encouraged to do good deeds as a means of cultivation. In Rule 13, Taoist priests were required to transcend the realms of the three worlds. The names of these three worlds were obviously borrowed from Buddhism. A further manifestation of the syncretic tendency of Quanzhen Taoism appears from the scriptures read by Taoist priests. Wang Zhe himself is recorded to have urged his disciples to read the Confucian *Scripture of Filial Piety*, the Buddhist *Sutra of the Mind* and the *Dao De Jing*.

Secondly, the Quanzhen Tradition in many ways imitated Chan (Zen) Buddhism. It was an invention of Chan Buddhists to practice monasticism, to cultivate the self and to downplay teaching by words. In Rule 1, Taoist priests were required to live in a simple, isolated monastery. In Rule 6, they were encouraged to visit superior masters in a public monastery. In Rule 3, Taoist priests were not encouraged to read for understanding with the naked eye, while not totally negating the words.

Lastly, the Quanzhen Tradition emphasized cultivation of the inner self more than the physical body. In Rules 7, 10, 11 and 15, it was made clear that Taoist priests must cultivate themselves to remove the layer of dust believed to cover their real selves. Immortality was understood as being in a state where the real self was recovered. This emphasis on cultivating the spiritual self or "nature" prior to the physical self or *ming* characterized the Northern Inner Alchemical School.

During the Yuan Dynasty the Quanzhen School suffered from two great setbacks. One occurred in 1258 when Emperor Xian Zong reigned the empire and the other occurred in 1281 when Emperor Shi Zu (Kublai Khan) reigned the empire. Both times, a great number of Taoist scriptures were burned. But on the whole the Quanzhen Tradition continued to spread its influence at the local level.

# Section V Compilations and Revisions of the *Taoist Canon* and Other Important Scriptures of the Song-Yuan Period

## 1. Compilations and Revisions of the *Taoist Canon* in the Song Period

During the Song-Yuan period, several compilations and revisions of the *Taoist Canon* took place. During the Song Dynasty alone, five attempts were made to revise and compile the *Taoist Canon*. The first attempt occurred during the reign of Emperor Tai Zong (r. 976-997), who after assembling over 7,000 *juan* of scriptures, asked Xu Xuan and Wang Yucheng, two of his top officials, to proofread and collate them. After deleting the overlapping texts, they got 3,737 *juan*, which were catalogued according to the transmitted method of Three Main Divisions (in twelve categories) and Four Supplements.

The second attempt occurred in 1008-1016 during the reign of Emperor Zhen Zong. A few officials and Taoist priests joined in revising and compiling Taoist scriptures based on the original catalogue prepared by Xu and Wang. The *Taoist Canon* was expanded to a number of 4,359 *juan*. The new catalogue was submitted to the Emperor who named it *Bao Wen Tong Lu* (*General Catalogue of Precious Texts*).

The third attempt was made also during the reign of Emperor Zhen Zong. This time it was Zhang Junfang who was responsible for the project. According to Zhang, the revision and compilation of the *Taoist Canon* were occasioned by the discovery that the *General Catalogue of Precious Scriptures* contradicted in many ways with the *San Dong Qiong Gang*, the Kaiyuan catalogue of the *Taoist Canon* of the Tang Dynasty and the *Yu Wei Catalogue of Seven Divisions*. By collating the existing Taoist classics and scriptures

from some of the monasteries in present Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces and incorporating some scriptures of Manichaeism from Fujian, Zhang and quite a few Taoist priests compiled a new canon with 4,565 *juan* of scriptures. This new canon was called *Tian Gong Precious Canon of the Great Song*.

The fourth attempt to compile and revise the *Taoist Canon* was made during the reign of Emperor Hui Zong (r. 1101-1125). Sometime during 1102-1110 the Emperor ordered to search for Taoist scriptures throughout the country and had some Taoist priests collate the *Tian Gong Precious Canon of the Great Song*. As a result, the number of scriptures in the *Canon* was increased to 5,387 *juan*. In 1113, the Emperor again ordered to search for more scriptures and had Wang Daojian, a Taoist priest from Dragon-Tiger Mountain, to proofread and revise all the available scriptures, the result of which became *Wanshou Daozang* (*Taoist Canon of Everlasting Life*). The number of scriptures totaled 5,481 *juan*. As it was done in the reign period called Zhenghe, this new canon was called either *Zhenghe Taoist Canon* or *Wanshou Zhenghe Taoist Canon*. That was also the first time that the *Taoist Canon* was officially printed.

The fifth or last attempt to revise the *Taoist Canon* was made in the years 1174-1189 during the reign of the Southern Song Emperor Xiao Zong (r. 1163-1189). The revised edition was called *Qiong Zhang Bao Zang* (*Fine Writings and Precious Canon*). Little detail is known of this new edition of the Taoist Canon.

## 2. Revisions and Compilations of the *Taoist Canon* in the Jin-Yuan Period

Owing to the repeated wars between the Song army and the Jurchen Jin, the *Zhenghe Taoist Canon* was either damaged or scattered. It became incomplete after the Jurchen Jin conquered northern China. In 1186, the Jin Emperor Shi Zong (r. 1161-1189)

ordered to search for the scattered scriptures and transfer them from Kaifeng (in present Henan Province) to the Tianchang Monastery in Beijing. He had the *Taoist Canon* from Yuxu Monastery temporarily borrowed for collation in Tianchang Monastery. In 1190 one year after the death of Emperor Shi Zong, the Jin Emperor Zhang Zong (r. 1190-1208) ordered to continue the revision of the Taoist classic. The revised classic was called *Xuandu Precious Canon of the Great Jin*, which consisted of 6,455 *juan* of scriptures. Unfortunately the printing blocks were burned after Tianchang Monastery caught fire in 1202.

The revision and compilation of the *Taoist Canon* done from 1237 to 1244, are mainly the work of Song Defang and Qin Zhi'an, two Taoist masters of the Quanzhen School. Their edition of the canon included quite a few works written by the leading Quanzhen masters before them. It was called *Precious Canon of Xuandu*, which is recorded to have had over 7,800 *juan* of scriptures. However, the canon became quite incomplete after the Yuan emperors twice ordered to burn the Taoist scriptures on grounds of their falsity. The *Catalogue of Lost Scriptures in the "Taoist Canon" of the Ming Edition* records the names of most scriptures lost during the two burnings.

## 3. *Yunji Qiqian* and Important Taoist Scriptures for Further Reading

Although the *Taoist Canon* as a whole did not survive the repeated wars and the polemics between Buddhism and Taoism during the period under discussion, we are fortunate to have available *Yunji Qiqian* (*Seven Slips of Taoist Bookbag*), an abstract of *Tiangong Precious Canon of the Great Song* made by Zhang Junfang. As a miniature canon, *Yunji Qiqian* preserved the essence of Taoist scriptures created before the Song Dynasty. *Qiqian* (seven slips) means the seven divisions. *Yunji* refers to Taoist scriptures and

books. The miniature canon had altogether 122 *juan* of scriptures, coveting a wide spectrum of Taoist Religion, from the general discussion on the Tao and its virtue and various Taoist arts, to the witness reports of Taoist efficacy.

## *Chapter Six*

# Taoism During the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368-1911)

Taoism, especially the Quanzhen Tradition, enjoyed a great boost during the Yuan Dynasty, thanks to the efforts of quite a few eminent masters of the tradition and favors from the Mongolian rulers. However, as the Mongolian Empire collapsed in the 14th century and was replaced by a new dynasty called Ming, the organized Taoist movements were generally under restraint. That was because, for one thing, the new rulers were Han Chinese who considered Confucianism as a more useful tool. Moreover, the founder of the new dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang (r. 1368-1398), was formerly a Buddhist monk who knew the intricacies of monastic politics inside out. The other Ming emperors generally followed the policy set forth by their founder, though some of them, out of personal belief in Taoism, heaped favors upon some Taoist priests, as was the case of Cheng Zu (r. 1403-1424) and Shi Zong (r. 1522-1566).

Taoism had a more difficult time after the Manchurian Qing Dynasty replaced the Ming in 1644. Tibetan Buddhism was declared the official religion of the Qing Dynasty and Neo-Confucianism was made its official ideology. Now Taoism was relegated to a lesser status though it was not yet considered as a heresy. The official rank of the Celestial Masters from Dragon-Tiger Mountain was

lowered to an unprecedented level and the conventional privilege of court audiences was taken away during the Qianlong era (1736-1795) and not resumed ever since. As far as its relations with the state are concerned, Taoism was unquestionably on the decline.

However, still some noteworthy events occurred in this period. A new Taoist school called Wudan Taoism and two branches of Yin-Yang School of inner alchemy emerged. This period also witnessed the revival of the Longmen Branch of the Quanzhen Tradition with its new emphasis on ordination practices. Lastly, perhaps most important of all, the Ming edition of the *Taoist Canon* was compiled in the Zhengtong era (1436-1449) and a few copies of it have been handed down.

# Section I Taoism and Its Relation with Ming Emperors

## 1. Zhu Yuanzhang and Taoism

It has been recorded in the family history of Han Celestial Masters, that before he was enthroned as emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang had already started to have a political "flirt" with the Celestial Masters of Dragon-Tiger Mountain. In 1361, when Zhu Yuanzhang was still the king of Wu, he summoned the Celestial Master and asked him to direct the Taoist affairs. He also passed an order that "No one, be he military or civilian, is allowed to destroy the ritual implements or buildings of Dragon-Tiger Mountain or blaspheme the gods, nor to dispossess the Celestial Master of the land and houses. Otherwise, he will be punished."

In 1367, one year before he became emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang wrote to then Celestial Master Zhang Zhengchang. In the letter, Zhu said:

> Since January, I have been concerned with the state affairs and thus became sick. It has long been my wish to report to the Lord-On-High, but I know of no one except you who can present the reports to the Celestial Court, therefore I have sent a messenger to your place. I expect that with the help of the "spirits" of your ancestors the competent master you assign will send my prayers to Heaven, as it will be the same sincere intention of you as a Master.

But after Zhu Yuanzhang became emperor, he took many measures to downplay Taoism.

First, he eliminated all the traces of Taoist symbols which might damage imperial authority. For instance, he forbade the use of the traditional title Tianshi, Celestial Master, for the successors to Zhang Daoling in Dragon-Tiger Mountain. Instead he ordered to use the name *Zhengyi Sijiao Zhenren*, which literally means "Perfect Being Inheriting the Zhengyi Tradition." He also limited the use of the red color and put restriction on the architecture of Taoist buildings.

According to the "Biography of Zhang Zhengchang," *History of the Ming Dynasty*, we have the following record:

> Zhang Zhengchang, styled Zhong Ji, the 42nd successor to Zhang Daoling of the Han Dynasty, had been living on Dragon-Tiger Mountain in Guixi County as did many of his ancestors. During the Yuan Dynasty, he was granted by an emperor the title Tianshi (Celestial Master). After Tai Zu [Zhu Yuanzhang] conquered Nanchang [in present Jiangxi Province], Zhang sent his men to request an audience with Zhu. Later Zhang was twice invited to the Court. In 1368 when Zhu became emperor, Zhang went to Court to congratulate him on his inauguration. The emperor questioned him: "Is there really a master (teacher) in Heaven?" Hence the title Tianshi was abandoned and a new title Zhengyi Sijiao Zhenren was used instead. Granted at the time was a silver seal which carded the power of an official of the second rank [the second highest rank in officialdom].

In a record of *Ming Hui Dian*, we learn that in 1370 Zhu Yuanzhang ordered that nowhere in Buddhist temples and Taoist

monasteries (except in the shrines of deities) the red color should be used.

Secondly, he purified some activities within the Taoist organization and purified the thoughts of the people by reinterpreting Lao Zi's *Dao De Jing*.

In the "Annals of Tai Zu," *History of the Ming Dynasty*, in the year 1373, Zhu Yuanzhang passed an order which said:

> In the rituals such as the *Jiao* (offerings) and *Zhai* (retreat or fast) practiced by Buddhist monks and Taoist priests, men and women mix together and are wanton in eating and drinking. The departments concerned should bring strict action against it.

According to *Da Zheng Ji*, we have the following record:

> After he finished his own commentary on *The Book of Lao Zi* in 1674, Emperor Tai Zu spoke to his officials by quoting Chapter 12: "Five colors dazzle the eyes, five tones deafen the ears" and Chapter 29: "The sage discards the extremes, the extravagant and the excessive" and the like. Then he explained to them, "How can we say that Lao Zi had an empty talk? What he said is useful both for personal life cultivation and government of the country.

Thirdly, Zhu Yuanzhang established a governmental institution administering and regulating Taoist affairs.

In 1368, Zhu Yuanzhang established the House of Xuanjiao (*Xuanjiao* was another name for Taoism) and had Taoist master Jing Shanyue direct Taoist affairs in the country. In 1382, he established a Dao Lu Si (Department of Taoist Affairs) at the central level. In the department there were officials of different ranks who would carry out their respective duties. In provinces and prefectures, institutions were also established to take charge of Taoist affairs within the provinces and prefectures.

In retrospect, the earliest governmental institution administering Taoist affairs was established during the Southern and Northern Dynasties. In the Northern Qi (479-501), one department called

Chong Xu (Venerating the Void) under Tai Chang Si (Court of Imperial Sacrifices) kept files of Taoist priests. In the southern Liang (502-557) and Northern Zhou (557-581), there were also special officials in charge of Taoist affairs. The administration of Taoist affairs gradually came to be perfected in and after the Tang Dynasty. In the Yuan Dynasty, for instance, the central government set up an office called Ji Xian Yuan (Worthies-Gathering House) directing the affairs of all Taoist schools. For each school, there were different levels of administration.

The Dao Lu Si of the Ming Dynasty was generally based on the administrative system of previous dynasties. All the Taoists were grouped into two major traditions, namely Quanzhen and Zhengyi. The names and numbers of monasteries and priests in all the provinces, prefectures and counties all over the country were verified and kept on file in the Dao Lu Si, which would report to the Board of Rites. Whenever there was a vacancy for an abbot in a monastery, candidates would be selected from among the Taoist scholars and be examined through the Dao Lu Si who would get the final approval from the Board of Rites. The Dao Lu Si was in addition responsible for submitting Taoist quotas application to the Board and executing the legal affairs concerning Taoist priests.

In 1382, 15 years after Zhu Yuanzhang became emperor, he passed an edict restricting both the number of Taoist priests to be initiated and the age of those to be initiated. In *Juan* 74 of the *History of the Ming Dynasty*, we have the report that no monastery on the provincial level was permitted to accommodate over 40 Taoist priests; no monastery on the prefectural level was permitted to accommodate over 39 Taoist priests; and no monastery on the county level was permitted to accommodate over 20 Taoist priests. We also have the report that no man under the age of 40 or no woman under the age of 50 was allowed to be initiated as a Taoist priest or priestess.

## 2. Support of Taoism by Emperor Cheng Zu and Emperor Shi Zong

Though Emperor Cheng Zu (r. 1403-1424) generally adopted the policy started by the founder of the Ming Regime, favoritism toward certain Taoist priests was reported. For instance, Zhang Yuchu, the 43rd generation Celestial Master, resumed his position after being convicted during the reign of Emperor Hui Di (1399-1402). Another instance is that several times, the Emperor ordered to find Zhang Sanfeng, a mysterious Taoist master. Though he did not succeed in getting his service, it was said that the Wudang Taoist School was promoted just because of its relation to Zhang Sanfeng. A detailed discussion of Zhang Sanfeng and the Wudang Tradition will be offered in the next section.

Among the Ming emperors, Shi Zong (r. 1522-1566) was perhaps the most enthusiastic in supporting Taoism. That is evident through the following facts.

First, Emperor Shi Zong was enthusiastic for the performance of Taoist rituals. Throughout his reign, the rituals were continually performed. In the "Biography of Shao Yuanjie," *History of the Ming Dynasty*, we have the following report:

> After he was enthroned, Emperor Shi Zong was misled by his eunuch Cui Wen and others into believing in ghosts and deities. Every day he was engaged in "offerings" and "fast" rituals. He never listened to the officials who tried to dissuade him from doing things like these....

Once he summoned Shao Yuanjie to Court to pray for rain. At another time, he had him perform rituals for the birth of a prince. At some other times, the Emperor had some Taoist priests like Tao Zhongwen pray for his health. The emperor's zest for Taoist rituals was best shown, perhaps, in his promotion of *qing ci*, a form of writing used for a memorial presented to deities during a Taoist

ceremony. According to one estimate, after 1538 nine out of his 17 cabinet members were promoted just because of their proficiency in writing *qing ci*.

Secondly, Emptor Shi Zong appointed some Taoists to top official positions, surpassing that of the Celestial Master, as it was in the case of the above-mentioned Shao Yuanjie and Tao Zhongwen.

Shao Yuanjie (?.-1539) was formerly a Taoist priest from Shangqing Monastery on Dragon-Tiger Mountain in present Jiangxi Province. He was quite proficient in Taoist arts. In 1524, he was summoned to Court and performed rituals for Emperor Shi Zong. Once he succeeded in regulating the climate through rituals, as the Emperor believed, and was thus granted the title of Perfect Being and entrusted to direct Taoist affairs throughout the country. The climax of his political career came in 1530 when he was appointed president of the Board of Rites, an official of Rank One in the government hierarchy.

Tao Wenzhong (?-1560) was a close colleague of Shao Yuanjie. His biography is recorded in the *History of the Ming Dynasty*. Under Shao's recommendation, Tao was granted a court audience with Emptor Shi Zong. In 1550 Tao accompanied Emperor Shi Zong in his inspection tour of the south because Shao was ill. After he returned from the trip, Tao was granted the title of Perfect Being. Sometime during the following year Tao helped the Emperor recover from illness by his prayers, and was thus appointed president of the Board of Rites. In 1550, catastrophes occurred one after another in the capital area. When Emperor Shi Zong consulted Tao Wenzhong about the matter, Tao attributed them to possibility that serious charges had been fabricated against the prisoners in the area. The catastrophes would not end until after a rainfall. After the Emperor allowed for lenient punishments of the criminals, the rain miraculously fell and the catastrophes ended. Because of this, Tao Wenzhong was promoted to the rank of Earl.

The support of Taoism by Emperor Shi Zong was finally made

evident by his indulgence in Taoist arts and elixir and by giving himself long, divine titles.

In his late years Emperor Shi Zong's desire for longevity grew day by day. Recommended by Tao Wenzhong, many Taoist priests and magicians came to the Court with their arts. Some brought with them the art of alchemy, some with the art of divination writing, still others with a kind of aphrodisiac made from children's urine. For a time, he was so indulgent in Taoist arts that he refused to grant audiences to any officials except Tao Wenzhong.

Emperor Shi Zong's ridiculous act is perhaps seen most clearly from the long title he gave himself. The last title he wanted people to call him contained thirty-five Chinese characters: Taishang Daluo Tianxian Ziji Changsheng Shenzhi Zhaoling Tongyuan Zhengying Yuxu Zongzhang Wulei Dazhenren Yuandujing Wanshou Dijun. Loosely translated, it means "Celestial Immortal of Supreme High Heaven, Deity of Longevity, Perfect Being Directing the Five Thunders Department, and Emperor-Lord of Everlasting Life."

Emperor Shi Zong was poisoned to death after consuming the elixir which he had longed for so hopefully.

## Section II The Wudang Taoist Tradition and New Branches of the Inner-Alchemical School

### 1. Wudang Taoism

Wudang Taoism derived its name from its place of origin on Mt. Wudang in present Junxian County, Hubei Province. Before the Ming Dynasty, Mt. Wudang had been an ideal place for Taoist hermits.

In chapter "Ji Shen Shu," *Zhenkao* (*Declaration of the Perfected*), Tao Hongjing mentions a Xie Yun who went to Mt. Wudang during 280-290, where he built a thatched hut in a cave for cultivation and where he attained the Tao. According to the *Collection of Perfect*

*Beings on the Blessed Land Wudang*, Liu Qiu, a top-ranking official of the Liu Song Dynasty (420-479), practiced abstention from eating grains, and became an immortal on Mt. Wudang. Another record says that Yao Jian, a magistrate of Wudang Region during the Tang Emperor Tai Zong's reign (627-649), found the hermitage there in his late years to practice Taoism. Chen Tuan, already mentioned in the previous chapter, lived a hermit's life on Mt. Wudang. There he was recorded to "read aloud *The Book of Changes* in Wulong Monastery" and to "practice the arts such as 'breath control' and 'grain abstention' for over 20 years." Again, according to the *Collection of Perfect Beings on the Blessed Land Wudang,* in 1287, Taoist master Ye Xizhen and some others were appointed directors of Taoist affairs in the Wudang region. This record suggests that Taoism might have enjoyed a rather high degree of prosperity at the time. However, most of the monasteries there were destroyed by the wars that broke out at the end of the Yuan Dynasty.

Thanks to the Ming Emperor Cheng Zu, Taoism on Mt. Wudang became very prosperous. During his reign, ten large monasteries or palaces were built with walls surrounding them. It took more than 300,000 workers seven years to finish the whole project. The real intention of Emperor Cheng Zu to carry out such a big project is not known. Some said that the Emperor did it out of his gratitude for the divine Great Emperor Zhenwu, who was believed to have aided him in his military expedition south; some said that Emperor Cheng Zu had the project completed in admiration for Zhang Sanfeng, who was believed to live on Mt. Wudang.

Whatever the reasons, Taoism flourished in the Wudang region and Zhang Sanfeng thus became quite famous. He has been regarded as the initiator of Wudang Taoism.

## 2. Zhang Sanfeng and the Teachings of Wudang Taoism

As there were many tales about the life of the hermit Zhang

Sanfeng, one hardly knows how to distinguish fact from legend. Even the writers of the official *History of the Ming Dynasty* were not certain about some of the facts. The following is what the book says about him:

> Zhang Sanfeng was a native of Yizhou, Liaodong [in present Liaoning Province] .... As he was careless in dress and appearance, he was nicknamed "Sloven Zhang." He was tall and slender, ... he had long ears and round eyes and a straight moustache. Throughout the four seasons, he would wear patchwork clothes and a straw hat. He could eat one bushel of rice at one meal or stop eating for several days or months. Whatever he read, he would not forget. He had no permanent residence. Some said he could cover a distance of 1,000 *li* in a day. Zhang was also a great joker and humorist. When he made a joke, he often did not consider the circumstances. Once when he was visiting a crag on Mt. Wudang, he said to the people nearby: "This mountain will have its day." At a time when the Wulong, Nanyan and Zixiao monasteries [on the mountain] were all destroyed by war, Zhang Sanfeng and his disciples uprooted the thorns and bushes, reclaiming the land of gravel and bricks and built thatched huts as places for cultivation. Later he left the huts.

When Emperor Tai Zu heard about his name, he sent his men to look for him, but they could not find him. Once Zhang was found staying in the Jintai Monastery in Baoji in present Shaanxi Province. At another time, he was found to be in Sichuan and another time somewhere else. According to the *History of the Ming Dynasty*, Emperor Cheng Zu had his men search many out-of-the-way places for Zhang Sanfeng. The search lasted many years but to no avail. Therefore the emperor had many new Taoist monasteries built on Mt. Wudang in honor of Zhang Sanfeng. What Zhang had predicted finally came true. The writers of the history book were not quite sure whether there was only one Zhang Sanfeng or several, therefore they added that Zhang Sanfeng was believed by some to be living some time during the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234), but it was impossible to verify for lack of evidence.

In spite of the difficulties involved in identifying the true Zhang Sanfeng, the book *A Complete Collection of Zhang Sanfeng*, especially the first half of the book, "Yun Shui Qian Ji," generally reflects Zhang Sanfeng's teachings and some of the characteristics of the Wudang Taoist Tradition.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the Wudang Tradition was its worship of the Great Emptor Zhenwu, who was originally called Xuanwu. *Xuan* means "tortoise," *Wu* means "snake." The tortoise-snake was used to describe one of the four arrangements making up the constellations visible in a clear night sky. The worship of Xuanwu was very old in northern China, as Chinese had a long tradition of worshipping animals and stars. It was changed to the name Zhenwu in the Song Dynasty probably because the word "Xuan" coincided with one of the characters of the Song Emperor Zhen Zong (who once used Xuan Xiu as his name). Mt. Wudang, situated at a strategic point of communication between the south and north, became a center of Zhenwu worship.

Another feature of Wudang Taoism was its emphasis on a kind of martial arts called *Nei Jia Quan* (Internal School of Boxing) as against "Shaolin Quan" (the Boxing of Shaolin Buddhist Temple, generally regarded as the External School of Boxing). The founder of *Nei Jia Quan* was a Zhang Sanfeng active between 1101-1126 when the Northern Song Emperor Hui Zong was in reign. It was said that it was the Great Emperor Zhenwu who taught Zhang Sanfeng about the art of boxing. The Zhang Sanfeng active in the early Ming Dynasty must have been the inheritor of the art. The fundamental principle guiding the art of boxing as practiced in the Wudang Tradition is that "quietude overcomes activity" and "softness overcomes hardness." The Taoist priests of the Wudang Tradition still practice the art today. And many other forms of martial arts such as "Eight Diagrams Palms" and "Taiji Boxing" are developments from *Nei Jia Quan*.

Finally, the *Complete Works of Zhang Sanfeng* generally reflects

the theories and practices of the Wudang Tradition. From the *Complete Works of Zhang Sanfeng*, we can see that his teachings were to a great extent similar to those of Quanzhen masters. For instance, Zhang is recorded to advocate that *Sanjiao*, "Three Teachings," be treated on an equal footing and live in harmony. In the article entitled "On Great Tao," the author says:

> However untalented I am, I have a perusal of books written by thinkers of a hundred schools. I have a systematic study of *Sanjiao* and find that the one and same Tao runs through the Three Teachings. The Confucianists would not be Confucianists without the Tao; the Buddhists would not become Buddhist without the Tao; the Immortalists would not become immortal without the Tao.

Again he added:

> Confucianists manage the Tao to serve the world; Buddhists use the Tao to enlighten the world; Immortalists conceal the Tao to salvage the world. They all emphasize their respective merits and advantages, therefore there is no point in arguing with each other!

For another instance, Zhang Sanfeng is recorded to emphasize the cultivation of *Xing* (the spiritual self or nature) in inner alchemy. In a Taoist song included in the article entitled "Xuan Yao Pian", the author sang the following few lines: "Before elixir is made, the self must first be cultivated. Before the great medicine is ready, the heart must be tempered. After the heart is tempered, the medicine will naturally be produced. After the self is cultivated, the elixir will ensue."

In the article entitled "Xuan Ji Zhi Jian", the author went to great lengths to discuss the importance of self-cultivation:

> [Cultivation of] The Great Tao lies primarily in cultivation of the self and the heart. The self is contained within the heart, the heart envelops the self from without. The self is the master of principle, the heart is the house sheltering the self. If the heart is cultivated, it becomes permanent. If the self is cultivated, it becomes nurtured. A permanent heart strengthens a person as a strong fortress fortifies a city. This is what is meant by *Zhu Ji* or "Foundational Work." A nur-

tured self has a full vitality as a cultivated land possesses fertility. This is what is meant by *Lian Ji* or "Self-cultivation."

The intrinsic similarity between the teachings of the Quanzhen masters and those of Zhang Sanfeng was largely accountable for the incorporation of the latter tradition into the former. According to the "General Directory of True Taoist Schools and Branches," seven Taoist traditions identified Zhang Sanfeng as their patriarch. Six of them have generational names recorded there.

## 3. Eastern and Western Inner Alchemy Branches

As we have mentioned in the previous chapters, inner alchemical school in the Song-Yuan period developed both in the north and in the south. The northern school was represented by Wang Chongyang and other Quanzhen masters, and the southern school by Zhang Boduan and his disciples. The southern school was later divided into two branches: one called Qingxiu (Pure Cultivation Branch), which emphasized cultivation by one individual alone, the other called Yinyang (Yin-Yang Branch), which emphasized cultivation by pairs, one male and one female. The Qingxiu Branch of the Southern Tradition was later integrated into the Northern Tradition, as is seen in the book called *Collection of Harmony* (*Zhong He Ji* written by Li Daochun, a Taoist master active in the late Song and the early Yuan Dynasty. The name Zhong (Middle) Branch, was generally assigned to the lineage established by Li Daochun. The Yin-Yang Branch of the Southern Tradition, however, continued to develop in the Ming-Qing period, with Lu Xixing initiating the Dong (East) Branch and Li Hanxu initiating the Xi (West) Branch.

Lu Xixing (1520-1606) was a native of Xinghua County, Yangzhou, in present Jiangsu Province. He was said to be very talented when he was young, but he failed several times in the preliminary civil service examinations. Because of this, he left home and led a hermit's life in a mountain. Once he claimed that he had received

revelations from the Immortal Lü Dongbin and wrote two books based on the claimed revelations. Many people believed him and followed him as their master. Lu observed that "The Tao of male and female, Yang and Yin, produces mortal beings, if followed in a natural way; it produces immortal beings, if followed in a reverse way." Lu also practiced one art of cultivation called *Li Xing Jiao Qi*, which literally means "communicating *qi* without body contact." This art was regarded by many as obscene, and therefore, spread only among the initiated by word of mouth. Lu's major works include *Fang Hu Wai Shi* (*An Unofficial History of Fang Hu*).

Li Hanxu was an inner alchemist active between 1851-1861. He was a native of present Sichuan Province. He claimed that he met Lü Dongbin and Zhang Sanfeng on Mt. Emei, where he was told about the secrets of inner alchemy. Li also claimed himself to be a disciple of Lu Xixing, and he collected and collated some of Lu Xixing's books on Lü Dongbin. In fact, the difference between the teachings of Li and those of Lu Xixing obviously existed, for Li Hanxing based his theories and practices on the teachings of Lü Dongbin as well as Zhang Sanfeng's. Therefore, a new name "West Branch" was used to describe the tradition Li initiated. Li divided the cultivation of the self into nine steps. His recommendation of the art like *Zai Jie* (transplanting the essence of a female) for the aged male cultivator was condemned by many "pure" Taoist masters. Li's major works include *San Chen Mi Zhi* (*Secret Essence of "Three Vehicles"*) and *Wu Gen Shu Jie* (*Explanations on "Rootless Trees"*).

## 4. Wu Shouyang and Liu Yimin, Two Great Popularizers of Inner Alchemy

Finally, we would like to mention Wu Shouyang and Liu Yimin. Although they did not establish any independent, new tradition, they greatly popularized the esoteric theory and practice of inner alchemy through their works. According to Taoist scriptures, Wu

Shouyang's place of birth was Nanchang, in present Jiangxi Province. He was a Taoist master active in the Ming Dynasty. He was affiliated with the Longmen Branch of the Quanzhen Tradition. In one of his major works entitled *Tian Xian Zheng Li Zhi Lun* (*Frank Comments on the Truth of Divine Immortals*). Wu Shouyang made very explicit even to the laymen the four stages of inner alchemy. At the groundwork stage, a practitioner is advised to temper his self. After that, he may move to the next stage, where he must try to transform the "primordial essence" or *jing* into *qi*. Then he will have to transform the *qi* into spirit or *shen*. Finally, in a mysterious way, the *shen* will return to a state of *xu* or void. The state of void is tantamount to a state of immortality for the inner alchemist. The works of Wu Shouyang later merged with the works of Liu Huayang, who claimed to be Wu's disciple. The combined work was called *Wu-Liu Xian Zong* (*Wu and Liu's Works on the Origin of Immortality*). In *A General Survey of Taoist Arts of Life Cultivation* (*Tao Jia Yang Sheng Shu Gai Yao*), Xiao Tianshi has the following comment on Wu and Liu's art:

> If the arts of the Northern School are seen as the superior form, the art of Wu and Liu is considered to be of the medium form...The art of the latter is easy to see, to understand, to practice and to experience. If only one can distinguish the dross from the essential ... this art will benefit him physically and spiritually.

Liu Yimin (1734-1821) was a Taoist master of the Longmen Branch of Quanzhen Taoism. He was active in present Gansu Province in the northwestern part of China. He was one of the most productive Taoist writers of the Qing Dynasty. His works on inner alchemy totaled nearly 30 *juan*. Most of them were later included in *Dao Shu Shi Er Zhong* (*Twelve Kinds of Taoist Books*).

Liu Yimin devoted many of his works to explanation and interpretation of the ancient classics from an inner alchemist's point of view. *The Book of Changes,* Wei Boyang's *Can Tong Qi, Yin Fu Scripture,* and *Yellow Court Scripture* were most important classics

he interpreted. Most interestingly perhaps, Liu Yimin interpreted *Xi You Ji* (*Journey to the West*),* which was generally recognized as fiction with a strong social tendency, as a book on inner alchemy. For instance, Liu said that in the chapters one to seven, the author intended to explain the process in which cultivation of the physical self in a person gradually moves to the cultivation of the inner self, and that the opposite was true in the rest of the 93 chapters. While Liu's interpretation seems odd to many readers, he certainly offered a new insight into this most important Chinese fiction. We may not go too far if we say that Liu Yimin was a great popularizer of inner alchemy in the Qing Dynasty.

## Section III Wang Chongyue's *Longmen Art of Mind Cultivation* and Lou Jinyuan's *Yellow Register Liturgy*

During the Ming-Qing period, the Quanzhen Tradition was not much supported by the emperors. The most noted Quanzhen master in this period seems to be Wang Chongyue, whose "open ordination" practice exerted great influence on the later practices of Quanzhen Taoism. As far as the Zhengyi Tradition was concerned, Lou Jinyuan was a very prominent master, worthy of discussion.

### 1. Wang Chongyue and the Revival of the Longmen Branch

#### A Life Story

Wang Chongyue (?-1680) was a Taoist master of the Longmen Branch of Quanzhen Taoism. It had a long tradition of ordination

*An English edition of the novel, translated by W.J.E Jenner, was published by the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing in 1982.

and initiation of new adepts. Whenever an ordination practice was underway, there should be a master directing the whole event. Wang Chongyue was the seventh successor of the Director since ordination practice was first introduced in the Longmen Branch. In *Tai Shang Lu Mai*, we have a record by Wang himself.

Wang Chongyue was born in present Shanxi Province. When he was about 20, he was already very determined to pursue a Taoist life. He had traveled to many mountains and encountered many difficulties until he met Master Zhao Fuyang at Wangwu Mountain. Many times, Wang pleaded with Zhao for instruction, but was ignored. He stayed on for over a month, living on pine and cypress seeds and fountain water until Zhao, deeply moved by his sincerity, passed on to him the precepts of initiation. During the next eight to nine years, Wang consulted over 20 masters and initiated over 50 disciples. One day, when he heard that there was a hermit on far-away Jiugong Mountain, he went out of his way to visit him. He considered himself unfortunate, not being able to meet the hermit on his first visit. Second time, when he went into the mountain, he saw a man well-seated somewhere in a thick forest. When Wang approached him, he was surprised to find that the man was none other than Master Zhao Fuyang. After asking him a few questions, Zhao passed on to Wang "Great Precepts of Celestial Immortals" (*Tian Xian Da Jie*). In 1656, he received an order from the Qing Emperor Shi Zu (r. 1644-1661) and started with his ordination practice at the White Cloud Monastery in Beijing. He performed ordinations three times, each time over 1,000 disciples were ordained. His lectures during the ordination ceremony were entitled *Xin Fa Zhen Yan* (*True Words of Mind Method*). It was later edited by his disciples under the title *Longmen Xinfa*.

## 2. *Longmen Xinfa*

*Longmen Xinfa* literally means "the methods of mind cultiva-

tion practiced by Longmen Taoism." Included in the book are the precepts Wang Chongyue used to teach the new ordainees. In Longmen Xinfa, Wang Chongyue summarizes his teachings in 20 points as follows:

1) Convert yourself to the "Three Treasures";
2) Confess your sins;
3) Remove all the hindrances and bondages;
4) Rid yourself of all the sources of desire;
5) Behave in strict compliance with the commandments;
6) Endure humiliation in order to temper your mind;
7) Tranquilize your body and mind;
8) Be active in consulting masters of the true Tao;
9) Engage yourself in intent contemplation;
10) Cultivate the Truth in a secret way;
11) Requite kindness to ward off misfortune;
12) Take an oath to make a total commitment to your pursuit;
13) Verify the efficacy with real experiences;
14) Keep fit and prolong your life;
15) Propagate the Taoist teachings;
16) Save all the people in the world;
17) Make your wisdom enlightened;
18) Utilize well the supernatural powers;
19) Fully comprehend the meaning of life and death;
20) Fully achieve merits and virtues.

As can be seen, "the central idea in *Longmen Xinfa*" is that a new adept must practice restraints in his conduct. This idea of practicing self-restraint, or following commandments, originated at a very early time. In the earliest Taoist scriptures such as *Taipingjing* and the *Xiang'er Commentary on Lao Zi*, we already find some of the commandments such as refraining from sex and extravagance and the unhealthy pursuit of wealth and power. As Taoism developed, more and more commandments were added to the list. In *Yun Ji Qi Qian* alone, three volumes were devoted to the description of

Taoist commandments. These precepts were often very minute in detail. In *Laojun Speaking on 180 Commandments*, for instance, people were ordered not to do certain things, such as bathing in the nude, sitting with women drinking and eating and picking eggs from a bird's nest. These various commandments were simplified and systematized when Wang Chongyue started with his ordination practice.

The ordination practice Wang Chongyue performed consisted of three levels, primary, intermediate, and advanced. As a Taoist advanced from the lower level to a higher one, he would have more and more restrictions as specified in the commandments either written or read to them. On the primary level called *Chu Zhen Jie* (ordination for the new perfected), for instance, an adept would first have to meet the general requirements by converting himself to the "Three Treasures," namely the "Treasure of Tao," the "Treasure of Scriptures" and the "Treasure of Masters." That was to say, an adept must follow the Tao, read the scriptures and learn from his master. After that, he would follow a few more specific commandments, such as not killing living creatures, not drinking alcohol, no hypocrisy, no stealing, no adultery and so forth. On the intermediate level, 300 commandments were imposed on the follower, with astonishing details for restraints. The following are precepts from among those numbered from 150 to 169:

150) Don't climb high and look down below.

151) Don't ride a vehicle or horse for socialization purpose.

152) Don't choose the bed in a good room to sleep on.

153) Don't comment on other people's taste of food.

154) Don't take food from the dinner table by hand, nor eat the leftovers.

155) Don't block the roads with thistles and thorns.

156) Don't make excessive sacrifices to the deities for the sake of luck.

157) Don't say prayers to gods and ghosts.

158) Don't curse or take an oath before the gods and ghosts.

159) Don't expose yourself naked to the luminaries.

160) Don't rashly summon wind and rain.

161) Don't stop practicing "fast" or "retreats" or practice it inappropriately.

162) Don't borrow money or goods from other persons without returning them.

163) Don't press other people to do evil things.

164) Don't prevent other people from doing good deeds.

165) Don't claim to your own credit when you actually receive the teachings from the Tao, the master and the scriptures.

166) Don't complain against the Tao or the master when you have experienced an illness or a case of death in the family.

167) Don't pass the scriptures or ordinations on to the unworthy adepts or pass on to the worthy adepts in an improper year or month.

168) Don't arbitrarily decrease or increase scriptures and commandments at ordination.

169) Don't terrify children and the aged.

At the advanced level of ordination called *Tian Xian Da Jie*, the commandments were even stricter. Adepts were ordered to practice restraints with various degrees of difficulty, such as "avoiding tongue errors," "stopping evil thinking," "refraining from music and sex" and "forgetting about the physical self," "bearing the unbearable," and so forth. Under each of the 27 commandments, ten means were to be employed such as wisdom, mercy, tolerance, and mind cultivation. After this advanced level of ordination, a Taoist priest was believed to have entered the realm of immortality.

The "open ordination" was a common practice in the early Taoist traditions like Great Peace Taoism and Five Bushels of Rice Taoism. But as the Yellow Turbans Uprising was associated with Taoism in general, the ordination practice went underground. It was not until the establishment of the Longmen Branch of the Quanzhen Tradition that the practice of "open ordination" was resumed for

those who wished to be initiated. Wang Chongyue actually revived the Longmen Branch by his "open ordination." The "three altars ordinations" (*San Tan Da Jie*) with different levels of commandments have been adopted and followed ever since.

## 2. Lou Jinyuan, an Eminent Zhengyi Taoist Priest

Since the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, especially after the reign of Emperor Gong Zong (r. 1736-1795) when Huang Jiao, the Yellow Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, was declared the official religion, Taoism, being a religion of the Han Chinese, was relegated to a much lower position than it had enjoyed during the previous Ming Dynasty. That was particularly made clear by the imperial attitude toward the top leader of the Taoist organization, as in the case of the Zhengyi Tradition, Zhengyi Perfect Being, traditionally called Celestial Master. In 1739, for instance, Emperor Gong Zong placed ban on the initiation practice conducted by the Zhengyi Perfect Being. Zhang Zhaolin, brother of Zhang Xilin, the 50-generation Celestial Master, was refused court audiences, after he took the temporary position as the Director of State Taoist Affairs. In 1752, Zhang Yulong, the 56th successor to Zhang Daoling, was demoted to Grade Five from Grade One. The most noted Taoist master who received imperial attention and favors was perhaps Lou Jinyuan, a Taoist priest from Dragon-Tiger Mountain, the headquarters of Zhengyi Taoism.

Lou Jinyuan was born in 1689 in present Louxian County, Jiangsu Province. His grandfather and father were professional Taoist priests. When Lou was a small child, he began to live in the Shangqing Monastery on Dragon-Tiger Mountain and apprenticed himself to the abbot of the monastery, and received Zhengyi credentials. In 1727, he accompanied Zhang Xilin to court. In 1730 (the eighth year of the Yongzheng era), Emperor Shi Zong fell ill and was cured by Lou with his register and talismanic water. Later

Lou was appointed Director of Dragon-Tiger Mountain, his rank was Grade Four. For a time he served as the abbot of Qin'an Hall in the imperial palace and read Buddhist scriptures to Emperor Shi Zong. Lou composed a few poems which greatly pleased the Emperor. Therefore, when a great building called Daguangming Dian (Great Brightness) Hall was completed, Lou was appointed its first abbot. The Emperor enlisted 400 Taoist priests to reside in the building and held a grand ceremony in Lou's honor. In the Qianlong era (1736-1795), Lou was put into charge of Taoist affairs in the country and his rank was promoted to Grade Three.

Although he had received imperial favors because of his arts, Lou was not enthusiastic in preaching those arts. In "Perfect Being Lou," *Juan* Nine of *Xian Ting Za Lu*, Lou is recorded as follows:

Though he directed Taoist affairs, Lou did not like to talk about the arts of cultivating *qi* and *zhen* (truth). He depreciated those arts as the means of living for sorcerers. How is it possible that real immortals would spend their lives in this human world like ours?

Once when Prince Gong invited him to his house and consulted him about the art of life cultivation, Lou said to him: "Prince, you wear the best clothes, you eat the best food, you are a true divine mortal in life." Pointing to the roasted pig meat on the dinner table, Lou smiled and said: "Today we are having roasted pig meat. This is the best way of life preservation. Why must we look for it elsewhere?"

Lou Jinyuan has many books to his credit, which include *Nanhuajing Zhu* (*Annotations on "The Book of Zhuang Zi"*), *Yuxuan Miaozheng Zhenren Yulu* (*Imperial Selections of the Analects of Perfect Being Miaozheng*), *Juan* One, *Chongxiu Longhushan Zhi* (*New Annals of Dragon-Tiger Mountain*), and some others. The most influential of all of his works were the 12 *juan* of scriptures on Taoist rites called *Huang Lu Ke Yi* (*Rites of the Yellow Register*). It was the most comprehensive collection of scriptures on ritual performance during the Qing Dynasty.

# Section IV Penetration of Taoism into the Folk Traditions

Though Taoism experienced marked decline on the official level during the Ming and Qing periods, its influence was still very strong among the people. This can be seen from the following three aspects: First, Taoism incorporated many a deity popular in different regions into its pantheon to attract a wide following; secondly, there was a widespread interest in the ethical teachings of the so-called morality books (*shanshu*), mainly based on the ethical outlook of Taoism and in popularization of Taoist arts and ideas through publication of the so-called "spirits-and ghosts novels"; thirdly, Taoist practical arts like talismans, ritual conjugation and inner alchemy were absorbed by quite a few popular religious organizations, through whose activities Taoism penetrated further into the grassroots society.

## 1. Incorporation of Popular Deities

As there was a strong syncretic tendency among the Three Religions, Taoism began to incorporate more and more non-Taoist elements. That was evidenced not only by its absorption of Buddhist and Confucian teachings but also by its incorporation of popular deities into its pantheon. Since the Ming Dynasty more and more deities were added to the list of deities to be worshiped. In the following passages we will give a brief account of some deities which were worshiped nationwide.

### Guan Di

Guan Di is the deified Guan Yu, a famous marshal in the period of the Three Kingdoms. He was venerated by Buddhists in the Song Dynasty as a divine protector of justice and by Taoists in the Song-Yuan period as one of the marshals in charge of the thun-

der-giving in Heaven. In the Ming-Qing period he enjoyed even more popularity, for in 1605 he was granted by the Emperor the title "Guan Sheng Di Jun" (Sage-Emperor-Lord Guan) and then was romanticized as a paradigm of righteousness in the famous novel *Three Kingdoms**. In almost all the provinces of China there was a temple especially dedicated to him. In many Taoist monasteries today we can still find a hall where he is enshrined as a God of Fortune.

**Wenchang Dijun**

Wenchang Dijun was another deity worshiped nationwide. Wenchang was formerly the name of an auspicious star in Heaven which was thought to be responsible for a human life fortune. Meanwhile, there was a deity called Zitong who was very popular in Sichuan and who was venerated by scholars of the Song Dynasty as a divine protector. In the Song-Yuan period, a Taoist priest made up a story in which Zitong was said to be in charge of the scholars' department in Celestial Court. In 1317, a Yuan emperor granted him the title of "Fuyuan Kaihua Wenchang Silu Hongren Dijun." Since then, Wenchang and Zitong were combined and known as Wenchang Dijun. He was worshiped especially by students and scholars who dreamed of success in the national civil service examination. In the Ming-Qing period almost all the schools in the country had a shrine-hall for the deity. It is no longer a practice after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. Shrine-halls for Wenchang Dijun, however, are still kept in many Taoist monasteries today.

**Tianfei**

Tianfei, popularly known as Mazu or Tianshang Shengmu in the coastal provinces, was a daughter of an official in the Song Dynasty.

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*An English edition of the novel, translated by Moss Roberts, was published by the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing in 1994.

She was born in 960 in Meizhouyu, Putian, Fujian Province. According to the record in the book entitled *Sanjiao Shoushen Daquan* we have a story like this: When weaving at home, she fell into a coma. Her spirit escaped from her body and traveled to the sea to save her four brothers who were caught in a storm. Thinking that she had a sudden stroke or something, her parents woke her up. As a result, only three of her brothers were saved. When she was nearly 30 years old she left home alone in her boat and never returned. Some people said she drowned in a typhoon when she was attempting to save fishermen in trouble. People remembered her for the good deeds she had done to them and built a temple in her honor. During the Xuanhe era (1119-1125) of the Song Emperor Hui Zong, when Lu Yundi was back from his mission to Korea, he was caught in a storm and his ship almost turned over. It was said a goddess helped him return home safe and sound. The goddess was identified as Mazu. Since then Mazu was venerated as the protector of those people who were away on the sea. The Ming Emperor Yi Zong (r. 1628-1644) granted her the title "Goddess of Azure Cloud" (Bixia Yuanjun). The worship of the Goddess spread to Korea, Japan and some other areas of Chinese influence. In many Taoist monasteries today there is a shrine for her.

## 2. "Morality Books" and "Spirit-Ghost Novels"

Another important means of Taoist penetration into the popular traditions of people in the Ming-Qing period was the publication of "Morality Books" and "Spirit-Ghost Novels."

### Morality Books

In the last chapter we mentioned Jing Ming Tao, a Taoist school characterized by its emphasis on ethical teachings. Some accounting books for recording merits and demerits already appeared such as "Taiwei Xianjun Gongguoge." During the Ming Dynasty, those

books on moral teachings became very popular. Examples were *Taishang Ganying Pian, Guandi Jueshi Zhenjing, Wenchang Dijun Yinzhi Wen* and *Lüzu Gonggouge*. During the Hongwu era (1368-1398), Wan Jingxu from Qiantang used his own funds to carve woodblocks of the *Taishang Ganying Pian*; he had 10,000 copies printed and freely distributed. Wang Ao and Shen Shixing, both high officials of the Ming period, were well known to be firmly devoted to the *Yinzhi Wen*. In 1857 *Yuding Jinke*, a 36-*juan* book produced by divination writing, came out, teaching the people of different trades different norms of conduct. Li Hongzhang submitted a memorial to the Emperor and proposed to have it included in the *Taoist Canon*.

These kinds of morality books were based on the ethical outlook of Taoism, that is, the belief that immortality could be attained through accumulation of good deeds. These books also absorbed Confucian principles about moral cultivation and Buddhist ideas of Karmic retribution. The following quotations from *Taishang Ganying Pian* make these ideas clear:

> The Supreme High said, "Fortune and misfortune don't come by themselves, they come at the invitation of the person himself; the return for the good or the bad follows the doer like his shadow." Therefore in Heaven and Earth there is a god overlooking the people who commit evil deeds. He will take away part of the person's life span in accordance with the nature of his evil deeds....
>
> Once a person commits a misdeed, he will be deprived some years of his life span depending on whether his misdeed is serious or not. There are hundreds of things counted toward the misdeeds big or small. The person who strives for immortality should avoid the misdeeds at the very beginning. Proceed to do what is in accordance with the Tao, retreat from doing what is not according to the Tao. Don't follow the evil path, nor take advantage of dark situations. Accumulate virtue and merits. Be kind-hearted to plants and animals. Be loyal to the monarch, pious to parents, sincere to friends and respectful to elder brothers. Set yourself upright so as to serve as an

example for other people to follow....

These good men are respected by all other people, protected by the Heavenly Tao and accompanied by fortune and honors. As all the evils stay away from them and the spirits guard them, whatever they do will be a success. It is expected that they will become immortals. Those striving to become celestial immortals must do one hundred good deeds and those wanting to become a terrestrial immortal must do three hundred deeds....

**Spirit-Ghost Novels**

In the late Yuan or the early Ming period, the novel *Ping Yao Zhuan* (*The Sorcerer's Revolt and Its Suppression*) appeared in which spirits and ghosts of the Taoist magic arts were portrayed. Toward the middle of the Ming, about the reign of Emperor Shi Zong, a great number of novels were published. Examples were *Xi You Ji* (*Journey to the West*), *Fengshen Yanyi* (*Investiture of the Gods*), *Sanbao Taijian Xiaxiyang Ji* (*Zheng He's Voyage to the Western Seas*), *Han Xiangzi Zhuan* (*Biography of Han Xiangzi*), *Lü Cunyang Feijianji, Qizhen Tianxian Baozhuan* and *Luye Xianzong* (*Tracks of the Immortal Beings in the Wilds*).

Moreover, other novels as well were inspired by this kind of spirit-ghost thinking. Even in the famous novel *Shuihu Zhuan** (*Outlaws of the Marsh*) appeared stories like "Cloud-Soaring-Dragon" Gongsun Sheng, who after learning some Taoist arts was able to defeat his enemy. In it also appeared the story that the 108 heroes of Liangshan Mountain were the earthly incarnations of the 36 heavenly star-gods and the 72 earthly ghosts (*Sha*). In his *Brief History of Chinese Fiction,* Lu Xun viewed this kind of spirit-ghost novels as one of the two major trends in fiction writing of the Ming period. He analyzed the reason why this trend appeared: it is due to

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*An English edition of the novel, translated by Sidney Shapiro, was published by the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing in 1980.

the fact that at the time "magicians often took office, talked of weird and unfounded events was rampant, while its influence carried even into literature."

## 3. Taoist Ideas and Arts in Popular Religious Organizations

By popular religious organization we mean a religious organization which is not officially acknowledged. This is a relative term, however. Take Taoist religion for instance. Neither the Taiping Tao nor the Wudoumi Tao was officially acknowledged at first. It was after two or three hundred years of efforts on the part of quite a few number of eminent scholar-gentlemen that Taoism began to be systematized in both its form and content. However, there were a few offshoots of Taoism remaining on the popular level, which had the potential of arousing insurrections. The Quanzhen Tradition, for instance, remained a popular religion for a few decades before it was officially recognized by the Yuan Dynasty.

During the Ming-Qing period, Taoism, together with Buddhism, was in decline on the official level. In the meanwhile popular religions emerged one after another. The most famous among them were *Luozu Jiao, Huangtian Jiao, Sanyi Jiao* and *Hongyang Jiao*. Though these popular religions were by no means affiliated with Buddhism or Taoism, they absorbed their teachings and practices to various extents. For instance, in a precious scroll of the *Huangtian Jiao*, references to Taoist inner alchemy are abundant. In *Sanyi Jiao* founded by Lin Zhao'en, Taoist teachings were followed together with Buddhism and Confucianism. Lin himself annotated the *Qing Jing Jing*. After his death, he was enshrined together with Taoist master Zhang Sanfeng.

Finally we will mention briefly the Boxer Uprising at the end of the Qing period (1900). The boxers carried incantations or took talismans and summoned many Taoist deities to their service. But

they certainly went too far, for they believed that their bodies were impenetrable by bullets and as a result died in great numbers when the Western allied troops triggered off the rifles.

# Section V Taoist Canons and Scriptures in the Ming-Qing Period

## 1. Compilation of the *Zhengtong Daozang*

We have mentioned in Section V of the last chapter that the *Xuandu Baozang* became quite incomplete after the Yuan emperors twice ordered to have the Taoist scriptures burned on grounds of their falsity. After the Ming Dynasty replaced the Yuan, new attempts were made to organize the Taoist scriptures into a canon. The Ming Emperor Hui Di (r. 1399-1402), the first successor to Zhu Yuanzhang, founder of the dynasty, is recorded to have passed an order that a *Taoist Canon* be compiled. But his order was not carried out because of the consequential coup d'état which deposed him as emperor. Emperor Cheng Zu (r. 1403-1424), who succeeded him, was also interested in the compilation of a Taoist canon. In 1043, the year he was enthroned, he already started to order Zhang Yuchu, the 43rd successor of Zhang Daoling, to collect Taoist scriptures into a canon. As the compilation of the canon was such a huge project, it was not completed until after 1446, the tenth year of the Zhengtong era, hence the canon was called *Zhengtong Taoist Canon* (*Zhengtong Daozang*). In 1607, (35th year of the Wanli era, under Emperor Shen Zong), a supplement of 180 *juan* was added to the 5,305 *juan* of the *Zhengtong Daozang*. The combined canon is known as the Ming edition of the *Taoist Canon*.

The Ming *Taoist Canon* is organized after the Taoist traditional cataloging system initiated during the Southern and Northern

Dynasties. That is to say the scriptures are divided into three major parts or *Dong* and four supplements or *Fu*; each of the three *Dong* is subdivided into 12 sections based on the gems of the scriptures, as we have mentioned in Section VII of Chapter Three. However, if we begin to read the canon, we will find that the cataloging system was not strictly followed. For instance, the Taixuan Division, which should have included only those philosophical works like *The Book of Lao Zi,* actually includes many works on alchemy and cultivation. The *Du Ren Ling,* which should have been included in the Dongxuan Division, is actually found in the Dongzhen Division. In spite of this and some other shortcomings, the *Zhengtong Canon* has the most comprehensive collection of Taoist scriptures and is the only canon that survives today.

As the canon was so massive in volume, attempts were made to publish it in an abridged form. The most famous abridged versions were the *Daozang Jiyao* edited by Peng Dingqiu during the Kangxi era (1662-1722) and the *Daozang Jinghua Lu* edited by Shouyi Zi and published in 1948.

## *Chapter Seven*

# Taoism in the Modern Age

The 20th century witnessed drastic changes in many spheres of Chinese life. Politically, the dynastic rule which had lasted for over 3,000 years was abandoned thanks to the efforts of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his comrades. Economically, China remained an agrarian country, depending largely on foreign capital and technology in the first half of the century, and then it was suddenly hauled into socialism in the second half of the century. Culturally, Chinese narcissism was greatly challenged by Western values, especially by their ideas of science and democracy in the early 20th century; it was then challenged by Marxism especially in the latter half of the century. Against this background, Taoism, being one of the "Three Pillars" of traditional Chinese culture, had to adjust itself and respond to ever-present challenges in the modern world. Admittedly, Taoism is no longer a major player in modern Chinese society, but its thinking and practices still influence Chinese people in one way or another. Besides, it has spread to many other parts of the world and commands some following. As a unique tradition emphasizing harmony between man and nature, spiritual as well as physical liberation, Taoism has much to teach people in the modern world. The fact that Taoism has survived various modern challenges proves its enduring vitality.

In this chapter we will first trace the evolution of Taoism in modern times, then provide brief accounts of the Taoist presence outside Chinese mainland, and introduce a few major Taoist monasteries in China.

## Section I Taoism in the Republic of China (1911-1949)

As an organized religion, Taoism was in a state of decline during the Republican period. As the Qing Dynasty was overthrown in 1911, Taoism together with Confucianism and Buddhism were regarded as "corrupt, feudal" culture, and so had a very difficult time, especially during the "New Culture Movements" around the second decade of the 20th century. In 1928, for instance, the Republican Government passed a decree which declared illegitimate many of the deities of the Taoist pantheon, such as the deities of the sun, moon, mountains and rivers. The practice of Taoist arts like drawing talismans and incantations were forbidden. However, as many of the Taoist beliefs were so deeply embedded in the Chinese mind and so closely connected with the life of the rural communities, the government had to acknowledge many other Taoist deities like the Yellow Emperor, the Kitchen God and Patriarch Lü. Moreover, as the government claimed to be republican and democratic, freedom of religious affiliation was written into law and constitution. In this period, there was no governmental office whatsoever established especially to administer religious affairs of Taoism, therefore Taoist priests began to set up their own organizations. Some local organizations were successful, but there was no truly national organization. Taoist influence in this period generally remained on the popular level in spite of the fact that Chen Yingning's promotion of *Xian Xue* (Learning for Immortality) was welcomed by a small section of intellectuals.

## 1. Taoist Associations

In the Republican period, several Taoist associations were established, some of them under the name of "Central," "China" and "All China." But as a matter of fact, they represented either one Taoist school or Taoist priests in a certain locality.

**Early Republican Period (1911-1937)**

In 1912 the Central Association of Taoism (Zhongyang Daojiao Hui) was initiated in the White Cloud Monastery of Beijing by its abbot Chen Yikun. This event was inscribed on a stone tablet called "White Cloud Monastery Ordination Tablet," which now stands in the temple complex. This association was represented largely by Quanzhen Taoist priests in or near the Beijing area. It was nothing more than a denominational, local association of Taoism.

In September of the same year, inspired by the Central Association of Taoism in Beijing, Taoist priests, mainly Zhengyi Taoists in or around Shanghai, assembled in Yuyuan Park and declared the founding of the General Taoist Assembly of the Republic of China (Zhonghua Minguo Daojiao Zonghui). The General Assembly designated two headquarters, one in Beijing, the other on Dragon-Tiger Mountain and a general office in Shanghai. Zhang Yuanxu, the 62nd Celestial Master, attended the assembly, which was supported by some wealthy merchants of Shanghai. Some of its proposals were rather inspiring. For instance, the assembly planned to establish hospitals and schools for noncharitable purposes, to set up business enterprises and even finance some intelligent young students to study in Western countries. Unfortunately, this association was not approved by the government. All these proposals were pigeonholed. And the influence of the association was hardly felt.

In the meantime, some Zhengyi Taoist priests began to prepare for a local Taoist association called Shanghai Zhengyi Taoist Assembly (Shanghai Zhengyi Daojiao Gonghui) headquartered at the

Temple of the Fire Deity in Shanghai. This local assembly served as an agent for the above-mentioned national general assembly. In 1927 the "General Assembly of Taoists in China" (Zhongguo Daojiao Zonghui), which was also headquartered at the Temple of the Fire Deity, was finally approved by the Shanghai local government. In 1932, Quanzhen Taoist priests in Shanghai joined hands with the Zhengyi Taoists in establishing an "All-China Taoist Association (Zhonghua Daojiao Hui). However, as it was not represented by Taoist priests from other parts of China, this association was a local or at most a regional organization.

**Later Republican Period (1937-1949)**

From 1931 Japanese troops started to invade China. It was a time of trial for the Chinese spirit. There was a split in political stance among the Taoist priests. Many either supported the anti-Japanese war efforts or found hermitages deep in the mountains. A few Taoists for various reasons joined the pro-Japanese Taoist association when Japan set up a puppet government in Nanjing. A Shanghai Special City Taoist Association (Shanghai Tebieshi Daojiao Hui), as it was then called, once assembled Taoist priests to pray for soldiers, Chinese as well as Japanese, who had died in the war. After Japan surrendered in 1945, the Shanghai Special City Taoist Association passed into history.

When the war was over, Zhang Enbo, the 63rd Celestial Master, went to Shanghai to plan a new Taoist association called "Shanghai Municipal Taoist Association" (Shanghaishi Daojiao Hui). He sought financial support from Li Lishan, then abbot of Fuxing Taoist Monastery, Shanghai branch (the monastery's headquarters was in Hangzhou). This association was set up on March 15, 1947. It included both Quanzhen and Zhengyi priests in Shanghai, with Li Lishan as its director and the Fuxing Monastery in Shanghai as its headquarters. They were very optimistic at first. They hoped that if more local associations were established, a national Taoist associa-

tion would sooner or later materialize. "Plans for Taoist Revival" were drafted by the eminent Taoist master Chen Yingning. In his plan, Chen listed eight objectives, namely preaching, studying Taoism, running newspapers and magazines, publishing books, collecting Taoist literature, participating in relief efforts, engaging in agriculture and afforestation, and performing Taoist rituals. According to the plan, the ultimate goal was to fulfill their Taoist mission. As the Civil War was soon to break out, the association actually did very little except deliver a few lectures, provide medical services and make donations. When the Nationalist (Kuomintang) Army fled the Chinese mainland, Zhang Enbo, who had been appointed associate army commander, followed them to Taiwan.

## 2. Chen Yingning and *Xian Xue*, the Learning for Immortality

If a religious tradition is to survive, it must have an officially approved organization, otherwise it will be suspected of stirring up rebellion. This is especially true as far as Taoism is concerned. If a religious tradition is to develop, it must try every possible means to extend its influence. Most of the time in pre-modern China, Taoist priests seemed not very eager to disseminate their teachings, as they believed that transmitting their teachings to an unworthy disciple would only invite disaster to the masters themselves. But if Taoist masters were not enthusiastic in this endeavor, how could Taoism possibly develop? For fear that some essence of Taoism might forever be kept in a museum, especially when most people of the time associated religion with superstition, Chen Yingning was not only active in organizational work, but also in promoting Taoist teachings during the Republican period.

### A Lift Story

In many respects, Chen Yingning could be regarded as the Man

of the Century. By studying the life and ideas of a person like him, we may get a clearer picture of how Taoism fared in the period, and hence obtain a better understanding of the tradition.

Chen Yingning (1880-1969) was born in Huaining County, Anhui Province. The early education he received was mainly Confucianist. He had a good command of all the Confucian classics and writing techniques necessary for an imperial examination. The first time he took the examination of *xiucai* for the lowest level of scholars, he made a big blunder because in his paper, he insinuated dissatisfaction with the Manchu government. Fortunately the proctor was a friend of his father's. But this incident was enough to dampen his enthusiasm for a political career. Urged on by his parents, he took the examination a second time and succeeded as a *xiucai*, but soon the imperial examination system was abandoned and Chen was only too glad to hear the news. Later he went to Anhui College of Politics and Law, a new-style school after the Western model, where Yan Fu, the eminent translator of T.H. Huxley's "Theory of Evolution," taught. Chen studied there for some time before he quit the school in 1907 because of a relapse of neurasthenia.

The first attack of neurasthenia occurred in 1895 when Chen was 15 years old. The cause of his illness, as Chen remembered in his autobiography, was over exertion of his mind coupled with malnutrition. It was an incurable disease at the time. Chen wished to find a cure from Chinese medical literature, but to no avail. Then he tried Taoist healing techniques. Their efficacy was not very obvious at first, but after he practiced the technique for some time, he found his health improving. That was the first time he tasted the Taoist fruit.

When he suffered from a second attack, he began to realize that the methods he acquired in a self-taught way were far from enough to cure his disease once and for all. At the age of 28, he left his parents and traveled to different places in China, seeking advice from many well-known Buddhist monks and Taoist priests. To his

disappointment, the Buddhist monks paid too much attention to spiritual cultivation to give him much help to physical improvement, while the Taoist priests were too preoccupied with ritual aspects to be expert in physical cultivation. He did find some Taoist priests from Wudang and Laoshan mountains who were engaged in some physical cultivation, but their methods seemed less useful than his. So he decided to search for a most proper method in the *Taoist Canon*. That was in the year 1911.

Reading the *Taoist Canon* was not an easy task. In the first place, at that time the *Canon* was hard to get hold of, as there were only seven copies preserved in seven different Taoist temples all over China, and these copies usually were taken off bookshelves only once a year when it was time for cleaning and airing. In the second place, there were altogether 5,480 *juan* in the extant Ming edition of the *Taoist Canon*. It normally would take a person quite a few years to read them through even if he has no other job engagement. By the time nobody had ever done so. Chen Yingning was the first who managed to read through the whole *Taoist Canon*. For the next two decades, he read, practiced and traveled. Amazingly, he completely recovered from his illness.

**The First Chinese Magazine on Taoism**

In 1933, Chen Yingning set out to run a magazine entitled *Yangshan Bimonthly*. This was a significant event in the history of Taoism, for as we mentioned earlier Taoism was one of the most cryptic religions in the world, and most priests took as motto the first line of the *Dao De Jing*, "The Tao which is speakable is not a permanent Tao." Chen became the greatest popularizer of Taoism. And nobody in this century was more competent than he. The magazine was a forum through which Chen disseminated his knowledge of Taoism, especially its inner alchemy, to the interested public. The bimonthly published 99 issues before it stopped on account of the Japanese invasion in 1937.

With the support from his disciples like Doctor Zhang Zhuming, another magazine came into being. The new magazine was entitled *Xianxue Monthly*, which turned out altogether 30 issues.

**Chen Yingning's View on *Xian* (Immortal) and Its Tradition**

The Immortalist Tradition had long been regarded as one of the major streams of the Taoist religion. However, as Taoist influence diminished among the Chinese elite, more and more Taoist practices were labeled "superstitious" especially after the New Culture Movement. The self-cultivation which characterized the Immortalist Tradition was on the verge of extinction. In order to preserve this tradition, which Chen considered to be the most valuable element of Taoism, Chen pioneered the proposal that the Immortalist Tradition be isolated from the Taoist tradition and the works on self-cultivation be studied and made known to the public. Chen's view on the Immortalist Tradition and practices can be summarized in the following points:

(1) The Immortalist Tradition has always been an independent tradition in Chinese history. Confucius was born in the 6th century B.C. when the Zhou Dynasty was in decline, but the legendary tales about immortals in the pre-Zhou Dynasty period could be easily found in ancient records. That was to say that the Immortalist Tradition had nothing to do with Confucianism. Buddhism found its way to China through Central Asia around the first century A.D. when the Eastern Han Emperor Ming Di reigned, but the legends about immortals in the pre-Han Dynasty period were recorded in Chinese historical documents. The Immortalist Tradition had nothing to do with Buddhism. And finally, the Immortalist Tradition far predated the Zhengyi Taoist School traceable only to the 2nd century A.D. and Quanzhen Taoism which started in the 12th century A.D.

(2) The Immortalists had different views of life from those of either Confucianists, Buddhists or Taoists. Confucianists believed

that life should be stable. Its purpose was to preserve the status quo. For them, human progress was unimaginable. Buddhists believed that life was illusory, so the purpose of life was to gain enlightenment. For them, real life was negated. Taoists believed that life followed its own course of action, the purpose of life was to take things as they are. Their slogans like "remain in tranquility" and "take no action" might lead people to a life of dejection. The Immortalists held that life was imperfect. The purpose of life was to transcend the law of nature which was accountable for life's imperfections.

(3) Immortalism reflected a true picture of the world. The world was neither made up solely of matter, as materialists held, nor was it made up solely of mind, as idealists insisted. Immortalists believed that the world was made up of both matter and mind and that they were convertible under certain conditions. For instance, through the cultivation which involved mind and body, the palpable *qi* (vital energy) might turn into impalpable *shen* (spirit). Therefore the dichotomy of matter and mind was irrelevant.

(4) Immortalism with its different levels and means of cultivation could benefit different people. There were three levels of cultivation which might bring people to different states of immortality. The highest state was to become a celestial immortal, which was exemplified by *Tianxian Zhengli Zhiyan* (*Frank Comments on the Theory of Celestial Immortality*) written by Wu Shouyang. The middle state was to become a terrestrial immortal, an ideal pursued by many of the early alchemists like Ge Hong. The lowest state was to become a human immortal, the means to which could be found in *Wu Zhen Pian* (*Treatise on Realizing the Truth*) by Song inner alchemist Zhang Boduan. Further, single cultivation is different from dual cultivation (men and women together); a male practitioner should employ different methods from a female practitioner.

Chen Yingning was undoubtedly an eminent master. He edited the journals which greatly popularized the teachings of Immortal-

ism. He was also the first one to run the College of Immortalism, though it existed only briefly. He was the first one who had widely used the *Taoist Canon* and built his cultivation on a very solid theoretical basis. Though his distinction of Immortalism from Taoism was not widely accepted, it was a historical fact that the stream of Immortalism had merged into the river of Taoism. What he has done during the Republican period unconsciously boosted the influence of Taoism. In fact he changed his view on the distinction between Taoism and Immortalism after he was elected Chairman of the Chinese Taoist Association in 1961.

Chen wrote quite a few essays on inner alchemy. For instance he wrote a commentary on *Huang Ting Jing* and annotated Sun Bu'er's *Nu Dan Gong*, an important work on inner alchemy for women. Most of his works can be found in the two magazines he edited; other works are in secret circulation among some Taoists, waiting to be published.

## Section II Taoism in the People's Republic of China (1949-)

Although Zhang Enbo, the 63rd Celestial Master, joined the Nationalist Army and fled to Taiwan, the lives of Taoist priests were little affected when the Communist-led People's Liberation Army liberated the mainland part of China in 1949. The Communist leaders realized that Taoist influence on the masses of the Chinese people especially in rural communities was deep-rooted. The wisest policy was to incorporate the Taoist priests into the "United Front," as the Communists had already done with other important sectors of society during the Civil War. The First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference held in late September 1949 declared that freedom of religious affiliation and

activities was to be protected. At the same time, they warned against "superstitious practices." Taoism was treated on an equal footing with other major religious organizations in China, namely, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism and Islam. On April 12, 1957, the first national Taoist association was set up.

## 1. Chinese Taoist Association

The Chinese Taoist Association (Zhongguo Daojiao Xiehui) is an organization whose membership is widely represented. When the first preparatory meeting was convened on November 26, 1957 in Beijing, 23 leading Taoist priests from different monasteries in 12 provinces participated in it. The membership grew, each time when the councilors' meeting was held. At the fifth councilors' meeting, for instance, there were 111 participants representing Taoist priests from 23 provinces. The activities of the association to a large degree reflect Taoist assertions in the People's Republic of China.

The Chinese Taoist Association aims at "assisting the government in carrying out the policy of religious freedom" and "uniting Taoist priests in their efforts to inherit and carry forward the fine tradition of Taoist culture." This aim appears in the first charter of the Taoist Association and has remained unchanged till now. However, as the anti-Rightist political campaign was launched in 1957, no significant activity was initiated by the chairman or executives of the first council. Worse still, Yue Congdai, the first chairman of the association, was labeled a "Rightist" and died soon after. Chen Yingning, who had served as a vice-chairman, became the acting chairman.

Between 1956 and 1961 when then second councilors' meeting was convened, China was on a drive for a hasty communization of the national economy. Taoists, like other religious professionals, joined local farmers or workers in their labor. The Taoist priests

from large monasteries usually formed their own production brigade, while those from small monasteries usually participated in the labor organized by farmers or factory workers. That was a significant change as far as the monastic economy and administration were concerned. For now the monastery ceased to be an independent economic unit and the regular religious life within the monastery gave way to a life of farm work or factory work. At that time, Taoist priests saw nothing wrong with the change, as they did all these largely out of their own will. Look at how Chen Yingning commented on this change in 1962:

> Fundamental changes have taken place in the social system of our country since 1949. While Taoism might still appear old-fashioned, Taoist priests have taken on a new look. The Taoist priest who used to travel from one monastery to another has now become a permanent labor force. Some of them were even awarded the honor of advanced laborer. The pessimistic become optimistic.... Only if they take part in the drive for socialist construction and concern themselves with the wellbeing of the people, will they get their own benefits. From now on, they don't have to worry about themselves.... And this is the overall situation of the Taoist priests in China.

During the period between 1962 and 1980, when the third councilors' meeting was convened, the Chinese Taoist Association had done some remarkable work but also experienced some severe setbacks. Since the 1960s the political climate seemed to turn for the better. When the second councilors' meeting was held in Beijing on November 1, 1961, Chen Yingning declared that the Taoist Association would focus its work on academic research of the Taoist legacy. Among many things, he put the following items on the planning agenda:

(1) Prepare an authoritative book on the history of Chinese Taoism within the next five years.

(2) Publish *Daojiao Huikan*, a restricted journal circulated among the members of the Taoist Association.

(3) Run a training program for professional Taoist priests. The five-year-long program would prepare students for monastery administration and research work.

These plans would have been carried out to the letter, had not the "cultural revolution" broken out in 1966. In spite of anything, the major part of the plans was realized. An outline of the book was written. Its English translation can be found in the *Journal of Chinese Religions* (No. 15, 1987) published in North America. The training program which stopped running since 1966 was resumed after 1981. The *Daojiao Huikan* published 20 issues till 1966 and was resumed as an unrestricted journal in 1987 under the name of *Zhongguo Daojiao* (*Chinese Taoism*).

During the ten-year nightmarish "cultural revolution," Taoist priests like many other religious personalities and lay people could not escape disaster. Being an embodiment and legacy of traditional Chinese culture, Taoism became a shooting target for those rebellious Red Guards. Countless Taoist ritual implements, tablets and scriptures were damaged; monasteries were closed down or confiscated for governmental offices, factories or even army barracks. Some "rebels" forced the Quanzhen Taoist priests to abandon vegetarianism, cut off their hair and doffed their cloaks. Some others even went so far as to force them into marriage!

## 2. The Revival of Taoism Since the 1980s

After the "cultural revolution," China entered a "new historical period," as the Chinese mass media often termed it. The Chinese Communist Party and government reoriented their work and launched a great campaign for economic reform. After a few decades of isolation, China has become a more and more active member of the world community. On the one hand, the government adopts a more tolerant policy toward non-communist faiths; on the other, the Chinese people have developed a new interest in religious faiths as

society has grown more and more competitive and uncertain. As a result, Taoism experiences a period of revival, which can be seen in several aspects.

Firstly, many Taoist monasteries have been restored or renovated:

From 1981 up to 1995, the Taoist Association played a very important role in restoring the major Taoist monasteries, damaged during the "cultural revolution." By petitioning to the State Administration of Religious Affairs, in 1986 the 21 key Taoist monasteries in the country were returned to the priests. They are Bixia Si on Mt. Taishan; Taiqing Gong on Mt. Laoshan; Maoshan Daoyuan in Jiangsu; Baopu Daoyuan in Hangzhou; Tianshi Fu on Dragon-Tiger Mountain; Zixiao Gong and Taihe Gong on Mt. Wudang; Changchun Guan in Wuchang; Congxu Guan on Mt. Luofu; Cangdao Guan and Zushi Dian on Mt. Qingcheng; Qingyang Gong in Chengdu; Louguan Tai on Mt. Zhongnan; Baxian Gong in Xi'an; Yuquan Daoyuan, Dong Daoyuan and Zhenyue Gong on Mt. Huashan; Wuliang Guan on Mt. Qianshan; Taiqing Gong in Shenyang; Zhongyue Miao on Mt. Songshan; and Baiyun Guan (White Cloud Monastery) in Beijing. More detailed descriptions of these monasteries will be offered in the last section of this chapter.

Secondly, several training programs for Taoist priest-candidates have been established and various new activities have been conducted:

On May 5, 1990, the first college for training potential Taoist priests was set up at the White Cloud Monastery in Beijing. The college runs two programs: one is a two-year special course, the other is a two-year advanced course. The students are chosen through special examinations coupled with a recommendation from the local Taoist association. During their study at the college, there are offered courses on various aspects of Taoism, such as history, liturgy, cultivation, martial arts and monastic administration. English is also included into the curriculum to equip its students with this most important tool of international communication. According to the Charter of the Chinese Taoist College, the purpose of the pro-

grams is to "train young Taoist priests who are both patriotic and devout in their religious faith, both proficient in knowledge of Taoism and devoted to Taoist cause so that they can better carry on the fine tradition of Taoism and spread Taoist culture." The students at the college include both Quanzhen and Zhengyi priests.

There are several other training programs throughout the country, among which the Shanghai Taoist College for Zhengyi priests, and the Qingcheng Taoist School for Taoist nuns in Sichuan are the most famous.

Besides training programs, many activities have also been resumed. For instance, some of the important Taoist festivals are observed within the monasteries and attract public attention. Taoist priests in China are much more actively involved in international activities. In September, 1993, Luotian Dajiao, the grandest Taoist ritual cosmic Renewal, was performed in the White Cloud Monastery. The last performance of this kind of ritual had occurred in the Ming Dynasty. Taoist delegations from different places on the Mainland of China and from Taiwan, Hong Kong and overseas were invited to participate. One of the most interesting scenes during the 15-day ritual performance was a group of Taoist priests from Australia, the United States and Canada saying prayers and chanting Taoist scriptures in Cantonese! In October 1995 a "Taoist Week" was held in Singapore, during which over 70 Taoist priests from China were invited to preach their arts and perform rituals.

Finally, the Taoist revival is evidenced by the new academic interest in Taoist studies among Chinese scholars.

Taoism as a serious field of academic study began very late in China. Before 1949, the year when the People's Republic of China was founded, there were very few scholarly books published on Taoism. The most important works among them were *Daojiaoshi* (*History of Taoism*) by Xu Dishan, *Zhongguo Daojiaoshi* (*The Taoist History of China*) by Fu Qinjia, and *Daozang Yuanliu Kao* (*An Investigation of the Sources of the "Taoist Canon"*) by Chen Guofu.

During 1949-1966 some progress was made in the study of Taoism. Besides the history of Taoism, many more facets of Taoism were studied such as alchemy and medicine. Some in-depth research in certain aspects of Taoism was also conducted, for instance, Wang Ming devoted himself to the study of the *Taipingjing* and compiled *Taipingjing Hejiao* (*Collation of the Taipingjing*). Chen Yuan published *Nansongchu Hebei Xindaojiao* (*New Taoist Schools in North China during the Southern Song*), a monumental work on the three new orders of Taoism discussed in Ch.6. Within the Chinese Taoist Association itself, there was some progress in the study of Taoism. The *Zhongguo Daojiaoshi Tigang* (*An Outline of Chinese Taoist History*), published in 1983, was actually prepared in this period. The research of Taoism was broken off during the "cultural revolution" from 1966 to 1976.

Since 1976, there has been a marked progress in Taoist studies. Many more articles and books have been published than in any other period. These articles and books cover a wide area of Taoist research, including Taoist philosophy and theology, ethics, arts and literature as well as its relationship with women and ethnic Chinese minorities. Besides research done by individual scholars, joint efforts have also been made to research this long neglected field. On the Chinese mainland today, there are four Taoist study centers based in, namely, Taoist Research Department, Institute of World Religions, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing; the Institute of Religious Studies, Sichuan University, Sichuan; the Institute of Religious Studies, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Shanghai; and the Research Institute of Taoist Culture under the Chinese Taoist Association, Beijing. The researchers in these centers are engaged in publishing essays and books, organizing conferences and training young scholars at home and abroad. In so doing, they have greatly increased our knowledge of Taoism necessary for the revival of this indigenous cultural tradition of China.

# Section III Taoist Presence Outside Chinese Mainland

## 1. Taoist Presence in Taiwan

Scholars have different opinions on the earliest Taoist presence in Taiwan. According to Liang Heng (in *Taiwan Tongshi*), Taoist presence can be traced back to the middle of the Tang Dynasty around the 9th century when a Taoist priest named Shi Jianwu went to Taiwan. According to Professor Michael Saso, the year 1590 is the approximate date. The earliest Taoist priests who went to Taiwan belonged to a sect called Lüshan Sannai. Later priests of the Maoshan Zhengyi traditions began with their activities in the region. No traces of the presence of the Quanzhen Tradition have been found. As the trade across the Taiwan Straits was frequent and immigration to Taiwan from the mainland started very early, we believe that the Taoist presence in Taiwan might be traced back to a much earlier date.

In the early 5th century, Sun En fled the coast of the East China Sea after he was defeated. When Sun En drowned himself, his people all firmly believed that he had turned into a Shuixian (Water Immortal). In Taiwan today, there are many Water Immortal Temples, which suggest possible connections. In 1661, Zheng Chenggong drove the Dutch out of Taiwan. A large immigration from the mainland soon followed. It is possible that Taoism flourished for a time in Taiwan because of the immigration. It is said that a Taoist monastery called Ciji Gong in Tainan was originally built by Zheng's descendants in imitation of the monastery in their hometown in present Longhai County, Fujian Province.

Taoist monasteries in Taiwan enshrine the deities that are similar to those enshrined on the mainland. Popular among them are the Jade Emperor, Three Officials, Patriarch Lü, Scholar Protector

Wenchang, Water Immortal and Mazu. As far as the overall situation of Taoism is concerned, the differences are also obvious:

(1) Almost all the Taoist priests in Taiwan belong to the Zhengyi Tradition. They are proficient in rituals but seem to know little about the cultivations which are in practice among the Quanzhen Taoist priests of the mainland.

(2) Taoism is a mainstay religious belief in Taiwan. This results from historical circumstances. Taiwan has been twice colonialized, once by Dutch and once by Japanese. Taoism, being an indigenous Chinese religion, naturally came to serve the national spirit. Therefore the influence of Taoism was and still is the greatest when compared with other religious traditions.

(3) There is a syncretic worship of Buddhist and Taoist deities in Taiwan. The island was occupied by Japan in 1895. Japan then adopted a discriminating policy toward religions in Taiwan. They attempted to wipe out the Taoist influence just because it represented the Chinese national spirit, while they protected Buddhism because it was a foreign faith very strong in Japan. In response, Buddhist statues were placed in the Taoist monasteries.

(4) The mingling of Taoism with native shamanism is very conspicuous. For instance, there are two kinds of Taoist priests in Taiwan, which are distinguishable from their headdress. One is called red-head priest, the other is black-head priest. By examining ancient costumes worn by Zhengyi priests, we find that they wore black headgear when they performed rituals. The red headgear was often donned by the shamans in Taiwan.

After Zhang Enbo went to reside in Taiwan, some regional Taoist organizations were set up. A Taiwan office was set up in Taipei in 1950 to take charge of Taoist affairs. It was soon followed by the Taipei Taoist Association, and the Taiwan Provincial Taoist Association. In 1966, The "taoist Association of the Republic of China" was inaugurated. Zhang Enbo occupied very important positions in all these organizations until he died on December 25, 1969. His

post as the Celestial Master passed on to his nephew Zhang Yuanxian. The "Taoist Association of the Republic of China" has so far convened six congresses. In the charter which was passed in the third congress in 1975, we can get an idea of its purpose and activities. "This Association aims to expound and publicize Taoist teachings, do research on the Taoist legacy, arrange Taoist scriptures and do social work and finally promote world harmony." Tasks to be accomplished are:

(1) To unite all Taoist denominations or sects, and to associate with other religions;

(2) To establish a college of Taoism and to open preaching forums;

(3) To integrate Taoist regulations and to reform Taoist rituals;

(4) To protect monastic property and to assist in maintaining and constructing Taoist monasteries;

(5) To promote charity work and cultural development;

(6) To promote other work related to Taoist mission.

The association has a branch in almost every county of Taiwan and its membership reaches 27,528, according to one source.

The Tianshi Fu has its own independent branch offices in some cities and counties in Taiwan and in other territories or countries like Hong Kong, Singapore, the Philippines, Canada and the United States.

## 2. The Taoist Presence in Hong Kong

It is still unknown when Taoist influence reached Hong Kong, but we know that some Taoist monasteries can be dated from the Qing Dynasty. At present in Hong Kong there are over 100 Taoist-related monasteries and Taoism commands a following of over 300,000 people. These statistics were provided by the Hong Kong Taoist Federation set up in 1967.

Due to special circumstances and its relative isolation from the

mainstream Taoist faith on the mainland, the Taoist presence in Hong Kong takes on some special features:

(1) The synthesis of the Three Teachings, namely Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, is common.

(2) Taoist monasteries usually serve also as business entities. Therefore some monasteries are registered as a "Corporation Limited."

(3) There are very few professional Taoist priests.

(4) Taoist ritual is much more emphasized than its monastic norms or disciplines.

(5) Most of the monasteries are engaged in charity work.

(6) Many of the monasteries have a close connection with the Taoist monasteries in Guangzhou, the capital city of Guangdong Province, such as Chongxu Guguan, Sanyuangong and Yunquan Xianguan.

**Major Taoist Monasteries in Hong Kong**

Yuan Xuan Xue Yuan was built in 1964. As the name indicates it is a syncretic religious organization which preaches the Three Teachings. *Yuan* is a Buddhist term which means "all-round"; *Xuan* is a Taoist term which means "mystery" or "profundity"; and *Xue* is a Confucian term which means "learning." It is located in the "New Territories."

Qingsong Guan: It was first established in 1950 by Taoist priests who claimed to be descendants of Huang Xuanxian, the fourth-generation master affiliated with the Longmen Branch of Quanzhen Taoism. It was registered with the local government in the name of Qingsong Guan Corporation Limited. The main deities enshrined in it are Patriarch Lü and four other less well-known masters. It has branch offices in the USA, Europe and Australia. The headquarters is in Kowloon.

Pengying Xianguan: It was established in 1925 by Mai Xingjie, who also served as the Abbot of Sanyuan Gong in Guangzhou. The main deities enshrined in it are Lord Lao, the Highest, Patriarch Lü

and Patriarch Qiu. The monastery belongs to the Longmen Branch of Quanzhen Taoism. In 1972 the monastery was registered with the government under the name of Pengying Xianguan Corporation Limited.

Yunquan Xianguan: It was built in 1944, functioning as a branch monastery of Yunquan Xianguan in Guangzhou. The present manager is Wu Yaodong, whose father Wu Lihe used to be the abbot of the home temple in Guangzhou. Wu Lihe was labeled "reactionary" in the early 1950s and therefore moved to Hong Kong with his family. The main deity enshrined in the monastery is Patriarch Lü.

Xinshan Zique Xuanguan: This monastery was first established in Macao in 1964. Later it moved to Hong Kong and registered with the government under the name of Xinshan Zique Xuanguan Non-Profit Corporation Limited. The temple enshrines the three Pure Ones and Patriarch Lü. It belongs to the Zhengyi Tradition.

## 3. Dissemination of Taoism Overseas

The Taoist religion began to extend its influence to areas outside China since the Tang Dynasty, largely because those areas were directly within the Chinese cultural orbit. They are Japan, Korea, Vietnam and some other Asian nations. But during the last two centuries many Chinese immigrated overseas largely because of economic hardship at home. These immigrants brought with them the Taoist faith and built monasteries in the new countries where they resided. According to statistics published by the Taiwan Tianshi Fu Overseas Office, by 1952 there were 54 Taoist monasteries with 25,000 devotees in North America, 85 monasteries with 27,000 devotees in South America, 98 monasteries with 29,000 devotees in Europe, 54 monasteries with 3,400 devotees in Africa, and 130 monasteries with 9,500 devotees in Oceania. Among the Asian countries, there were 12 monasteries with 3,400 devotees in Japan, 9 monasteries with 5,200 devotees in Thailand, 7 monasteries

with 2,700 devotees in Myanmar, 4 monasteries with 820 devotees in Indonesia, 2 monasteries with 120 devotees in India, 58 monasteries with 38,000 devotees in the Philippines, 135 monasteries with 12,500 devotees in Malaysia, and 198 monasteries with 27,000 devotees in Singapore. These monasteries may serve as windows through which their fellow-citizens come to learn about Taoism.

Another force that contributed to Taoist dissemination overseas is academia. Academic interest in Taoism was perhaps aroused by translations of the Taoist classics done by European sinologists of the 19th century. As the knowledge of Taoism provided by those "Old China hands" was far from satisfactory, some "New China hands" began to adopt new approaches to Taoist studies, as were the case with Bend Maspero and Kristofer Schipper from Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris, and Michael Saso from the University of Hawaii. Both of them were ordained by Taoist masters in Taiwan and both have become world leading scholars on Taoist studies. It would be unfair if we failed to mention some Japanese scholars who set up the first academic society especially for the study of Taoism, namely "the Society of Taoist Research." The names like Yoshitoyo Yoshioka, Ninji Ofuchi and Miyakawa Hisayuki have become paradigms for many new students of Taoism. Thanks to all these scholars and others, Taoism has now found its way into the curricula of many colleges and universities in Western countries and has become a respected field of study. To stimulate exchange in the study of Taoism, so far five international conferences have been held. The discovery of Taoist values is an ongoing process, which will in the future be stimulated through efforts of international cooperation.

## Section IV Taoist Monasteries on the Mainland

By now, we have presented an outline of the history of Taoism

as an organized religion. But readers might still feel puzzled when they happen to enter a Taoist monastery in China. In this section we will first discuss the structure of a Taoist monastery and then provide guidelines concerning the major Taoist monasteries in China.

## 1. Structure of a Taoist Monastery and Its Underlying Philosophy

Taoist monasteries are continuations of ancient Chinese temples where nature deities and ancestors were worshipped. For Taoist priests, the earliest place of worship was perhaps a simple "quiet chamber," as was popular in the early Five Bushels of Rice Taoism. As Taoist influence increased, especially in the Tang Dynasty, larger and more complex buildings were constructed, where Taoist priests could worship their deities and practice self-cultivation at the same time. When the Quanzhen Tradition emerged, a system of public Taoist monasteries or Shifang Conglin was introduced where the size of a monastery grew larger so as to accommodate the itinerant priests or monks who came to register with the monastery or *Gua Ding*, to use a Taoist expression. This system was clearly influenced by Buddhism. However, as we observe the building structure of Taoist monasteries and compare them with those of the Buddhist temples, we will find that the structure of Taoist monasteries has its own underlying philosophy, which reflects much more the peculiarity of Chinese culture than we may find in the Buddhist temples, although mutual influences are discernible in both Taoist monasteries and Buddhist temples.

Most Taoist monasteries in China follow similar patterns in their architectural structure. Take for instance the White Cloud Monastery in Beijing. In front of the complex stands a building structure called *Linxing Men*, from where the Taoist priests watch Heaven or greet visiting deities. There also stands a flag post, two ornamental stone columns and a structure called "mountain gate."

This "mountain gate" has three openings which symbolize the three realms of the world. It is the divide between the Taoist religious world and the secular world. Along the axis of the complex stand three main halls, with attached halls on both sides. The main halls enshrine the Jade Emperor and the Three Pure Ones. These buildings face south. Along the eastern side of the complex are the living quarters of the priests. According to the ancient theory of *Wu Xing* (Five Agents), the East, "Blue Dragon" and "Wood" all symbolize Yang and a free traveling of Yang spirit out of human body is just what a Taoist is pursuing for life. The western side of the complex is usually reserved for itinerant Taoist priests from other monasteries. Most of the halls in the monastery are one-story high, unlike Gothic churches or mosques which mean to bring grandeur to the viewer. Some of the palaces or halls, especially those enshrining the supreme deities, are gorgeously furnished, which suggests that the deities share the common desires of human beings for comfort and luxury. The trees and rockeries dotting the complex express the Taoist desire for return to nature. The overall structure of a Taoist monastery like the White Cloud Monastery brings a sense of closeness to its viewer, who might think that he is not far removed from the Taoist Kingdom of God.

## 2. Major Taoist Monasteries in China

By a rough estimate, there are nearly 1,000 Taoist monasteries in China today. The following section will give a brief account of the 21 monasteries which have been listed as the Key Taoist Monasteries. These and some others have preserved the best of the Taoist legacy, and therefore are living witnesses for the study of Taoism — one of the most fascinating traditions in the world.

1) Bixia Si (Mt. Taishan, Shandong Province)

Bixia Si (Bixia Monastery) is located on top of Mt. Taishan in present Shandong Province. Its earliest predecessor Zhaozhen

Monastery dates back to 1009 during the reign of the Song Emperor Zhen Zong. It was renovated and expanded in the next few dynasties. The efforts made by Ming emperors are still testifiable by the two bronze tablets erected within the complex, which date back to 1615 and 1625 respectively. The main deity enshrined there is Goddess Bixia (literally meaning "Azure Cloud"). The full name of the goddess is Tianxian Shengmu Bixia Yuanjun, which literally means "Celestial Immortal Holy Mother Azure Cloud Goddess." One should not be surprised about such a long title, as Chinese are known for piling long titles upon the respected. There is a legend like this: When the Song Emperor Zhen Zong returned from a trip to Mt. Taishan where he offered a national sacrifice, he found a jade statue of a girl emerging from the pond where he had just washed his hands. He thought it must be the daughter of the deity Mt. Taishan, who wanted to make her presence felt, so he ordered to build a monastery for her, and entitled her "Celestial Immortal Jade Girl, Azure Cloud Goddess." She is the divine protector of women and children, and is more popularly known as "Taishan Niangniang," Goddess Mt. Taishan. The name of the monastery is spread far and wide by millions of pious pilgrims who go there yearly. The monastery belongs to the system of Quanzhen public monasteries.

2) Taiqing Gong (Mt. Laoshan, Shandong Province)

Traveling eastward, one will arrive at a beautiful coastal city called Qingdao. Its beach is as famous in China as Palm Beach in the United States. Fifteen miles away from the city there is a mountain called Laoshan. In Chinese history, Mt. Laoshan had a close association with Taoism. Legend has it that 2,200 years ago Xu Fu set sail from a nearby island in order to find the elixir for China's First Emperor (Qin Shi Huang). There are a dozen of Taoist monasteries on Mt. Laoshan. Among them Taiqing Gong (Taiqing Palace) is the most famous. From the name of the monastery, *Taiqing*, one may guess that the main deity enshrined is the Taoist supreme trinity. When one enters the monastery, one finds that there

are more deities and halls expected. Beside the supreme trinity ("Shangqing," "Yuqing" and "Traiqing") are Shennong, Fuxi and Xuanyuan, three ancient Chinese legendary heroes; the Three Officials, in charge of Heaven, Earth and Water respectively; the Queen Mother of the West; Patriarch Lü; the god Guan, etc. Taiqing Gong is also famous for its connection with some eminent Taoist masters. Patriarch Qiu once preached here and initiated many people. It is in this monastery that Patriarch Qiu's fellow disciple Liu Changsheng established the Shuishan Branch of Quanzhen Taoism. The Ming Taoist master Zhang Sanfeng twice chose the monastery as his hermitage. It is said that he planted in the complex the trees which still now blossom since winter for half a year. It is also said that in his *Strange Tales from Make-Do Studio* (*Liao Zai Zhi Yi*)* Pu Songling based many of his stories on things he saw here. The *Neijia Quan* (martial arts of internal school) taught in the monastery is as famous as the Shaolin Gongfu. Taiqing is a Quanzhen public monastery.

3) Maoshan Daoyuan (Jiangsu Province)

To the south of Shangdong Province there is a province called Jiangsu, which has been the birth place of many eminent Chinese statesmen, scientists and entrepreneurs. Not far away from its capital city Nanjing, one will find a Taoist monastery, which used to be the residence of many Taoist masters. Even now it is still an attraction for devoted Taoist priests. This monastery is known as Maoshan Daoyuan (Mt. Maoshan Taoist Monastery). Mt. Maoshan was originally named in memory of three Mao brothers who after quitting their official posts came here to practice alchemy about 2,000 years ago. A folk song is still sung by the people living in the area, expressing their gratitude toward the Maos. Here are a few lines:

> Mt. Maoshan connects Jinling [ancient name for present Nanjing],
> Rivers and lakes flow their water downward.

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* An English edition of the book, translated by Denis C. & Victor H. Mair, was published by the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing in 1989.

Three deities flew on white cranes,
Each occupying one hill.
They caused rainfall to irrigate our fields,
Which are now no longer dry.
Now that our wives and children have food security,
We are care-free.
Since you have risen up to the blue sky like white cranes,
When will you come down again?

Beginning from the 4th century A.D., many Taoist masters came here such as Wei Huacun, Yang Xi, the Xu Brothers, Lu Xiujing, Tao Hongjing, Wang Zhiyuan, Pan Shizheng, and Sima Chengzhen. These masters initiated the Maoshan Scriptural Tradition, one of the most influential traditions in the history of Taoism. The 20th century witnessed two great disasters befalling Maoshan Monastery. In 1939 the Japanese set fire to it because of its connection with Communist resistance; during the "cultural revolution," many of its buildings were demolished. Today some of the buildings have been restored and some treasured artifacts retrieved. The Maoshan Daoyuan, consisting of Wanfu Gong and Wanning Gong, is a Zhengyi public monastery.

4) Baopu Daoyuan (Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province)

Traveling southeastward, you will come to a City of Paradise: Hangzhou. Marco Polo gave a rather detailed description of this city after he left here. It was and is still a "land of silk." To the south of the city lies the famous West Lake. Not far away to the west of the lake stands a Taoist monastery called Baopu Daoyuan (Baopu Taoist Monastery). Careful readers will immediately associate it with Ge Hong, a well-known 3rd century Taoist alchemist, who called himself Baopu Zi. Enshrined in the main hall of the monastery is "Immortal Ge (Hong)." On its east side stands the Red Plum Pavilion, Baopu's Cottage and Half-Leisure Hall. Inside the Red Plum Pavilion, there are many engraved corridors. Among them, the engraving of pictures based on the famous Chinese opera

*Courtesan Li Huiniang* in the story is very lively and interesting. Whether there is some connection between Taoism and prostitution remains unknown. Also found in and near the monastery are the sites where Ge Hong carried out his alchemical experiments. The well whose water Ge used is still there. In the monastery, there is a tablet dating back to the 16th century. The tablet records a brief life story of Ge Hong and his activities in this area. According to the stele, Ge Hong "concocted medicine to cure the sick, dug wells to help the needy and made roads to facilitate transportation." His popularity is further testified by a mountain range called "Ridge Ge" which overlooks the monastery. Dozens of Taoist priests live in the monastery today. The Taoist music played by the choir brings listeners back to ancient times, it is so enchanting that they will "linger there and forget to go back home."

5) Tianshi Fu (Dragon-Tiger Mountain, Jiangxi Province)

If you take a train from Hangzhou down south, in about ten hours, you will come to a station called Yingtan. Yingtan is a city which borders on three provinces, Zhejiang, Fujian and Jiangxi. The spectacular Dragon-Tiger Mountain is not too far beyond. Legend has it that before Zhang Daoling, the first Celestial Master, left for Sichuan, he had stayed on this mountain for some time and when he successfully made an "alchemical elixir," a dragon and a tiger appeared and came to his service. Hence the name of the mountain. In later Taoist literature *xiang long fu hu* (conquering dragon and tiger) always means "making elixir." Zhang's family history says that the fourth Celestial Master Zhang Sheng moved to this mountain after his father surrendered to Cao Cao in the early 3rd century. But it was not until the 12th century that prosperity came and large monasteries began to be built for the Zhang Family. The name "No. 1 Residence in Southern China" reminds us of their past glory. Today Tianshi Fu is the only monastery that remains there. Tianshi Fu, which literally means "Celestial Master's Residence," is believed to have been the residing place of 60 celestials

starting from the fourth Celestial Master Zhang Sheng of the 3rd century down to the 63rd Celestial Master Zhang Enbo of this century. We are doubtful of that long unbroken tradition in one locality. Probably Zhang Jixian, the 33rd Celestial Master, was the first Master to live in Tianshi Fu for enshrined in the main hall today are only three Celestial Masters, Zhang Daoling, Zhang Jixian and Zhang Yuchu, the 43rd generation in the Zhang lineage. What characterizes the monastery is its overall layout, which is modeled after the "Eight Diagrams." Besides the three Zhangs, the Three Pure Ones and the Three Officials are also enshrined. Visitors are often attracted by two yew podocarpus (the familiar Chinese name being "arhat pine"), which are more than two thousands years old, and a bell which weights 9,999 *jin* (one *jin* equals 0.5 kg). Tianshi Fu is the Mecca for Zhengyi priests. In recent years it has begun to receive pilgrims even from outside of China.

6) Chongxu Guguan (Mt. Luofu, Guangdong Province)

Guangdong is connected with Jiangxi Province by the Hangzhou-Yingtan Railway which extends southwestward. Being one of the earliest provinces open to foreign trade and a neighbor of Hong Kong, Guangdong is better known than any other province. Amidst the emerging skyscrapers and other modern buildings, a few Taoist monasteries still survive as if to remind the busy men that there is a higher ideal beyond accumulating wealth. Chongxu Guguan is one of these monasteries. Like Baopu Daoyuan, this monastery is famous for its connection with Ge Hong. In his later years, Ge Hong came to Mt. Luofu to receive instruction in alchemy from his father-in-law Bao Qing who was then the chief of the prefecture in the area. The present Chongxu Guguan developed from the earliest Duxu Guan which Ge built soon after he came to the mountain in 327. Duxu Guan was renovated and enlarged throughout the following dynasties. Quite a few less well-known Taoist monasteries were formerly its branch monasteries, such as the Huang Long Dong (Yellow Dragon Cave) in Hangzhou, in Singapore and in

Malaysia and the Huangdaxian Miao (Great Immortal Huang Monastery) in Shanghai and in Kowloon, Hong Kong. Great Immortal Huang was Ge Hong's disciple. One book says, when Ge Hong "ascended to Heaven," Huang was absent, but he found a dose of "Dan Yang" (elixir) left for him when he came back, so he swallowed it and became an "immortal-on-Earth." A few traces of Ge Hong's activities can still be found there, for instance, the well and the furnace. The monastery is hidden among old pine trees, which make it an ideal place for Taoist priests and lay people to cultivate themselves. Because of its special geographical position, Chongxu Guguan attracts many pilgrims from Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan as well as from Southeast Asian countries. It is a Quanzhen public monastery.

Let us now turn our attention from the most prosperous coastal province to the populous inland province Sichuan. It is one of the major cradles of Taoism both in legend and in recorded history. It was here that the first three Zhangs initiated the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism. But according to a Taoist legend, this area was honored with visits of the Yellow Emperor, Immortal Master Ning Feng and Lao Zi. There is a cluster of Taoist monasteries, most of which belong to the Quanzhen School. This might seem quite strange at the first. But most of the followers of the Five Bushels of Rice Taoism were forced to scatter after their leader Zhang Lu surrendered to Cao Cao. Also imagine the compelling influence of Quanzhen Taoism under the leadership of Qiu Chuji after he gained official patronage from the Mongols. Today three monasteries are listed as national key monasteries, namely Changdao Guan, Zhushi Dian and Qingyang Gong. There is a large concentration of Taoist priestesses in China.

7) Changdao Guan (Mt. Qingcheng, Sichuan)

Changdao Guan (Changdao Monastery), another name for Tianshi Dong (Celestial Master Cave), occupies the central position among the clusters of monasteries on Mt. Qingcheng. This monas-

tery changed its name many times in history. This name is taken from the name of the monastery built in the early Tang Dynasty. The Tang monastery was once occupied by Buddhist monks, who turned it over to Taoist priests under the order of Emperor Xuan Zong. The Emperor's edict was engraved on a stele which is still found there. The main deities enshrined in the monastery are the Three Pure Ones and the Yellow Emperor. There is a passage leading to Tianshi Dong where a statue of Zhang Daoling is kept, and a gingko tree which is believed to have been planted by the Celestial Master. In its environs lie the Heaven-ascending Ladder (a flight of precipitous steps), Demon-vanquishing Rock and Heart-purifying Pool, which we will associate with Taoist cultivation. The tea and wine that the Taoist priests make there are delicious and much sought after. In fact, in 1983 Fu Yuantian, the abbot of the monastery and currently chairman of the Chinese Taoist Association, was awarded for his achievement in wine refining by the provincial government. Changdao Guan is a Quanzhen public monastery.

8) Zhushi Dian (Mt. Qingcheng, Sichuan)

Zhushi Dian (Zhushi Hall) is influential next only to Changdao Guan. Zhushi literally means "ancestral master." The monastery is so named probably because of a legend telling that the Yellow Emperor once asked to be the disciple of an ancient immortal called Ning Fengzi. The monastery is famous because it used to be frequented by many important Taoist priests and priestesses. Yu Zhen and Jin Xian, two Tang princesses, ordained Taoist priestesses, once resided in the monastery. The former is said to be buried there. Du Guangting, a 9th century Taoist priest and famous collector and systematizer of Taoist rituals, is said to be buried there too. The places of interest include the Pavilion of Triumph built by Feng Yuxiang, the famous Christian general, after he heard the news of the Japanese surrender in 1945.

9) Qingyang Gong (Chengdu, Sichuan)

Qingyang Gong (Qingyang Palace) is located on the outskirts of

Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan Province. The name of the monastery is derived from a legend about Lao Zi. After he finished his work, the *Dao De Jing*, he told the Hangu Pass guardian Yin Xi: "After you have practiced the Tao for a thousand days, you can find me at Qingyang (Green Sheep) market in Chengdu." Another legend said Lao Zi was reincarnated here before he initiated Yin Xi. Because of its alleged connection with Lao Zi, the monastery enjoyed great prosperity during the Tang Dynasty. At the peak of its time, the monastery occupied an area of over 10 acres. It has dwindled greatly today. Still it is a quite large monastery. The hall enshrining the Three Pure Ones is still the largest one of the same kind in Chinese Taoist monasteries. The Bagua (Eight Diagrams) Pavilion, a two-terraced building, bears typical Taoist symbols. The 81 dragons depicted there symbolize the 81 reincarnations. There stands a bronze "sheep" which has the mouth of a horse, the body of a cock in the eyes, mouse in the ears, dragon in the horns, monkey in the head, rabbit in the back, snake in the tail, pig in the bottom, dog on the belly and tiger in the paws. The only thing that it reserved for itself is the beard. Besides, if you are lucky enough, you can see with your own eyes over 13,000 wood blocks of the *Daozang Jiyao* (*Abstracts from the "Taoist Canon"*). Many copies are printed to meet the needs of students of Taoism at home and abroad. The blocks have become a rarity in the world. Qingyang Gong is a Quanzhen public monastery.

If you take a boat down the Yangtze River from Chengdu, passing the world-famous Three Gorges, you will arrive in the central China province Hubei, which produced many poets in medieval China such as Li Bai, and quite a few famous generals of the Chinese Red Army. In history, the area including part of Henan Province in the north and Hunan Province in the east, inspired Taoist imagination, which is manifested by the poems of Qu Yuan, a patriotic poet during the Warring States Period and the essays of Zhuang Zi. Mt. Wudang, which was one of the centers of Taoism in the

Ming Dynasty, is in the north of Hubei Province. Before going there, you might as well pause at the capital city Wuhan, with its Changchun Monastery.

10) Changchun Guan (Wuhan, Hubei Province)

Changchun Guan (Changchun Monastery) is named after Patriarch Qiu whose courtesy name was Changchun. In the early 13th century, Patriarch Qiu came to preach here and made it another center of Quanzhen Taoism. The original monastery was burned in 1851 and a new monastery was built after the previous model 13 years later and is kept till today. The monastery is laid out on a mountain slope. Lingguan Hall is on the first terrace from the bottom overlooking the "mountain gate." On the second terrace stands Taiqing Hall which enshrines Taishang Laojun (Lord Lao the Highest), Wushang Zhenren (the Supreme Perfect Man, a name for deified Yin Xi) and Nanhua Zhenren (Southern China Perfect Man, a name for the deified Zhuang Zi). On the third terrace stands Qizhen Dian, the hall of the Seven Perfect Beings, the seven great disciples of Patriarch Wang Chongyang. Patriarch Lü is enshrined in a hall on the fourth terrace, while the three ancient Chinese legendary heroes are enshrined on the fifth and the last terrace. Changchun Guan is a Quanzhen public monastery, the present headquarters of the Hubei Taoist Association.

11) Taihe Gong (Mt. Wudang, Hubei Province)

Mt. Wudang distinguishes itself with the worship of Great Emperor Zhenwu. Zhenwu was originally the name used to refer to the designated northern zone of constellations by ancient astrologists. He was considered to be the divine protector of northern China. Zhenwu's prestige was greatly promoted, when the third Emperor of Ming Dynasty regarded him as his personal protector and built a fabulous number of monasteries in his honor. Among those monasteries, Taihe Gong (Taihe Palace) is one of the few major ones that are preserved today. The present monastery dates back to 1416. The central hall is called Tai He (Great Harmony) and contains a bronze

gilded statue of Zhenwu in sitting position. Beside Tai He Hall are stone steps leading toward what is called the Golden Hall. Inside the Golden Hall, another bronze statue of Zhenwu is placed, but this time in a standing position. It stands between statues of a boy and a girl as his waiters and the Fire and Water Generals as his bodyguards. Over his head hangs a "Windproof Pearl," under the table is a bronze tortoise struggling with a snake. The Golden Hall is surrounded by a stone wall which extends 1.5 miles. The wall is called "Forbidden Wall," whose three gates open to the cliffs and the only access gate is the southern one. The unique layout makes it an ideal place for performing great Taoist ceremonies.

12) Zixiao Gong (Mt. Wudang, Hubei Province)

Zixiao Gong (Zixiao Palace) is the center of the Wudang monasteries. Built in the early 15th century, this monastery could very well serve as a museum for Zhenwu. Taoist legend has it that Zhenwu had many incarnations at different times of history. The most popular incarnation was Zhenwu as a prince by birth, who was more interested in elixir than in the crown and therefore came to Wudang. His persistence moved a deity who finally passed on to him a sword and the right Tao. Later he was called on by the supreme deity to help King Wu's army to overthrow the cruel last Shang King Zhou. In this baffle, he overcame the tortoise and snake, two evil spirits which stood on the side of the King. As a result, Zhenwu was appointed Divine Protector of the North by the Supreme Deity. The struggling tortoise and snake became symbols of Zhenwu's power. In Zixiao Monastery alone, there are 35 different images of Zhenwu. Coming to the name of the mountain, Wudang literally means "Only Zhenwu can defend it." It is the most famous Taoist sanctuary in China. Every year millions of visitors come here to offer incense or to learn practicing Taoist Gongfu.

13) Zhongyue Miao (Mt. Songshan, Henan Province)

Mt. Songshan has long been regarded as one of the Five Sacred Mountains of China. Being near the center of ancient Chinese civi-

lization in the Yellow River Basin, Mt. Songshan became frequented by emperors who went there to pray for their families and their people and by hermits and Taoist priests who went there for self-cultivation or revelations. Gui Gu Zi (Master Ghost Valley), a famous strategist in the Warring States Period, found the hermitage here. The work bearing his name Gui Gu Zi is included in the *Taoist Canon*. Bao Jing, father-in-law of Ge Hong, also a Taoist in his own right, is said to have received the *San Huang* (Three Emperors) *Scripture* in a cave on this mountain. Li Quan is said to have come here to receive the *Yin Fu Jing*, one of the most important works for Taoist cultivation. It was here that Kou Qianzhi, the founder of Northern Celestial Master Taoism, came to receive revelations from Lao Zi and at another time from Li's grandson. The Tang Empress Wu Zetian came to the mountain and ordered to fling down *long jian*, a bamboo slip with prayers on it, as a means of soliciting blessings. In 1982, Empress Wu's *long jian* was found by a local farmer inside a rock crack. The "*Long Jian*," which is 36.3 centimeters long and weighs 248 grams, is engraved with 63 Chinese characters. All of these have contributed to the fame of Zhongyue Miao as a Taoist monastery. Its halls and towers are as numerous as those in the nearby Buddhist Shaolin Temple, though it is less well known than the latter. Zhongyue Miao is a Quanzhen public monastery.

Now follow us to Shaanxi Province, which lies to the northwest of Henan Province. Shaanxi is a province famous today for its terracotta warriors of its capital city Xi'an (ancient Chang'an). In the Yuan period it was the cradle of Quanzhen Taoism. Today there are still quite a few important monasteries. In this province alone four monasteries have been listed as key monasteries. They are Baxian Gong in Xi'an, Luoguan Tai on Mt. Zhongnan and Yuqun Daoyuan and Dong Daoyuan on Mt. Huashan.

14) Baxian Gong (Xi'an, Shaanxi Province)

Baxian Gong (Baxian Palace) is located in the eastern part of

Xi'an, which used to be the capital of China of more than 10 dynasties. The terracotta warriors are no doubt better known to the world than Baxian (Eight Immortals). But for the people in Xi'an and in the province for that matter, the yearly Spring Festival fair held in the monastery is much more attractive. Wearing their holiday best, fathers and mothers bring their children to the monastery and teach them how to offer incense and kowtow to the deities they like. In return, the children are given some pocket money so that they can buy things that attract them in the fair. The parents remember that they were told when they were children that the eight immortals would come down one of these days. So they ask their children to be patient and have an eye open, for these immortals usually disguise themselves as visitors like them. As the day goes by, they taste the foods and see whatever is brought to the fair, but still somewhat regretting they could not meet the immortals. As they return home, they come to realize that they are all "immortals" themselves, for they had very, very, happy days. As a Quanzhen public monastery, the structure of Baxian Gong is similar to that of the White Cloud Monastery. It was raised to a higher grade in the name of "gong" (palace), just because the Qing Empress Dowager Cixi once stayed in the monastery when the "boxers" failed to defend the capital city of Peking. Baxian Gong is the center of the Eight Immortals worship.

15) Louguan Tai (Shaanxi Province)

Seven miles from Xi'an there is a monastery whose earliest predecessor "Gu (ancient) Lou Guan" is considered to be the earliest kind of a Taoist monastery. Lou Guan literally means "house for observation" and is believed to have been used by Yin Xi for observing the stars. It was not quite like a modern observatory whose purpose is to study the universe scientifically. Rather, this was used to predict human and social events in relation to changes in the constellations, for Yin Xi was an astrologist in his own right before he was initiated by Lao Zi. Therefore the monastery today charac-

terizes itself with the worship of Lao Zi and Yin Xi. Among many things, the two tablets which bear the *Dao De Jing* in Chinese seal script are especially prominent. In its vicinity, there are some other relics believed to be related to Lao Zi, such as Lao Zi's Tomb, the Burner and the Ox-Fastening Cypress. The cypress is believed to be the very tree that fastened Lao Zi's well-known ox. Louguan Tai is a Quanzhen public monastery.

Mt. Huashan, which rises straight from the southern Shaanxi Province, has long been famous for being precipitous and difficult of access. For Taoist hermits, however, inaccessibility was a blessing. Many hermits, as Taoist hagiography records, went into this mountain before they ascended to Heaven. In the early Song Dynasty, a hermit called Chen Tuan came to this mountain. Legend had it that Chen was invited to play chess with the Song Emperor Tai Zu. They betted the mountain on the chess, and Chen won it. Many monasteries here today were originally built in his memory. Yuyuan Daoyuan, Dong Daoyuan and Zhenyue Gong are the three largest ones. The last monastery was burned down in 1991.

16) Yuquan Daoguan (Shaanxi Province)

Yuquan Daoguan is built on the remains of Xi Yi Ci (Altar to Xi Yi, Chen's courtesy name) which was originally built in the early 11th century. In the middle of the monastery today stands a new Xi Yi Ci where Chen Tuan is enshrined. To the west of the monastery we can see three pavilions and a cave. The cave is called Xi Yi Cave where Chen Tuan was believed to practice self-cultivation. The stone sculpture depicting Chen Tuan in a reclining position is especially vivid. Known as the longest sleeper in the world, Chen Tuan could sleep away 800 years, as a story tells us. Perhaps to him, sleeping was a kind of cultivation. The longer one can control his sleeping, the longer he can control his living. The pavilion called Shan Sun Ting is believed to have been built by Chen himself, and so is Wu You (Carefree) Tree planted near the pavilion. The Yuquan Daoguan is a Quanzhen public monastery.

17) Dong Daoyuan (Mt. Huashan, Shaanxi Province)

Dong Daoyuan is a branch of the Yuquan Daoguan. The central deity enshrined here is the Goddess of Nine Heavens. Perhaps because of its relation to Yuquan Daoguan, it is listed as one of the key monasteries, though it is far less important.

While northwestern China proper boasts a large number of Taoist monasteries, in China's Northeast where the Jurchens used to dominate, the number of Taoist monasteries is limited. However, as Quanzhen priests were good at preaching, they were able to penetrate this area. The two key monasteries in this area are frequented by large number of people including those of non-Han Chinese origin. The two monasteries, namely Qianshan Wuliang Guan and Taiqing Gong of Shenyang, are both in the same province of Liaoning.

18) Wuliang Guan (Mt. Qianshan, Liaoning Province)

Wuliang Guan is 20 miles to the east of Anshan, a city famous for its mining and steel industry. The monastery is so named because *wu liang* which means "boundless" are homonyms of the Chinese characters for "beamless," since the earliest monastery was built without using any beams. There are three halls enshrining Laojun, the Three Officials and Ci Hang respectively, and three pagodas remembering Xiu Tailing and Ge Yuetang, two eminent Taoist priests who once stayed in this monastery. It is an attraction for many tourists. Bing Xin, the famous contemporary Chinese woman writer, composed the following poem after she had visited the monastery:

As we drove deeper into the mountain,
The stone path began to have more twists and turns.
The horse stalled,
And the tyres slided.
The mountain peaks were breathtaking,
The path under foot narrowing.
Hearing the chimes,

I was freed of the earthly bonds.
Reaching the peak, I caught sight of spectacular views:
The tablets and trees stood there as firmly as the mountain pass.

Wuliang Guan is a Quanzhen public monastery.

19) Taiqing Gong (Shenyang, Liaoning Province)

Taiqing Gong is the largest Taoist monastery in Northeast China. Its earliest predecessor Sanjiao Tang (Three Teachings Hall) was built in 1665, where Lao Zi, Confucius and Sakyamuni were enshrined together. Sanjiao Tang was later enlarged and its name changed to Taiqing Gong which enshrined Taiqing Celestial Worthy as its main deity. Taiqing Gong was famous for its ordination activities. Public ordinations were held many times there and since 1823, nearly 4,000 Taoist priests have been ordained. The fame of Taiqing Gong might have done it a disservice, for during the "cultural revolution," it suffered great losses: the statues were smashed, the scriptures burned and the priests driven away. Now some of the halls have been restored, and some relics retrieved. The masters in the monasteries continue to conduct initiations. Taiqing Gong is a Quanzhen public monastery.

20) Baiyun Guan (Beijing)

Baiyun Guan (White Cloud Monastery) can be the first or last item in your itinerary. Being situated in the national capital, it is the No. 1 Quanzhen public monastery. It should not escape your attention. If you cannot wait to see it, you may visit it first, and you will probably get a general impression of what a Taoist monastery is like. If you are patient, follow our advice. After you make a tour of the major Taoist monasteries in the provinces, come to Baiyun Guan and compare it with what you have seen, you will probably understand more about Taoism than you can imagine. Since we have already mentioned the structure of Baiyun Guan, we will add just a few points here. Baiyun Guan is the best preserved Taoist monastery in northern China. It is the center of the Chinese Taoist Association and one of the few monasteries that have preserved the

Ming edition of the *Taoist Canon*. Suffice it now to say, Baiyun Guan in Beijing is the heart of Chinese Taoism, a place that Taoist students should not miss visiting.

# *Epilogue*
# Taoism and Chinese Culture

The Taoist religion began with the Wudoumi Tao founded by Zhang Daoling on Heming Mountain during the reign of Emperor Shun Di of the Eastern Han Dynasty (A.D. 25-220). The sources of the Taoist beliefs are mainly three fold: the pre-historical worship of nature and ancestors, the worship of spirits, Heaven and Earth in the Shang Dynasty, and the systematic beliefs in supernatural beings in the Zhou Dynasty. The religious thought or theology of Taoism was developed from ideas expressed in *The Book of Changes*, the ideas or theories from *The Book of Lao Zi* and *The Book of Zhuang Zi*, as well as the ideas of *xian* generated by the shamanistic practices in the South. The Taoist world view was further enriched by assimilating the shamanistic rituals of the ethnic minorities in the Southwest, traditional medical knowledge, the methods of health care or cultivation, primitive metallurgy, and folk music, painting and sculpture and so forth. Taoist moral codes were formed by assimilating the moral teachings of traditional society, especially Confucianism. Taoist rituals such as the fasts and sacrificial ceremonies were also based on Confucian norms and rites.

The richness of Taoism can be shown by the number of scriptures it produced. In the Ming edition of the *Taoist Canon* alone, 5,485 *juan* are included, whose texts cover a wide variety of sub-

jects. In *Miehuo Lun* (*Essays on Eliminating Deceptions*), Liu Xie of the Southern Dynasty of Qi (479-502) remarked that Taoism "first boasts that Lao Zi is its founder, then speaks of the divine mortals and finally talks about Zhang Ling." In *Wenxian Tongkao* (*A Comprehensive Study of Literature*), Ma Duanlin of the Liu Song Dynasty says, "Taoist arts are diverse."

In spite of the rich and diverse contents of Taoism, there is a core belief which links the different texts together, the belief that immortality is attainable through cultivation and exercises. The other equally important notion is the Tao. It is a philosophical notion as the First Principle in the cosmos as well as a religious notion of omnipotence and omnipresence. Sometimes it is the synonym of *xian*: he who attains the Tao becomes a *xian,* immortal. Sometimes, it refers to any one of the supreme Taoist trinity gods like Yuanshi Tianzun. Sometimes it refers to the life essence, the fundamental cause for the changes in things or the moral concept like virtue. The Taoist followers have two ideal worlds in mind: one is a secular world of great peace where the state is prosperous and the people enjoy a long and peaceful life and everything is equitable; the other is a splendid world of immortals where the people communicate with deities, unite themselves with the Tao and live forever in endless joy. They know very well that these two ideal worlds are somewhat remote, illusory and not easily accessible. Yet the human instinct to probe the secrets of the universe, for a better world and longevity and immortality drive them passionately to attain these ends despite all ordeals. The Taoist turn of mind therefore can be said to be both romantic and practical.

The distinctiveness of Taoist religion is further expressed through comparing it with Taoist philosophy, Confucianism and Buddhism. While Taoist philosophy advocates that people must know about the law of nature and work accordingly, Taoist religion proposes in its alchemical theories and practices that the people must go against nature in order to return to the original purity and simplicity and to

finally unite themselves with the Tao. The difference between Taoist religion and Confucianism is also obvious. While Confucianism proposes to obtain knowledge through examining things in the world, it attaches much greater importance to moral principles, i.e., the relationships between man and man, man and society. But Taoist religion emphasizes all along the matters, the physical nature of the world, exercises, experiments and technology. While Buddhism recommends spiritual cultivation, discourse, compassion and the next world, Taoist religion emphasizes much more physical cultivation, the practical arts and this present world. Besides, Buddhism and Taoism have a quite different cultural origin. Chen Yinke, a noted modern scholar, remarked that Taoism, "though fantastic somewhere, pays due attention to the relationship between man and nature, and so contains more common sense than Buddhism."

Taoism not only exists as an ideology, it has many other manifestations. By absorbing various schools of thought, it addresses questions such as the origin of the universe, the relations between spirits and man, Heaven and hell, good and evil, and the efficacy of the power of spirits. By assimilating the various arts like breathing techniques, talismans and incantations and rituals, Taoism attempts to substantiate the true existence of the Tao. Those who share in the theories and practices of Taoism are Taoists. At first they are loose in connection, later they are formed into a close-knit system with strict disciplines. A Taoist priesthood is also developing. As more and more elitists join the priesthood, Taoism becomes much more refined and widespread in influence. Being a product of Chinese culture and society, Taoism in turn influences many aspects of Chinese culture and society.

Historically, Taoism had a close relation with imperial politics. By providing divine justification for the right to rule in certain dynasties, Taoism was able to receive political patronage and support, as we have elaborated throughout this book. Though Taoist influence on the Chinese economy has been insignificant, we find inter-

esting economic ideas in the earliest Taoist scripture, the ideas like "Every man was born with certain strength and therefore he must work to feed and clothe himself," and "There should be an equitable distribution of food, clothes and even treasures like gold and silver." Also the practice of celibacy among the Taoist priests helped contribute to a small degree the decrease of the population in China. On the ideological level, Taoist contributions were much greater. It offered an answer to many fundamental questions concerning the origin of the cosmos, the relation between man and the universe, life and death and so forth and therefore greatly enriched Chinese philosophy. In order to spread the Taoist teachings, many eminent Taoists employed various art forms such as poetry and prose in the scripture writing, as well as sculpture and painting in the monasteries and novels. Arts and literature have been an important part of the Chinese cultural legacy which have not yet been fully explored. Taoists also promoted Chinese science and technology in which Confucianists had only a minor role to play. Many scientific discoveries or technological advances in ancient China were made by Taoists. Alchemy, the predecessor of modern chemistry, for instance, was originally promoted mainly by Taoists. Finally, in a male- dominated culture like China, Taoism in its unique way preached the equality between men and women. This idea was expressed fully in the *Taipingjing*, in which women were believed to have originated from the same primordial *qi*. In Taoist officialdom, women were also appointed to high positions, as was the case of Libationer Lady Wei Huacun. In addition, in the Taoist scriptures on inner alchemy, women were often believed to have an easier way to success.

It is true that Taoism no longer exerts the same influence as before on the mind of the Chinese people, yet there are many fine cultural legacies we can explore to better our lives and society. Besides, Taoism has already spread to areas beyond the Asian nations. We believe that the fascinating tradition of Taoism will attract more

scholars as it has already done to work in this field. We also believe that with the joint efforts made by scholars across national boundaries and with the support from governments and other organizations, it will not be long before we find out much more about the mystery of Taoism and its universal values for humanity.

## *Appendix I*

# Interaction Between Taoism and Buddhism in China

Whenever the topic of the relationship between Taoism and Buddhism is raised, more often than not the first things that come to mind are the events labeled the burning of the canons by Taoists, and those referred to as Buddhist catastrophes by Buddhists. It would appear that relations between Buddhism, which entered China from abroad, and Taoism, which is indigenous to China, have been absolutely antagonistic with no reconciliation between the two. In reality, however, the relationship is not only one of hostility, but also of integration. Although there are doctrinal differences between the two, both are theistic, and hence have the same philosophical basis. As a result, each has absorbed elements of the other in order to enrich its own doctrines. The relationship between them is mutually exclusive and complementary. An examination of the origin and development of such a relationship is of great import to research into the two religions and traditional Chinese culture at large. Here major relevant historical facts will be referred to for the purpose of presenting an outline of the conflicts and integration between the two religions.

# I. The Rise of Taoism and the Entry of Buddhism into China

According to historical records, Taoism originated in China during the reign of the Eastern Han Emperor Shun Di (126-144) when Zhang Daoling, a native of Peixian County (in the northwestern tip of present Jiangsu Province), created a body of Taoist scriptures on Mt. Heming in present Sichuan Province and initiated a religious school known as Wudoumi Tao (Five Bushels of Rice Taoism). However, a religious school called Fangxian Tao (the Magics and Immortality Taoism) whose central belief is immortality was flourishing in the coastal kingdoms of Yan and Qi during the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) and could well be regarded as an antecedent to Taoism.

During the reign of the Western Han Emperor Cheng Di (r. 32-7 B.C.), Gan Zhongke, a follower of Fangxian Tao, created a divine scripture entitled *Tianguanli Baoyuan Taipingjing*, the source text of *Taipingjing* (Great Peace Scripture). Here at the time the belief of immortality was used for political purposes. Though Gan was finally executed and the scripture banned, the influence of the scripture stayed through its transmission first by Yu Ji and then by Zhang Daoling.

On the other hand, the worship of the Yellow Emperor and the deified Lao Zi was gaining momentum. During the reign of Emperor Ming Di (r. A.D. 58-75), Liu Ying, prince of Chu (now Hebei Province), took great interest in chanting the words of the Yellow Emperor and Lao Zi, ...practicing three-month fasting and taking oath with deities. Emperor Huan Di (r. 147-167) went in person to offer sacrifices to Lao Zi. With the spread of the Taiping Tao Movement, an inspired uprising from the *Great Peace Scripture* and the Wudoumi Tao, the influence of Taoist religion reached far and wide. Therefore the period between the reign of the

Western Han Emperor Cheng Di and the Eastern Han Emperor Xian Di (32 B.C.-A.D. 220) marks the rise of Taoism.

According to the *Xiyuzhuan* (*Records of the Western Regions*) Buddhism entered China during the reign of Emperor Ming Di. After he had a dream of a large golden statue, the emperor sent a court official and a student archivist as envoys to India to record the Buddha's teachings. The court official returned to Luoyang, bringing with him two Buddhist monks, Kasyapamatanga and Gobharana. This is the earliest presence of Buddhist monks and the beginning of the practice of kowtowing in China. Moreover, according to historical records, the Chu Prince Liu Ying promoted the building of Buddhist temples and Emperor Huan Di was keen on offering sacrifices to the Buddhas. From then on, Buddhist teachings gradually spread. Here we can see the emergence of Taoism was roughly contemporaneous with the introduction of Buddhism, if not earlier.

Admittedly, the earliest followers of Taoism generally came from a different social class from those of Buddhism. While Taoism grew and flourished in the grassroots of Chinese society, meeting with distrust and suspicion or even hostility from the ruling class, Buddhism gained official patronage not long after it spread to China. Most scholars on Taoist and Buddhist research in China and many in the world have believed that the genesis of Taoism was a product of Buddhist stimulation. Some have even gone so far as to assert that Taoism was a mere copy of Buddhism. This author objects to the above assertions on the following grounds:

(1) Different time frames: It is an established fact that the earliest organized Taoist movement led by Gan Zhongke developed during the Western Han Dynasty. It could not possibly have modeled after Buddhism, which was introduced into China later.

(2) Different doctrinal origins: The core of Taoist faith has always been the cult of immortality. Its doctrinal basis is multiple. There were mystical elements in the Taoist philosophical works of

Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, Mohism, Confucianism and the Yin-Yang and Five Agents theory. Though the later development of Taoism absorbed some elements of Buddhism, the central Taoist belief remains distinctive and unchanged.

(3) Distinctive social circumstances from the rise of Taoism: One of the fundamental causes for the rise of Taoist religion was the catastrophic social conditions of the time in China, where the people were suffering the unsufferable: famine, death, corruption, etc. Taoism emerged to fill in the spiritual vacuum. There was no obvious Buddhist impact to be found there. Further, when we look at the translated Buddhist sutras and converts, they were few and negligible.

In a word, the emergence of Taoism was unrelated to the entry of Buddhism into China and there was almost no sign of Buddhist influence on the early Taoist religion.

## II. Efforts Toward Mutual Toleration During the Han, Wei and Jin Dynasties

One of the major distinctive features of early Han Taoism was its close connection with the Huang-Lao teachings. Early in the reign of Emperor Wu Di (140-87 B.C.), the followers of Fangxian Taoism highly respected the Yellow Emperor, believing that he had attained the Tao and become an immortal. In the Eastern Han period, they began to venerate the philosopher Lao Zi and gradually made him a god. The important Taoist scriptures of the time such as *Taipingjing* and *Lao Zi Xiang Er Zhu* by Zhang Lu, grandson of Zhang Daoling, all absorbed mystical elements of Lao Zi's teachings as doctrinal basis and in so doing made themselves popular. Another example was *Lao Zi Zhang Ju*, a work which interpreted the *Book of Lao Zi* from the perspective of an immortalist, and thus

made Lao Zi an indisputably important figure in Taoist religion and his work a major piece among Taoist scriptures. The integration of immortality cult and the teachings of Huang Di (Yellow Emperor) and Lao Zi gave rise to a very popular movement, which was historically called Huang-Lao Taoism.

In contrast, Buddhism was little known when it first appeared in China. The earliest Buddhist pioneers like Kasyapamatanga and Gobharana and An Shigao, a Pathian prince, could not read and speak Chinese and knew little about Chinese politics, economy and culture when they first came to China. To win their local Chinese converts, they first had to have the Buddhist sutras translated into Chinese, and therefore they had to enlist the help from the local Chinese, who nonetheless knew neither Pali, Pathian or other Central Asian languages. Imagine how difficult the translation project was. Most translations were a product of guesswork rather than a faithful reproduction of the source language. An Shigao acquired Chinese language later and his translation project could not have been taken without the assistance from Yan Fudiao, the first ordained Buddhist monk of Chinese origin. Another example was Lokaksema. He was a Buddhist monk from then Central Asian Kingdom Yuezhi, but could speak fluent Chinese. However what he could do was to translate the original texts orally and had a Chinese scribe record his oral reproduction. The impact of Buddhism on the Chinese was imaginably minimal.

While the followers of immortality cult were very enthusiastic in absorbing the teachings of Huang Di and Lao Zi, the Buddhist pioneers were no less eager to borrow the vocabulary and ideas of the teachings. If we look at their earliest translation works, we can easily pick up phrases peculiar to the teachings. That was one way of adaptation to Chinese culture, of course, as the Chinese intellectuals were all familiar with Lao Zi and Huang Di. No wonder Buddhism was regarded by many as a branch of Lao Zi's teachings. The above-mentioned Prince Liu Ying (later known as Emperor

Hui Di) is recorded to have promoted the building of Buddhist temples as well as the Huang-Lao teachings.

Indeed, mutual defamation against each other existed between the Buddhists and the followers of mortality cult. At the close of the Eastern Han Dynasty, a Buddhist by the name of Mou Rong wrote a treatise entitled *Lihu Lun* (*On Follies*), where he expressed his reverence for the Buddha, Lao Zi and Confucius, but flatly rejected the practices for immortality and other magical arts. Similarly in the *Great Peace Scripture* we find the authors' denunciation of Buddhism on the ground that it naturally led to filial impiousness, no offspring and no labor, running contrary to the accepted social values of the Chinese people. However, we should see that the direct confrontations between these two faiths were not evidenced until the Eastern Jin period.

## III. The Struggle for Supremacy During the Southern and Northern Dynasties Period

The conflict between Taoism and Buddhism began to surface in the Eastern Jin period (317-420) and became intense during the Southern and Northern Dynasties period (420-589). After the death of Emperor Sima Yan in 290, the ethnic Chinese minorities in the north established one after another altogether sixteen kingdoms over a period of 136 years. The political conflicts between the minority rulers and the ruled Chinese majority led to the confrontations in cultures, historically known as conflicts between Yi ("foreign barbarians") and Xi ("civilized Chinese"). The confrontations between Buddhism and Taoism are one part of the cultural conflicts.

Earlier in the Western Jin period, Wang Fu, a Taoist priest, wrote *Lao Zi Huahujing* (*Lao Zi's Scripture on Converting Barbarians*). This scripture expressly asserted the cultural superiority of Taoism

over Buddhism. Wang stated that Buddhism originated from Taoism as Taoism was born earlier than Buddhism. He further alleged that Lao Zi was the teacher of Sakyamuni. Wang's allegations, however, did not meet with strong oppositions from the Buddhist side, possibly because Buddhism was still an unfledged faith. Instead, it took advantage of Wang's publicity to gain a cultural acceptance from the native Chinese.

The Taoist accusation of Buddhist faith gained more and more political flavors and was more strongly confronted, as Buddhism became more and more mature, institutionally, doctrinally and politically. But here the attitudes of the rulers played a major role in deciding who would be patronized and superior.

The Northern Wei Emperor Taiwu (r. 424-452) was a typical ruler who stood on the side of Taoism, opposing Buddhism. Wei was a dynasty founded by Xianbei, an ethnic minority people living in the northwestern border of China proper. After they had gained control of the whole northern China, they adopted a policy of assimilation on Chinese culture. First they claimed that they were descendants of the common Chinese ancestor, the Yellow Emperor so to speak, and thus had a legitimate right to be rulers in China. They even adopted Chinese families and wore Chinese attires and made Chinese the only official language. Being a China-born faith, Taoism was even made an official religion in the reign of Emperor Taiwu. Cui Hao was a major figure supporting the pro-Taoist campaign. And Kou Qianzhi, the founder of the Northern Celestial Master School, was a major beneficiary. The Buddhists were victimized. It is recorded that the emperor passed an edit ordering elimination of Buddhism, destruction of its temples and statues and execution of all the monks and nuns. That was the first catastrophe experienced by Buddhism in China. At the time Taoism certainly got the upper hand over Buddhism. However when the Northern Zhou Emperor Wu Di was enthroned, Buddhism made a comeback and Taoist influence subsided.

The second catastrophe came during the reign of the Northern Zhou Emperor Wu Di (r. 561-578). The Buddhist-Taoist conflict was also very obvious. The emperor originally placed a high value on Buddhist teachings. Then a Taoist priest called Zhang Bin emerged and persuaded the emperor into believing that Buddhism carried a bad omen for the country. And thus Taoism was placed above Buddhism. The real catastrophe occurred somewhat later when the emperor ordered the number of Buddhist monks and nuns reduced by three millions, statues and scriptures destroyed and properties confiscated. In the word of a Buddhist the Buddhist temples, private or official, which had existed for hundreds of years were ruined. However if we pursue the causes for the Buddhist catastrophe, we will find that Taoists themselves actually played a rather minor role, for Taoism suffered too. Some monastery properties were also confiscated and the number of Taoist priests reduced. The causes, therefore, are more political and economic than religious ones. As early as in the reign of the first emperor of Northern Zhou, Yuwen Tai (r. 507-556), adopted a certain Su Chao's suggestions on government:

(1) Rule the minds prior to ruling the people;

(2) Select worthy and talented people for official posts;

(3) Make the best use of natural resources;

(4) Levy taxes equitably;

(5) Promote moral education;

(6) Be sparing with litigation and imprisonment.

The policies based on the suggestions were followed by his successors. The growth of Buddhist economic power was not in the interest of the government. For one thing, with an accumulation of the temple properties, the national resources were drained; for another the increase in the number of Buddhist monks reduced the human resources which might have been used as production workers or soldiers.

The last major event involving both Buddhists and Taoists was

of cultural, rather than political, significance, though both Buddhists and Taoists were fighting for political gains. This event occurred in southern China and was known historically as "arguments concerning Yi and Xia."

The polemic was initiated by Gu Huan, Taoist theorist, whose life overlapped the Song and Qi periods of the Southern Dynasties. He wrote a dissertation named *Yi Xia Lun* (*On Barbarians and Chinese*). In it, Gu seemingly treated Buddhism and Taoism equally, which in fact favored Taoism over Buddhism. He claimed that Buddhism was a religion for the "barbarians" living outside China and therefore its teachings should be taken seriously by the Chinese. His arguments invited furious refutations from the Buddhists who claimed that Buddhism was superior to Taoism and both Chinese and foreigners should learn from it. The polemic continued with Zhang Rong's *San Po Lu* (*On Three Damages*). In his work, Zhang warned that acceptance of Buddhist teachings would lead to the damage of the country, because the building of Buddhist temples was a waste of money and an erosion of national strength; the damage of families, because the devout converts abandoned their families without fulfilling their filial duties; the damage of the bodies, because the converted monks had to shave their hair and had their tops tattooed. A Buddhist monk composed *Bian Huo Lun* (*Arguing Against Misunderstandings*) to refuse Zhang's points. The conflicts between Taoism and Buddhism resurfaced now and then in later dynasties.

## IV. The Buddhist Catastrophe During the Tang Dynasty and the Burning of Taoist Canons During the Yuan Dynasty

Taoist expansion reached its peak during the Tang Dynasty

(618-907), largely because of the conversion of the imperial house to Taoism. Under the imperial patronage, Taoism secured political and social privileges which enabled it to compete favorably with Buddhism and extend its influences. However, we should see that the Tang government was rather liberal in its religious policy and did not exhibit undue favoritism toward a particular faith. Both Taoism and Buddhism were considered conducive to moral education and stability of the country. It would seem that they were given free rein for expansion. But if we observe the history carefully, we will find that they never fell out of control. They were manipulated by the government which never forgot its political and economic interests. The much-discussed conflicts or contentions between Taoism and Buddhism were nothing but the end result of its political expediency.

The Tang government's policy changes concerning Taoism and Buddhism can be summed up by stages as follows:

(1) A policy of reduction on both Buddhism and Taoism pursued by Emperor Gao Zu (r. 618-626)

At this stage, the number of both Buddhist temples and Taoist monasteries and the number of both Buddhist monks and nuns and Taoist priests and priestesses were much reduced.

(2) A policy of reverence for Taoism followed by Emperor Tai Zong (r. 627-649) and Emperor Gao Zong (r. 650-683)

At this stage, Lao Zi was regarded as the remote patriarch of the Li royal family and thus further deified, and Taoism was considered as the faith of the royal house and placed above Buddhism.

(3) A policy of reverence for Buddhism adopted by Empress Wu Zetian (r. 684-704)

At this stage, Buddhism was favored over Taoism, because the empress wished to reduce the influence of the Li royal house.

(4) A policy of veneration of Taoism restored by Emperor Xuan Zong (r. 712-756)

At this stage, new temples for Lao Zi were built and every

household was ordered to keep one copy of Lao Zi's work and the emperor himself wrote a commentary on the work as an authoritative version. The Taoist priests were properly cared for in the department which formerly administered the affairs concerning those royal families.

(5) A policy of undue worship of Buddhism demonstrated by Emperor Xian Zong (r. 806-820)

At this stage, the emperor made a fetish of bones left by cultivated Buddhist monks, which became all the mode. Lots of resources were used as sacrifices and consequently the whole country suffered.

(6) A policy of suppression against Buddhism under Emperor Wu Zong (r. 841-846)

The suppression against Buddhism reached its climax during the Huichang era (841-846), which will be discussed in more detail in following passages.

This incident is often referred to by Buddhists as Huichang Catastrophe. Many scholars and Buddhists still attribute the catastrophe to Taoist provocation, which we believe is not historically true. It is true that some leading Taoist priests such as Zhao Guizhen condemned Buddhism and might have instigated the emperor's emotion, but it was the status of Buddhism at the time that finally led to the disaster.

According to one record kept in the *Tang Hui Yao* (*A Brief Record of the Tang Dynasty*), in the fifth year of the Huichang era, the emperor decreed that a nationwide survey be conducted of the Buddhist monks and nuns and temples. The survey showed that there were 4,600 large and medium-sized and 40,000 small Buddhist temples across China, that the number of monks and nuns totaled 260,500, and that 150,000 men and women worked as servants for the temples. At the time, the total number of households throughout the country was 4,955,151. Obviously the monks, nuns and their servants constituted a very large part of the

overall population of China at the time. In the biography of Emperor Wu Zong, we have the following lines: "If one peasant does not farm, some people will starve; if one woman does not raise silkworm, some people will have no clothes to wear. But today a countless number of monks and nuns all depend on the peasants for food and silkworms for clothes. The temples and halls are extremely many, all of which are beautifully decorated just like the imperial palaces. The weakening of the national strength and deterioration of social and moral fabrics are caused by these." It was promoted by the above consideration that the emperor launched a large-scale anti-Buddhist campaign, which resulted in the destruction of over 4,600 large and medium-sized temples, and over 40,000 small-sized temples, a new taxable population of 260,500, an emancipation of 150,000 slaves and a confiscation of millions of acres of arable land. The Huichang Catastrophe, therefore, had little to do with the conflict between Buddhism and Taoism.

An overview of the ruling house's religious policy changes supports our conclusion that the rise and decline of Buddhism and Taoism resulted not from their doctrinal or other conflicts, but rather from the economic and political expedience of the government. Buddhism and Taoism were nothing but two pieces of chess played on the hand of the emperors. The cause for the burning of Taoist canons in the Yuan period could also be found in here.

## *Appendix II*

# Constitution of the Chinese Taoist Association

(Adopted on March 6, 1992 at the Fifth Taoist National Congress)

**Article One:** The official name of the association is Zhongguo Daojiao Xiehui. Its English name is Chinese Taoist Association (abbreviated as C.T.A.)

**Article Two:** The association is a national, patriotic religious organization for Taoists.

**Article Three:** The purpose of the association: Under the leadership of the People's Government, to unite all the Taoists in the nation to devote themselves to the country and their faith, to abide by the Constitution, laws, statues and policies of the People's Republic of China, to inherit and carry forward the fine Taoist tradition, to stand up for the legal rights of the Taoist circle, to assist the government in implementing the policy of free religious affiliation, to promote national stability and unity, to take active part in the socialist modernization drive, national unification and world peace effort.

**Article Four:** The association has the following responsibilities:

(1) To transfer to the government the opinions and demands of the Taoist priests and followers, to raise suggestions and to assist the

government in implementing policies concerning religious affairs.

(2) To organize the Taoist priests to learn current government policies and to receive patriotic and socialist education.

(3) To promote normalization of religious activities, that is, to ensure that all the religious activities shall be confined to what is permitted by the Constitution, laws, statues and policies of the People's Republic of China and to oppose any unlawful activity in the name of Taoism.

(4) To assist Taoist priests in administering monasteries and temples and in preserving historical relics.

(5) To urge Taoist priests to contribute to the socialist construction, to take part in productive labor, social service and public good activities and to strive for self-support.

(6) To train young Taoist brains.

(7) To collect, research and publish Taoist literature and historical documents, and to conduct investigation and research on Taoist past and present.

(8) To strengthen the ties with the Taoist counterparts in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao and overseas regions and to promote friendly international exchange programs.

**Article Five:** The national congress of the association is held every four years, to be convened by the council. The date of congress may be moved up or postponed if necessary.

The national congress has the following functions and powers:

(1) To hear and review the work report of the council.

(2) To discuss and decide on important issues of the association.

(3) To revise the Constitution of the Chinese Taoist Association.

(4) To elect the council.

**Article Six:** The council of the association, elected by the national congress, has a tenure of four years. If the convention of the national congress is advanced or postponed, the tenure of the council will change accordingly.

The general meeting of the council is held every two years. It is

to be convened by the permanent council members and may be advanced or postponed if necessary.

When the national congress is not in session, the council enforces the resolutions of the national congress, discusses and decides on important issues of the association.

**Article Seven:** The association appoints honorary council members. It grants honorary titles to those Taoists who are highly respected and who have made great contribution to Taoist cause.

**Article Eight:** The association sets up a permanent council which discusses and decides on important issues. The permanent council is elected by the general meeting of the council. The permanent council's meeting is held once in a year or extemporaneously as needed by the occasion. The permanent council's meeting is convened by the chairman or a vice-chairman authorized by the chairman.

**Article Nine:** The council members of the association elect one chairman, several vice-chairmen and one general-secretary. The chairman and vice-chairmen take charge of the permanent council and day-to-day meeting matters. The general-secretary assists the chairman and vice-chairmen in their work.

The council sets up several posts for deputy general-secretaries, who are nominated by the general-secretary and approved by the permanent council. It is their job to assist the general-secretary.

**Article Ten:** The association may set up relevant institutions as needed by the work.

**Article Eleven:** The Chinese Taoist Association directs the work of local Taoist associations and Taoist monasteries.

**Article Twelve:** It is obligatory for delegates to the national congress and members of the council to abide by and implement this constitution.

**Article Thirteen:** It is the council's responsibility to raise the fund for the association and the responsibility of the local Taoist associations and Taoist monasteries to support the effort earnestly.

**Article Fourteen:** The association is located at the White Cloud Monastery, Beijing.

**Article Fifteen:** Whether or not to terminate the association will be discussed and decided on by the Taoist national congress.

**Article Sixteen:** This constitution takes effect upon approval by the national congress.

(Based on the Chinese text published in the journal *Chinese Taoism*, No. 3, 1992.)

## *Appendix III*

# Rules of the Chinese Taoist Association on Administration of Taoist Monasteries and Temples

(Adopted by the Fifth Taoist National Congress on March 6, 1992)

**Article One:** To strengthen administration of Taoist monasteries, ensure normal proceedings of religious activities and keep order of monasteries for the benefit of social stability and national unity, the following administrative rules are formulated in accordance with the Constitution and relevant laws, statutes and policies of the People's Republic of China, and the constitution of the Chinese Taoist Association.

**Article Two:** The Taoist monasteries here refer to monasteries approved by governments at the county level or above as religious places open to the lay public.

**Article Three:** Under the supervision of the governmental administration for religious affairs and the guidance of the Chinese Taoist Association, the monasteries should be ruled by the Taoist assemblage.

**Article Four:** The monasteries should set up organizations to practice democratic management.

The democratic management committee should be elected by

all the Taoist assemblage through democratic consultation. The committee members should support the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and socialism, be patriotic and dedicated to their faith, and be persons of integrity and impartiality with a good knowledge of management and Taoist expertise.

**Article Five:** The democratic management committee has the following responsibilities:

(1) To unite and educate the Taoist priests and lay Taoist followers to abide by the state Constitution, laws, statutes and policies and to guarantee normal religious activities.

(2) To assist the government in implementing the policy of free religious affiliation.

(3) To safeguard the legitimate rights of monasteries and Taoist priests.

(4) To arrange religious activities and carry out day-to-day affairs within monasteries.

(5) To organize Taoist priests to learn current national and international affairs and policies and special Taoist knowledge, to collect and classify Taoist resources and conduct academic research of Taoism.

(6) To preserve and maintain the buildings, cultural relics and horticulture and to ensure security, fire control, hygiene and order of the monasteries.

(7) To receive pilgrims and visitors.

(8) To organize Taoist priests in productive labor, social service and other public good activities in order to achieve self-support of monasteries and contribute to socialist construction.

(9) To formulate and perfect various rules and regulations, strengthen financial management and practice internal control (economic democracy).

(10) To periodically report the work to the Taoist assemblage and present important issues for their discussion.

**Article Six:** Monasteries may, in the light of actual conditions,

establish corresponding traditional Taoist ranks such as *fang zhang*, or abbot, *jian yuan*, or superintendent (*zhu chi*, or resident, and *dang jia*, or head priest) and *zhi ke*, or receptionist, who shall, led by the managerial organization, organize the implementation of the monastery's activities.

**Article Seven:** Administration and Education of Taoist Priests

(1) The number of Taoist priests residing in a monastery should be fixed according to its actual needs and its financial capacity to support them and be reported to the government's relevant organization for approval. The permanent residing Taoist priests should file to the local government for residence permit.

(2) A monastery may admit within its quotas patriotic, law-abiding Taoist followers of 18 years old or more. They should be literate, healthy and honest volunteers who have got permission from their families to become priests. They should all carry the relevant certificates from their respective local governments. After one or two years of observation, with permission from the monastery management they may be granted hats and headdresses, ordained and become permanent residents. Those who have violated the monastery regulations or others should return to where they come from. Under no circumstances should lawless and dishonest persons be admitted as Taoist priests.

(3) They who wish to become Taoist priests in a monastery should file their own applications and select masters of their own choice. The monastery management should grant permission according to the second item of this article. Those who have not been granted hats and headdresses must not be given a Taoist name nor a formal apprenticeship.

(4) Monasteries should pay special attention to training and education of Taoist priests, especially young Taoist priests, in order to make them patriotic, faithful and well-educated religious professionals. Taoist priests within the monasteries should abide by monastery regulations, attend morning and evening prayer services and

traditional ritual practice and distinguish themselves from the lay public.

(5) Resident Taoist priests should settle down and take the monastery as their home. They should not leave as an itinerary priest without permission. The monastery must not accommodate priests or other persons without clear identities. Those priests carrying identifiable evidences or letters can be accommodated in accordance with regulations concerning residence administration.

(6) Those priests who wish to be out on pilgrimage should first get permission from the monastery management which will give them a letter with the time limit specified. The priests out on pilgrimage must not interfere with the internal affairs of the monastery that accommodates them. They must not perform ceremonies, beg for alms or take disciples. They may be punished if they exceed the time limit without good reasons.

(7) Taoist priests and nuns should live in separate monasteries or separate complexes within monasteries.

(8) Taoist monasteries may take faithful citizens as laymen or laywomen. The monasteries should have a good understanding of the citizens involved and strictly control the quotas. The decision should be made after collective discussions on the monastery's democratic management committee and the result should be reported to the government religious administration above the county level for record. The Taoist lay persons should respect the decision of the monastery management and its democratic management system and should by no means interfere in its internal affairs.

**Article Eight:** Administration of Religious Activities

(1) Religious activities must be conducted within the limits permitted by the state Constitution, laws, statutes and policies. Approval must be obtained from the local Taoist association if Taoist priests are to be invited to perform rituals at the private homes of common Taoist followers. The monastery to which the priests are attached should make arrangements for this and take the fee

charged on the inviters. The scale, length of time and frequency of the performance must not disturb social order, production and other working routines.

(2) All of the religious activities performed by the Taoist priests and followers within monasteries such as offering incense, kow-towing, praying, chanting, preaching, observing Taoist holidays, and conducting rituals are under legal protection.

(3) Under no circumstances should feudal, superstitious activities be performed such as spirit-dancing, exorcism, fortune-telling through palm and face reading, divination through words analysis, geomancy, lot-drawing and spirit-writing. Activities conducted in the name of Taoism but actually meant to create rumors, hood-winking people with demagogy, disturbing social order, cheating and hurting people's physical and mental health should be boycotted and reported to relevant local government organizations.

(4) Taoist priests from overseas may participate in religious activities in open monasteries, but should by no means interfere in China's religious affairs. The open monasteries should observe the principles of mutual respect, non-affiliation, non-interference in dealing with their relations with the Taoist counterparts in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan.

(5) Monasteries may accept donations from Taoist followers at home and abroad, but they should by no means beg for them from religious groups or individuals. And they must not accept any donation with conditions attached from foreign organizations or individuals, nor must they force an assigned amount from lay Taoist followers.

(6) With approval from government religious administration organizations, monasteries may offer for sale religious books and journals, religious articles and works of art.

**Article Nine:** Financial Management

(1) Each monastery must be staffed with financial workers selected from among Taoist priests. There ought to have sound and

strict financial and accounting system and proper procedure to go through. The financial workers must strictly obey relevant state financial regulations. Financial examination should be conducted at least once every year under guidance of the government's religious administration organizations.

(2) All the monastery revenues must be recorded in financial accounts. They are generally used to cover expenses on monastery maintenance, cultural relics preservation, Taoist priests' daily living and spendings. No institutions or individuals are allowed to make free use or possession of the revenues.

(3) All the property (movable or unmovable) in a monastery must be registered and be under unified administration. The principle of economy and making ends meet should be practiced. The annual budget and major spending plans should be submitted to the Taoist assembly for discussion.

(4) Monastery financial workers must periodically publicize revenue and expenditure. Every item of the revenue and expenditure should be reviewed and approved by the leader concerned. The person who accepts and checks the financial report should ensure the availability of proper documents and clear accounts. The government religious administration has the right to examine the monastery's financial and management conditions and Taoist assembly have the right to monitor them.

**Article Ten:** Public Security and Fire Control

Every monastery should take practical measures to ensure public security and safety in accordance with the Fire Control and Supervision Regulations issued by the State Council and the Ancient Buildings Fire Control Administration Regulations issued jointly by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Public Security.

(1) Every monastery should strictly implement the above regulations concerning public security and fire control and formulate specific measures accordingly such as setting up a system of responsibility on the persons on duty, and accept guidance from the

public security and fire control departments.

(2) Every monastery should have fire-fighting equipment and store an adequate amount of water for fire-fighting purpose. In a place where water source is scarce, big jars filled with water should be put there or a cistern be built, and all the passages leading into and out of the monastery should remain unobstructed.

(3) Every monastery should strengthen administration of the sources of fire, electricity, and inflammables. No fuel wood is allowed to be stored in the monastery, and no fire or electricity to be used for production or cooking within its halls. The "No Smoking and Fire-fighting" signs should be put up in conspicuous places. The incense and candle bearers should make their offering in designated areas. No firecrackers are allowed to be set off within the monastery complex.

(4) Security inspectors should be appointed to inspect fire hazards regularly to avoid fires.

**Article Eleven:** Historical Relics Protection and Others

(1) Every monastery should designate particular persons to record and protect its historical relics in accordance with the government's laws concerning historical relics protection. The monastery should turn to historical relics and horticulture departments for guidance and expertise in protection of relics and maintenance of buildings.

(2) No institution or individual is permitted to borrow, sell or give the relics as gifts.

(3) Approval must be obtained from the government's religious administration to demolish, renovate and reconstruct monastery buildings.

(4) No external institution should be allowed to set up businesses and service centers, organize exhibitions and shows within a monastery without approval by the monastery and government religious administration department.

(5) A diagram should be drawn of the monastery buildings and

lands. Upon approval by the relevant department, a proper legal procedure should be followed.

**Article Twelve:** These regulations have been discussed and adopted by the Fifth Taoist National Congress and are effective as of March 1992.

**Article Thirteen:** All the local Taoist associations may formulate concrete measures based on these regulations.

**Article Fourteen:** The Chinese Taoist Association is responsible for interpretation of the regulations.

(Based on the Chinese text published in the journal *Chinese Taoism*, No. 4, 1992)

## *Appendix IV*

# Regulations of the Chinese Taoist Association on Administration of Non-resident Zhengyi Taoist Priests

(Adopted by the Fifth Taoist National Congress on March 6, 1992)

**Article One:** To safeguard legitimate rights and strengthen administration of non-resident Zhengyi Taoist priests and to promote normalization of religious activities for the sake of social stability and development, the following regulations are formulated in accordance with the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and other relevant laws and statutes and the constitution of the Chinese Taoist Association.

**Article Two:** Zhengyi Taoist School refers to the talismanic schools centered on Dragon-Tiger, Maoshan and Gezao mountains in southeast China. Most of the non-resident Taoist priests are scattered in cities, towns and villages. As they have families, they don't often live in monasteries.

**Article Three:** The non-resident Taoist priests must:

(1) Support the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, embrace the socialist system, be patriotic and law-abiding;

(2) Convert themselves to the Three Treasures, namely the Tao, Scriptures and Master, which means they should belong to one of

the Zhengyi School lineages;

(3) Be able to recite the Patriarch's Precious Declaration and scriptures for morning and evening prayers;

(4) Be able to perform routine rituals of the Zhengyi School;

(5) Be able to observe the Taoist rules and commandments.

**Article Four:** The non-resident Zhengyi Taoist priests must bear certificates issued by their local Taoist associations after they are carefully examined according to the above Article Three and report to the local government's religious administration. The issuance of certificates should be strictly controlled and their format is uniform and determined by the Chinese Taoist Association.

**Article Five:** The non-resident Zhengyi Taoist priests may join the local Taoist organization. In places where there is no such an organization, they may apply to the local government to find one.

**Article Six:** The non-resident Zhengyi Taoist priests must perform their activities in monasteries which have been approved by the government as open monasteries (including Quenzhen School monasteries). They must by no means build their own monasteries. Under the direction of the local Taoist organization, the non-resident Zhengyi Taoist priests should perform their activities in designated places approved by the local government. The regulations on their activities should be perfected and administration strengthened.

**Article Seven:** The non-resident Taoist priests should follow the ritual norms of the Zhengyi School. All their regular practices in designated places such as chanting, morning and evening prayers, incense offering, fasting and other services are legally protected.

All the harmful and superstitious practices such as spirit-writing, medium-dancing, fortune-telling, palmistry, lot-drawing, exorcism and geomancy are forbidden.

Approval from the local Taoist organization must be obtained if Taoist priests are to be invited to the home of faithful individuals to perform ritual service meant to remember and salvage the souls of deceased family members. The scale, the time length and frequency

of the service should not affect regular work, life and social order.

**Artide Eight:** The non-resident Taoist priests and their organization may accept donations from the faithful masses. The donated fund will be used to maintain monastery buildings and other regular religious affairs of the organizations. However, under no circumstances should the priests demand money from the lay public at home or abroad or accept donations, with conditions attached, from organizations or individuals overseas.

**Article Nine:** The non-resident Taoist priests must submit membership fees to the local Taoist organization. The way of fee collection will be determined by the organization and the collected fees will be used for monastery maintenance and administration of the organization.

**Article Ten:** A Taoist organization should stop the illegal activities of a Taoist priest or priestess and persuade him/her not to do that again. The organization may suspend his/her certificate if he/she refuses to mend his/her ways or it may have the government take necessary actions against him/her.

**Article Eleven:** The non-resident Taoist priests should make their due contribution to the maintenance of social stability, national unity and the promotion of socialist material and cultural progress.

**Article Twelve:** The right to interpretation of the regulations rests with the Chinese Taoist Association.

(Based on the Chinese text published in the journal *Chinese Taoism,* No. 4, 1992.)

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# Index

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