

Taoism in China

Written by Wang Yi'e

Translated by Shao Da



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Preface

Among the five major existing religions in China (Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism), Taoism is the only one originating here. Formed in the second century during the last years of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220), its religious belief can be actually traced back to the remote antiquity. For this very reason, it has kept a widespread and far-reaching influence upon the Chinese people across the world.

The second century turned out to be turbulent years for the Eastern Han. People suffering from successive years of wars and famines were eager for peace. During that time, *The Classic of Supreme Peace (Taiping Ching)*, a book deeply influenced by Lao-tzu's Taoist doctrines and advocating immortals worship, began to spread far and wide. Claiming to establish a state of peace and prosperity described in the book, both the Supreme Peace Sect (Taiping) founded by the three brothers Zhang Jiao, Zhang Bao and Zhang Liang and the Five Bushels of Rice Sect (Wudoumi) by Zhang Daoling thus won wide support from peasants.

The Zhang brothers led their disciples to stage an armed revolt, which was eventually suppressed by united warlords. Their Taiping sect was put under a ban. As Zhang Daoling's grandson Zhang Lu

gave himself up later to Cao Cao (the prime minister who actually controlled the court toward the late Eastern Han Dynasty), the Wudoumi sect(also known as the Heavenly Master sect) mainly spreading in Sichuan and southern Shaanxi was able to survive.

Legend has it that Zhang Daoling or Zhang Lu wrote *Annotations by Xiang'er on Lao-tzu's Work*, in which the writer gave a religious interpretation of Lao-tzu's *Classic of the Way and Virtue (Tao Te Ching)* and personified the Tao by referring to it as celestial god Supreme Master Lao. The book also admonished people to do good deeds to prevent disease and avert calamities. It became an important classic of the early Taoism.

Two significant reforms occurred to Taoism in its history.

From the Jin Dynasty (265-420) to the Northern and Southern Dynasties (386-589), as more and more people from high society joined the ranks of Taoist disciples, immortals worship gradually replaced the previous dream of establishing a state of peace and prosperity to become a new goal of Taoism. Ge Hong (284-363), Kou Qianzhi (365-448), Lu Jingxiu (406-477) and Tao Hongjing (456-536) had played important roles in completing this change that took several hundred years. They revised the early Taoism's doctrines while absorbing Confucianism's moral principles and ethics, which won support from upper-class disciples including emperors and noblemen. Thus Taoism became a peer of the influential Confucianism and Buddhism in ancient China, and saw its heyday in the Tang (618-907)

and Song (960-1279) dynasties.

Around the mid-12th century, Wang Chongyang (1113-1170) founded in north China a Taoist sect named Quanzhen stressing self-discipline, while another sect of Jindan emerged in south China. They both absorbed philosophical ideas and health preservation theories from Confucianism and Buddhism, and later merged into a single Quanzhen Sect, coexisting ever since with the Way of Orthodox Unity (Zhengyi), another major sect of Taoism evolving from the Heavenly Master Sect. Priests of Quanzhen Sect had to live a strict religious life, single and vegetarian, living collectively in temples all the year round. In contrast, those from Zhengyi might get married and have children. Usually they lived a secular life, eating meat and holding rites for disciples to exorcise spirits and stave off disasters.

Lao-tzu wrote in his *Tao Te Ching* -- Taoism's main classic: "Tao generates one. One generates two. Two generates three. Three generates all things in the universe." Taoism holds the belief that immortals dominate all things in the world. People can ask for their blessings and protection, and become an integral part of Tao through benefactions and self-discipline. In that way, they can return to nature and eventually become immortals themselves.

Taoism worships all kinds of immortals, including natural gods, ancestral gods, local gods, ethnic

gods and craft gods, as well as all previous enlightened emperors, virtuous and able officials and talented scholars. Guanyin (Avalokitesvara) of Buddhism and many deities in other religions are also worshiped. Like the human society, the immortals' world maintains a rigid hierarchy, in which each deity has his or her own responsibility.

After the 16th century, Neo-Confucianism, a Confucian school of philosophy emerging in the Song Dynasty, began to dominate the ideological sphere. Being discriminated against, Taoism turned to the countryside and gained more popularity there, further merging with Buddhism and folk beliefs.

Taoist organizations gradually declined in the first half of the 20th century, but its doctrines still maintained a wide influence on the Chinese people across the world. Following its founding in 1949, the People's Republic of China has adopted a policy of freedom of religious belief. Along with other religions Taoism has been protected by the country's Constitution. Disciples' Taoist belief has received due respect. Dilapidated temples have been renovated with the aid of governments at different levels. With the value of its ancient classics and theory being re-recognized, Taoism's religious activities have gradually got on the right track.

The year 1957 saw the establishment of the Chinese Taoist Association, which later set up its local branches in all provinces and autonomous regions, major cities including Beijing, Tianjin and

Shanghai, as well as some famous Taoist spots. The association aims at helping the government implement its religious policies and safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Taoists. It's also responsible to transmit the opinions and suggestions of Taoist personages to competent authorities, and organize them to carry out religious activities and take part in the nation's socialist construction.

Over the half century since its establishment, the association convened seven national congresses. Since 1989 it resumed the liturgies for impartation of Taoist instruction that had been suspended for more than 40 years. The ceremonies, called *chuanjie* in Quanzhen Sect and *shoulu* in Zhengyi Sect, were attended by hundreds of priests from home and abroad. It also founded in 1989 a Taoist Culture Institute and the following year a Chinese Taoist College -- the first of its kind in history, to promote the spread of Taoist culture worldwide and train academic personnel for Taoist research and temple management. The association has also published a large number of Taoist classics and periodicals to carry forward the Taoist belief and present the newest results in Taoist research.

Currently, China has several ten thousand registered Taoist priests and nuns, and thousands of Taoist temples, many of which are places of historic interest and scenic beauty.

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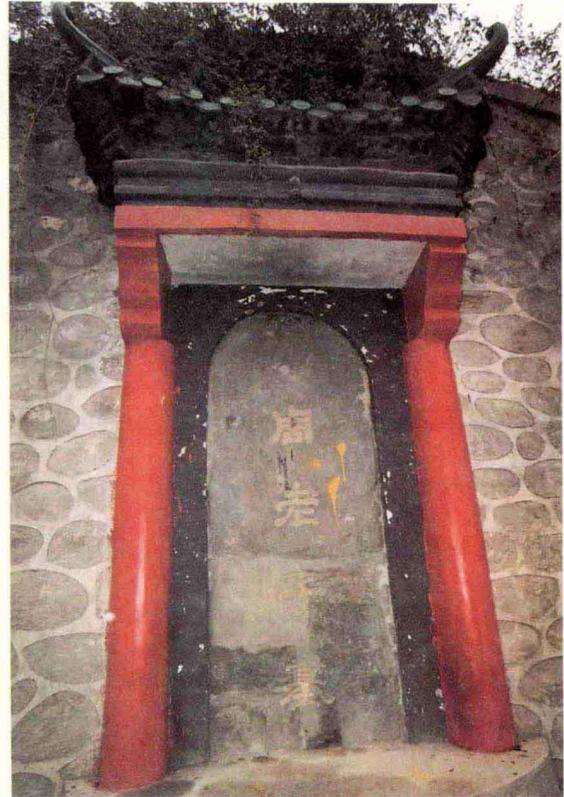
1. Worship Tradition of Long Standing

*T*aoism has been generally acknowledged to be founded early in the second century by "Heavenly Master" Zhang Daoling, who established the Wudoumi sect toward the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty. Its religious belief can be actually traced back to the remote antiquity. The ancient nature worship and ancestral worship, and especially alchemy and

supernatural legends emerging during the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC), as well as teachings of Yellow Emperor and Lao-tzu popular in the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), -- all have provided sources for Taoism. Lao-tzu, founder of the Taoist school, has been respectfully referred to as the "earliest ancestor," and his *Tao Te Ching* as the religion's main classic.



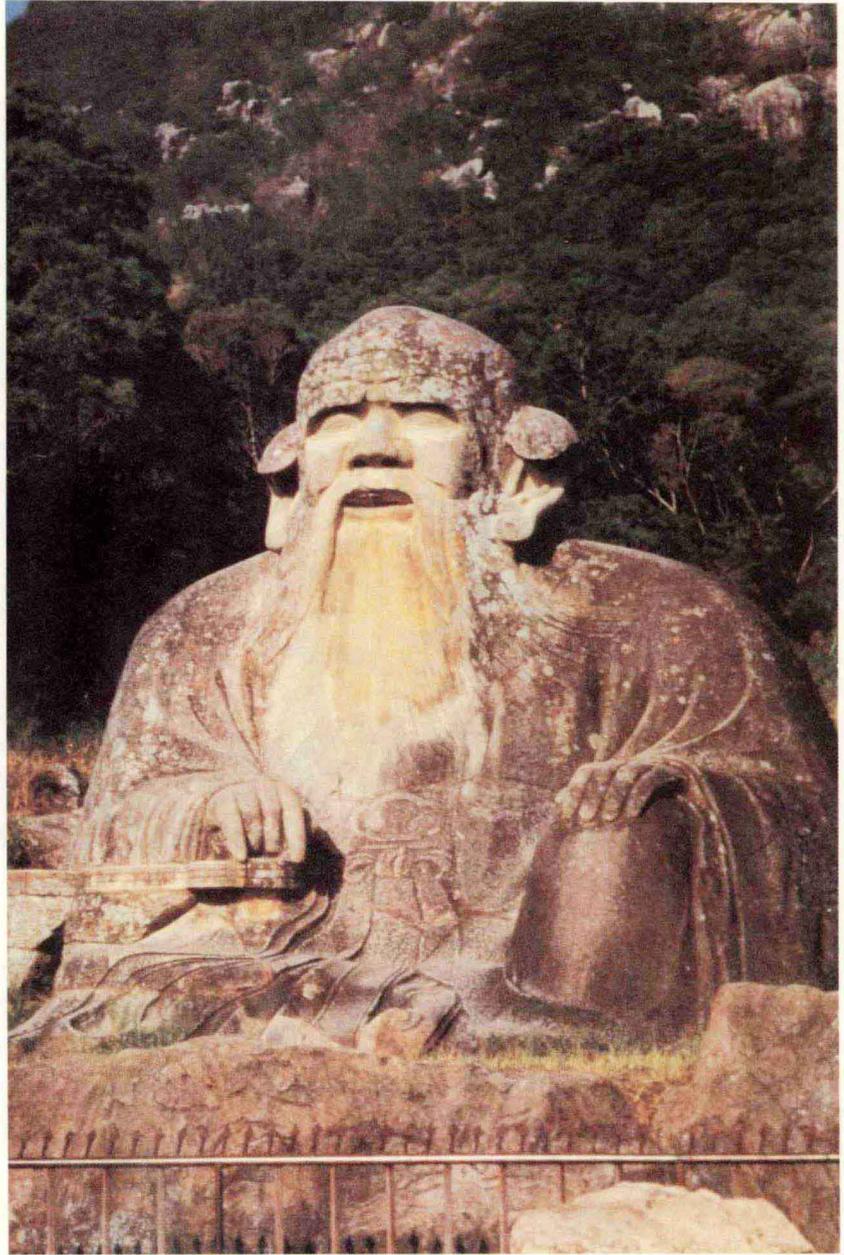
Relief sculpture of Supreme Master Lao
in the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534)

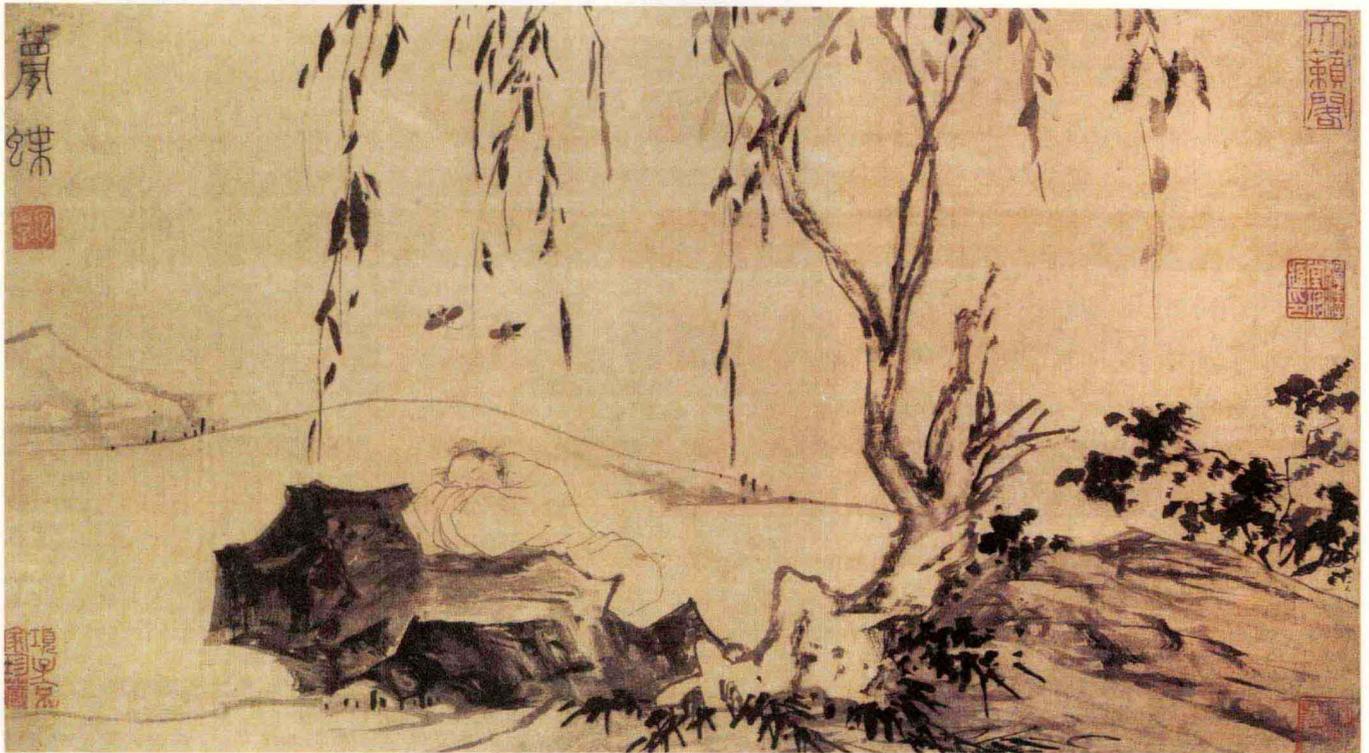


Tombstone of Lao-tzu situated on Mount Daling
in Louguantai Forest Park in Zhouzhi County,
Shaanxi Province

Stone statue of Lao-tzu on Mount Qingyuan in Quanzhou City, Fujian Province (Song Dynasty)

According to Sima Qian's *Historical Records*, Lao-tzu, a famous philosopher and founder of the Taoist school in ancient China, whose original name was Li Er, was a native of Quren Li, Lixiang Township, Kuxian County in the state of Chu (east of today's Luyi County, Henan Province). He styled himself Boyang, and was given the posthumous title of Dan. Once he served as an official historian of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-256 BC), but resigned later and went westward to Hangu Pass where at the request of Yin Xi, the fort's magistrate, he wrote the five-thousand-word *Tao Te Ching* and established a philosophical system with Tao as its supreme realm. He was respectfully referred to by Taoists of later ages as the "earliest ancestor." His *Tao Te Ching*, Taoism's major classic, has been translated and published in many languages.





Zhuang Zhou Dreaming Butterflies

Chuang-tzu, or Zhuang Zhou, was a native of Mengcheng in the state of Song (today's Shangqiu City, Henan Province) during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). A philosopher and a representative figure of the Taoist school at that time, he further developed Lao-tzu's thought and established a philosophical system with Tao as the core concept. He was respectfully referred to by Taoists of later ages as "Nanhua Zhenren," and his work, *Book of Master Zhuang*, as "*Nanhua Zhenjing*," which has become an important classic of Taoism.

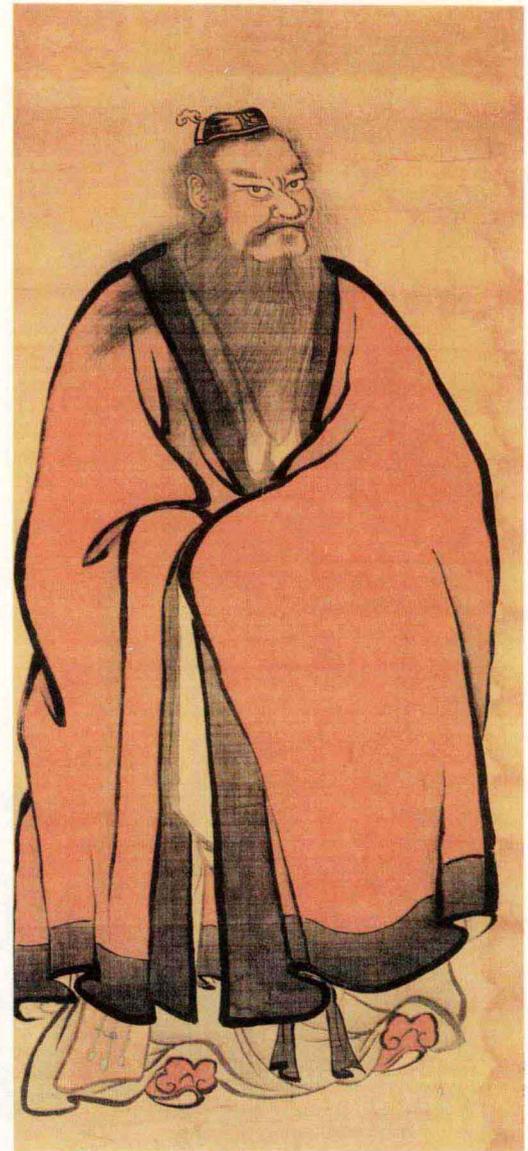
Heavenly Master's jade seals kept in the Heavenly Master's Mansion on Mount Longhu (Dragon and Tiger) in Jiangxi Province



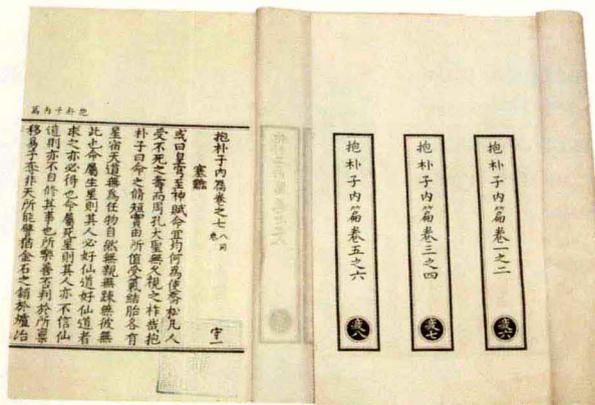
Heavenly Master's family tree



Zhang Daoling (34-156), whose original name was Zhang Ling, was a native of Feng Yi in the state of Pei (today's Fengxian County, Jiangsu Province) during the Eastern Han Dynasty. He styled himself Fuhan (assisting the Han Dynasty). During the reign of Emperor Ming he acted as the magistrate of Jiang Zhou in Ba Jun (today's Chongqing Municipality), but later resigned and lived in seclusion on Mount Beimang (north of today's Luoyang City in Henan Province) to practice the way of perpetual rejuvenation. In the reign of Emperor Shun (126-144) he went to Sichuan with his followers and founded the Wudoumi sect there, regarding Lao-tzu as the patriarch and Lao-tzu's *Tao Te Ching* as the main classic. Wudoumi was also known as the Heavenly Master sect, and thus Taoists of later ages respectfully addressed Zhang as "Heavenly Master." Prime Minister Cao Cao led his army to attack and occupy Sichuan in 215. Zhang's grandson Zhang Lu surrendered to Cao and then moved to north China. Therefore Wudoumi was able to survive and became the orthodox Taoist sect afterward. After the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) it merged with Shangqing and Lingbao sects, which were referred to together as the Way of Orthodox Unity (Zhengyi Sect).



Portrait of Heavenly Master Zhang (by Fan Yi, Ming Dynasty)



Ge Hong's *Pao-pu-tzu* (*Master Embracing Simplicity*)
in the *Collected Taoist Scriptures*

Ge Zhichuan Living in Seclusion (by Wang Meng, Yuan Dynasty)

Ge Hong (284-363), a Taoist theoretician, alchemist and pharmacologist who styled himself Zhichuan, was a native of Jurong in Jiangsu's Danyang during the Three Kingdoms (220-280) period. His well-known *Pao-pu-tzu* is divided into two parts. The first tells about legends of immortals and the way to stay healthy and prolong one's life; the second comments on mundane affairs. Ge acknowledged the existence of immortals, which produced a great impact on the Taoist alchemy of later ages. His book has also provided prized historical materials for studies on the development of medicine and chemistry in ancient China.

In this painting, Ge moves with his family to Mount Luofu for a hermetic life. With simple and unaffected figures walking among high mountains and towering ridges, the painter has created a lofty artistic ambience.

Portrait of Master Zhenbai (by Zhao Zi'ang, Yuan Dynasty)

Tao Hongjing (456-536) of Moling in Jiangsu's Danyang (today's Nanjing), alias Huayang Hermit, styled himself Tongming (brightness), and was given the posthumous title of "Master Zhenbai." A Taoist theoretician, he wrote many classics like *Zhenling WeizhaoTu* (*Illustrated Ranking of the Immortals*), *Zhengao* (*Declarations of the Perfected*) and *Dengzhen Yinjue* (*Concealed Instructions on the Ascent to Perfection*). He introduced ancient China's hierarchy into Taoist doctrines to rank all kinds of immortals, which exerted a significant influence on immortals worship of later ages.





Statue of Lü Yan (wood carving, Ming Dynasty)

Lü Yan, the most widely spread of the Eight Celestials in Taoist mythology, styled himself Dongbin. Legend has it that he lived in the Tang (618-907) or Five Dynasties (907-960) period. He was known as "sword immortal," "wine immortal" and "poet immortal" among the people. During the Song Dynasty he was honored with the title of "Miaotong Zhenren." After the Quanzhen Sect was founded by Wang Chongyang in the Yuan Dynasty, Lü was revered as its patriarch.

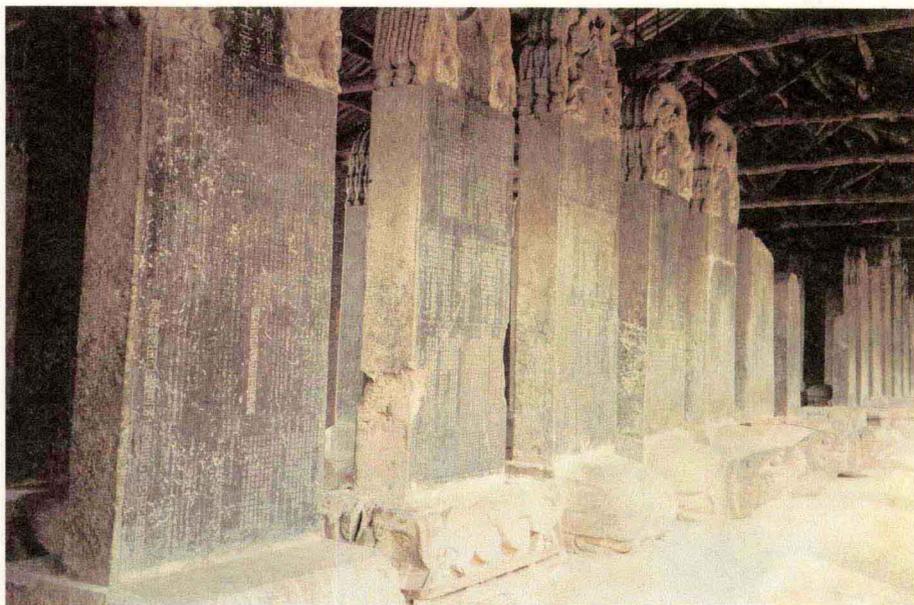


Inscriptions by Wang Chongyang on a tablet, kept in the Palace of Chongyang Wanshou in Huxian County, Shaanxi Province

Wang Chongyang (1112-1170), alias Chongyang-tzu, was a native of Xianyang in Shaanxi Province. His original given name was Zhongfu, but he changed it to Zhe after being converted to Taoism. He once practiced Taoism in Liujiang Village of Shaanxi. In 1161 he went to Shandong to preach sermons and took Ma Danyang, Sun Bu'er, Tan Chuduan, Qiu Chuji, Hao Datong, Wang Chuyi and Liu Chuxuan as disciples in succession. Later he founded the Quanzhen Sect of Taoism, maintaining Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism should be treated as equals.

Yuan Dynasty Tablets in Palace of Chongyang Wanshou

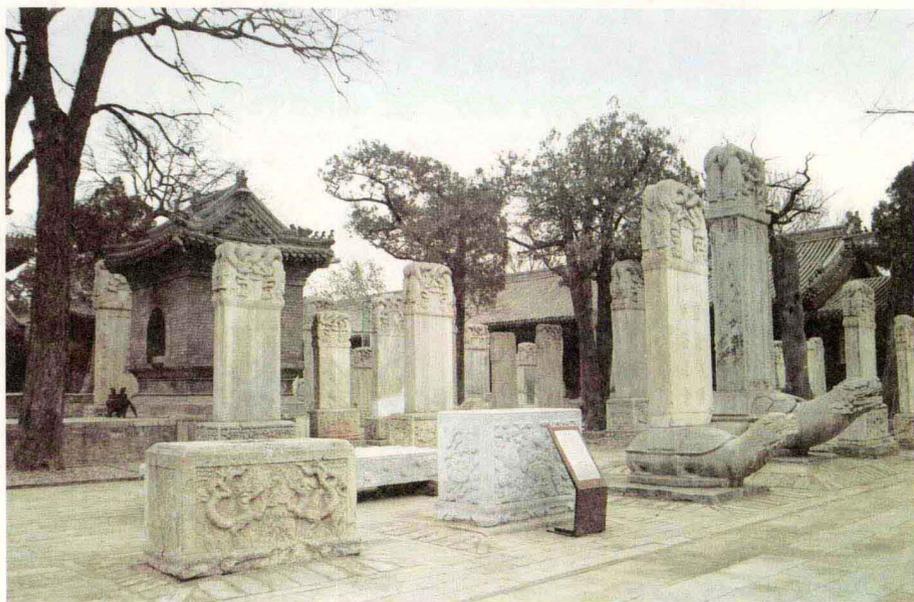
A total of 31 Yuan Dynasty tablets kept in the Palace of Chongyang Wanshou in Huxian County, Shaanxi Province have provided valued historical materials for studies on the Quanzhen Sect of Taoism.

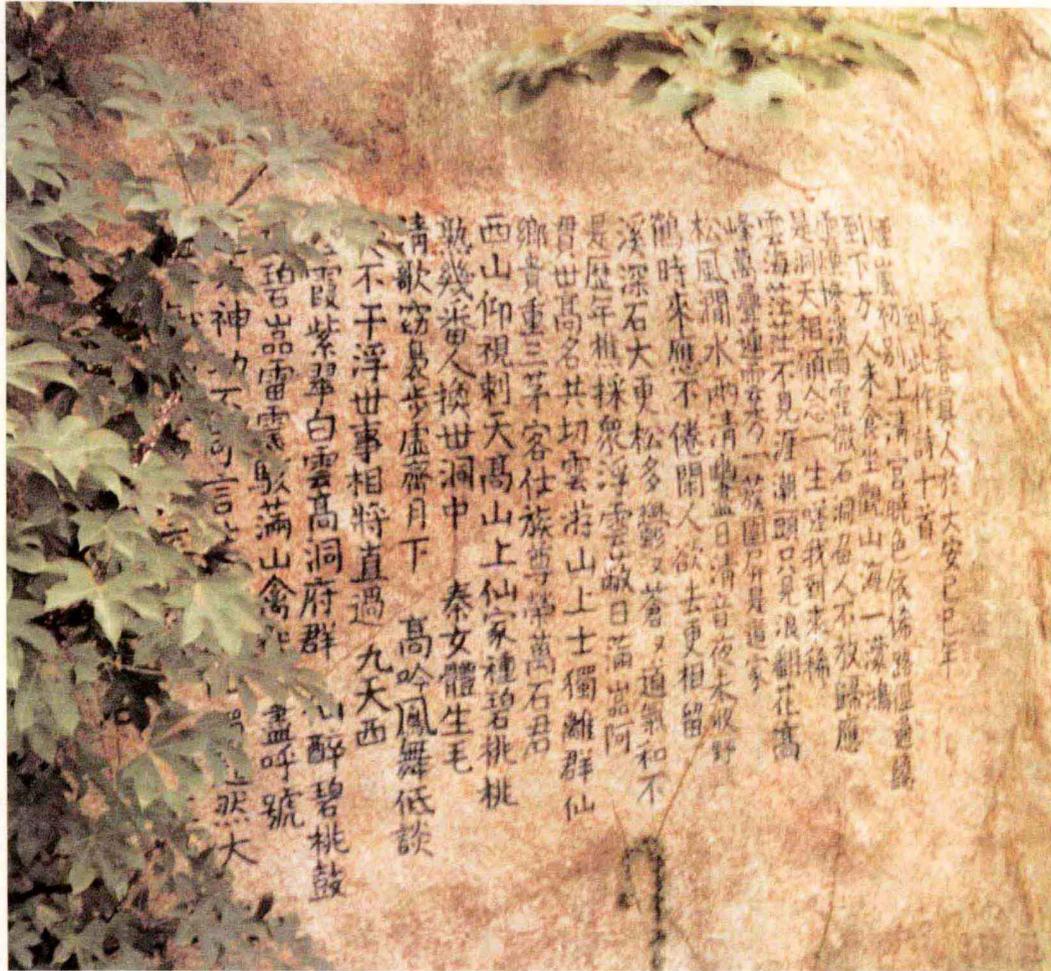


Taoist tablets in Dongyue Temple of Beijing

Of the Taoist tablets in Beijing's Dongyue (Eastern Sacred Mountain) Temple, the one carrying inscriptions recording the deeds of Heavenly Master Zhang written by calligrapher Zhao Mengfu of the Yuan Dynasty is the most well-known.

Dongyue Temple, located on the Chaoyangmenwai Street, was established in 1319 by priest Zhang Liusun of the Zhengyi Sect, in which Dongyue Emperor is enshrined.





Cliff engravings of Qiu Chuji's poems in Taiqing Temple on Mount Lao



Portrait of Qiu Chuji (Qing Dynasty)

Qiu Chuji (1148-1227), alias Qiu Changchun, was one of Wang Chongyang's seven Quanzhen disciples. He founded the Longmen school and was revered by Quanzhen priests of later ages as Founding Master Qiu.



Portrait of Wang Changyue

Wang Changyue (?-1680) of Changzhi in Shanxi Province, alias Kunyang-tzu, was the seventh-generation founder of the Quanzhen Sect's Longmen school. In 1656, by decree of Shunzhi, the first emperor of the Qing Dynasty after reunifying China, he taught the three commandments of *Chuzhen*, *Zhongji* and *Wuxian* to priests at a *chuanjie* ceremony in Beijing's Baiyun Temple.

2. Polytheistic Worship

*T*aoism is a polytheistic religion. Its supreme deities include the Original Divinity, Lingbao Divinity and Daode Divinity, which are often referred to as Three Pure Deities (Sanqing). Jade Emperor is the deity in overall charge in Heaven. Besides mountain, river and star deities, there are numerous gods and goddesses taking charge

of worldly affairs like life and death, disaster and happiness, fortunes of officialdom, and luck in money transactions respectively. Besides, those who have achieved success in cultivating themselves and who did good deeds and dispensed charities can become immortals after death.

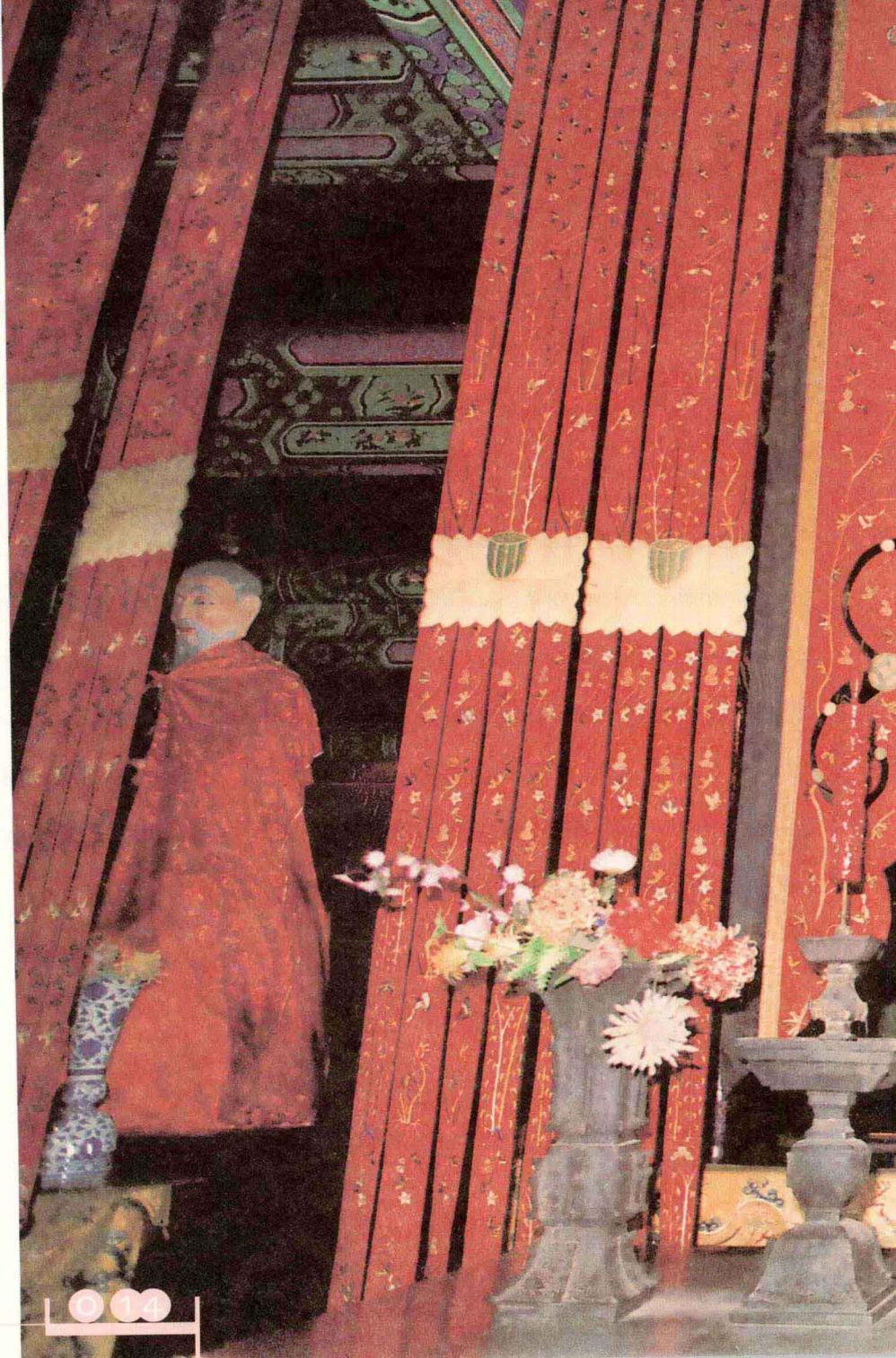
Statues of Three Pure Deities in Sanqing Palace of Beijing's Baiyun Temple (Ming Dynasty)

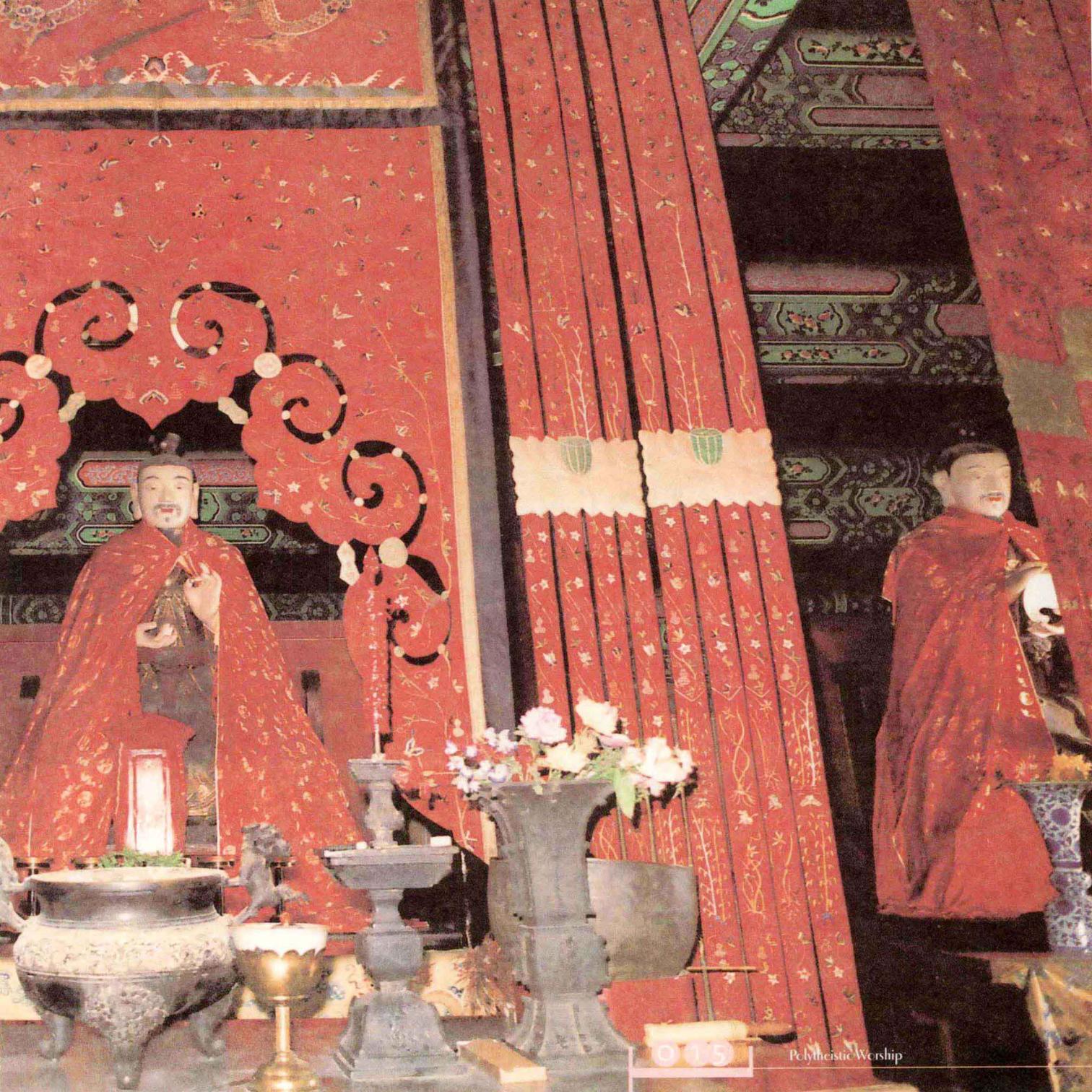
From left to right: Daode Divinity, Original Divinity and Lingbao Divinity.

Original Divinity, also known as the Yuqing Original Divinity, is the supreme deity in Taoism. He is the creator of the universe and the symbol of Tao or "One."

Lingbao Divinity, also known as the Shangqing Lingbao Divinity, is the number two god in Taoism. He is the symbol of "Two" or initial separation of *yin* and *yang* from Tao.

Daode Divinity, also known as the Taiqing Daode Divinity or Supreme Master Lao, is the number three god in Taoism. He is the symbol of "Three" or emergence of all things in the universe.





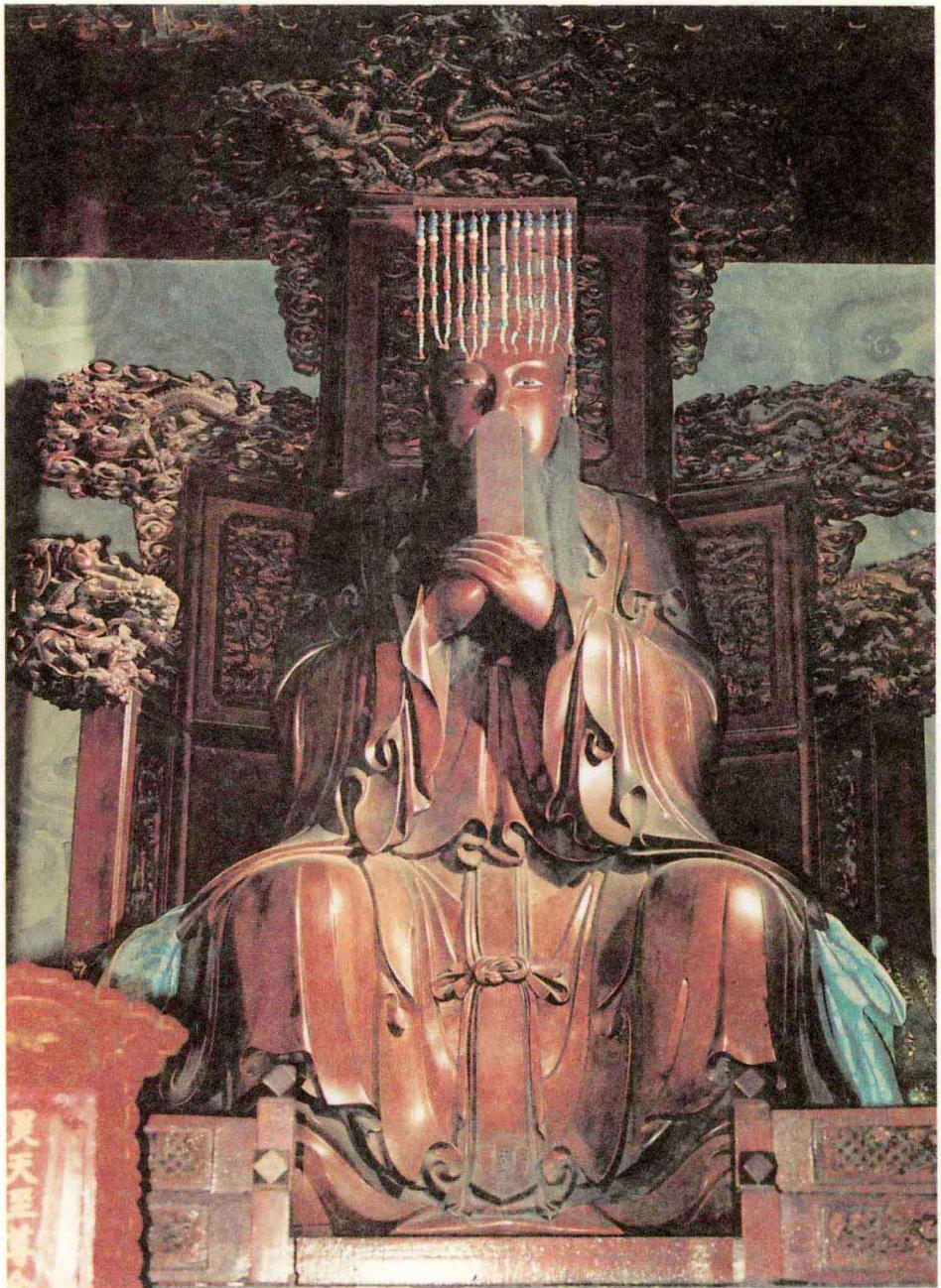


Statues of Four Assisting Deities in Beijing's Baiyun Temple (clay sculptures, Qing Dynasty)

They are four deities assisting Jade Emperor in governing Heaven and Earth. Ziwei Beiji God controls the forces of nature such as wind, rain and thunder. Gouchen Tianhuang God presides over all constellations in the universe. Nanji Changsheng (Longevity) God takes charge of lifetime on the Earth, and Houtu (Earth) Goddess of human fertility and landscape.

Jade Emperor (wood carving,
Ming Dynasty)

Jade Emperor is the deity in overall charge in Heaven. According to *Seven Bamboo Strips of the Cloudy Satchel*, a famous compendium of Taoist non-ritual texts assembled by Zhang Junfang in the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), Jade Emperor is a disciple of Original Divinity.





a God of Zhenwu (gilded bronze statue, Ming Dynasty)



God of Wenchang (bronze statue, Ming Dynasty), in charge of rank, fame and fortune on the Earth

Usually taking the image of a man with long, disheveled hair, stepping on a turtle and a snake with bare feet, he was regarded in Taoist mythology as the Northern God. Legend goes that he went into self-discipline on Mount Wudang in Hubei Province, and became an immortal after attaining the highest state of spiritual enlightenment. The worship of Zhenwu reached the pinnacle in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

Portrait of Queen Mother of the Western Heavens (Yuan Dynasty)

Queen Mother of the Western Heavens is the supreme goddess in Taoist mythology. The newly become immortals must seek an audience with her before getting admitted to the abode of immortals. The folk tales of Queen Mother's birthday celebration are well known to all Chinese people. Legend goes that she can give blessings and protection to people on the Earth.





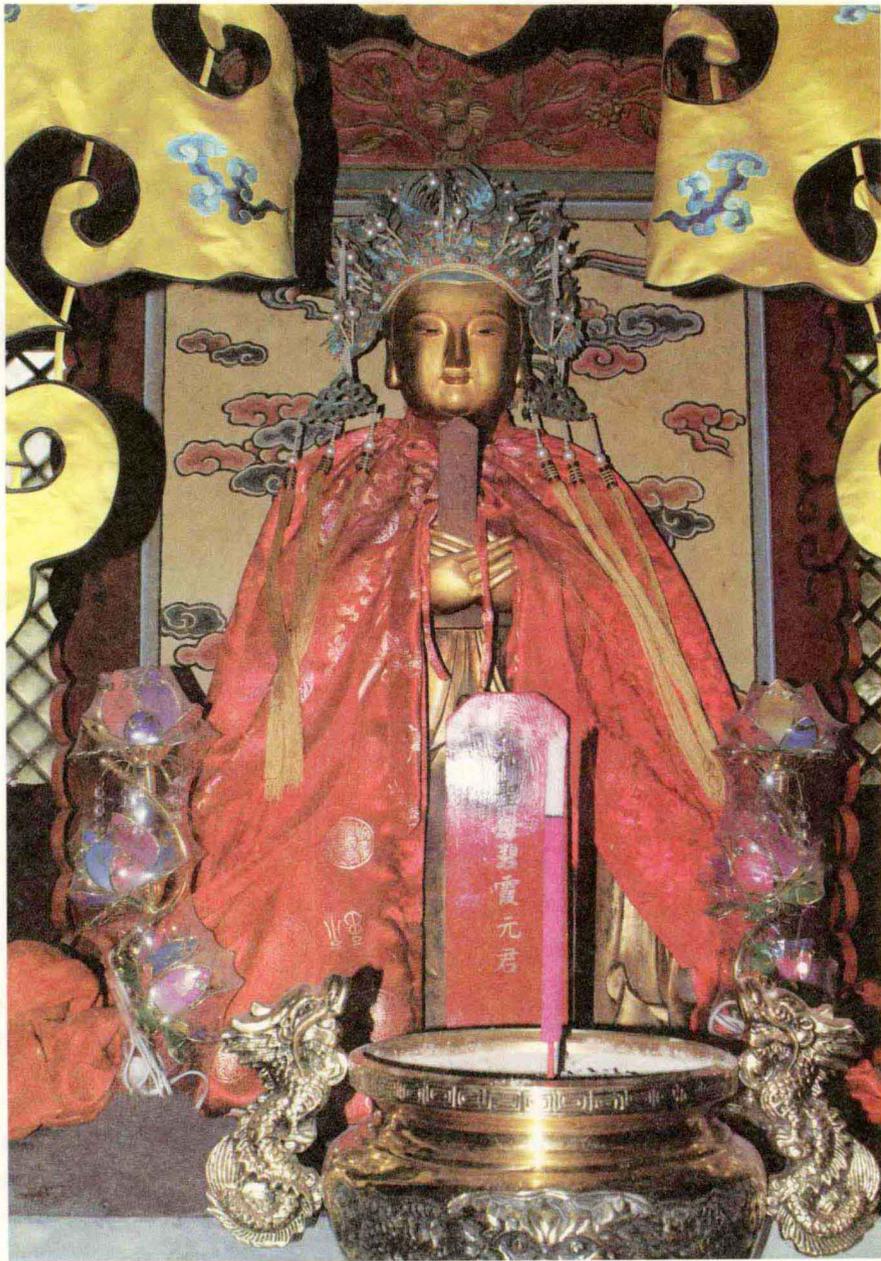
Mother of Big Dipper (Doumu) and Gods of Sexagenary Cycle (wood sculptures)

A goddess who is the mother of the Big Dipper, Doumu has three eyes, four heads and eight hands holding the Sun, the Moon and different weapons respectively.

Sixty constellation gods were granted the title of "General" in Taoist mythology. They take turns to be on duty in the Sexagenary Cycle. People refer to the duty god in the year in which he or she was born as Benming Yuanchen.

Princess Azure Clouds:
Goddess of Mount Tai (wood
carving, Qing Dynasty)

Princess Azure Clouds is said to
be daughter of the God of
Eastern Sacred Mountain
(Mount Tai). Married women
usually pray the benevolent
goddess for getting pregnant.





Statue of Hua Tuo in Yaowang Temple in Hebei Province

Chinese people often give the title of "Yaowang" (sage in medicine) to celebrated physicians in history such as Bian Que (c. 407- c. 310 BC), Hua Tuo (141-203), Sun Simiao (581-682) and Zhang Zhongjing (150-219). With their blessings, disciples believe that they can be either free from illness or recovered soon from it.



Divine General Wang (wood sculpture, Ming Dynasty)

Divine General Wang, whose original name was Wang Shan, lived in the Song Dynasty. A follower of Sa Shoujian (a Taoist priest revered as the "founding master" of Xihe, Tianshan and Suzu sects), after attaining the highest state of spiritual enlightenment, he was appointed by Jade Emperor the god to protect the Taoist doctrine.

Guan Yu: a God of Wealth

Guan Yu, Bi Gan and Zhao Gongming were regarded as the gods of wealth in Taoism.

Guan Yu, a general of the Shu Kingdom during the Three Kingdoms period, was often described in classical novels as honor and faith incarnate.

Bi Gan, a legendary figure of the Shang Dynasty (c. 1600-c. 1100 BC), was a symbol of selflessness and fairness.

Zhao Gongming was said to wear a suit of armor and carry an iron staff, holding a reputation of being impartial and incorruptible.





Immortals Offering Birthday Congratulations (Qing Dynasty)

The Eight Celestials refer to Han Zhongli, Lü Dongbin, Li Tieguai, Cao Guojiu, He Xiangyu, Lan Caihe, Zhang Guolao and Han Xiangzi. In this painting they offer birthday congratulations to Queen Mother of the Western Heavens.

3. Magnificent Taoist Temples

*I*n the Taoist mythology, immortals live not only in the kingdom of Heaven but also in beautiful mountains and rivers on the Earth. Therefore, numerous temples have been built on mountains with scenic splendors. These magnificent

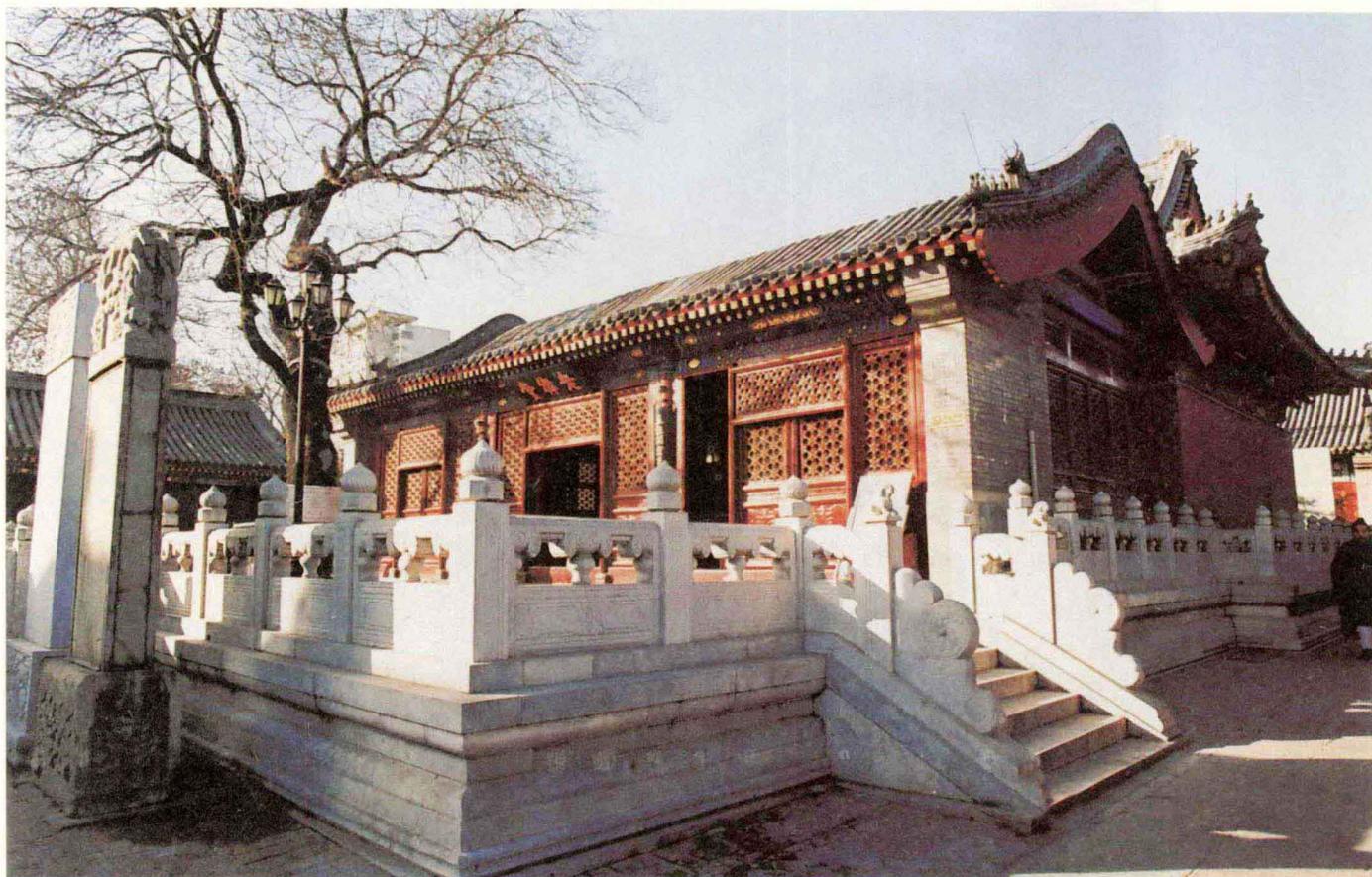
buildings are unique in style and layout. Among thousands of extant temples constructed in the remote past, many have become tourist attractions.



Archway of Beijing's Baiyun Temple

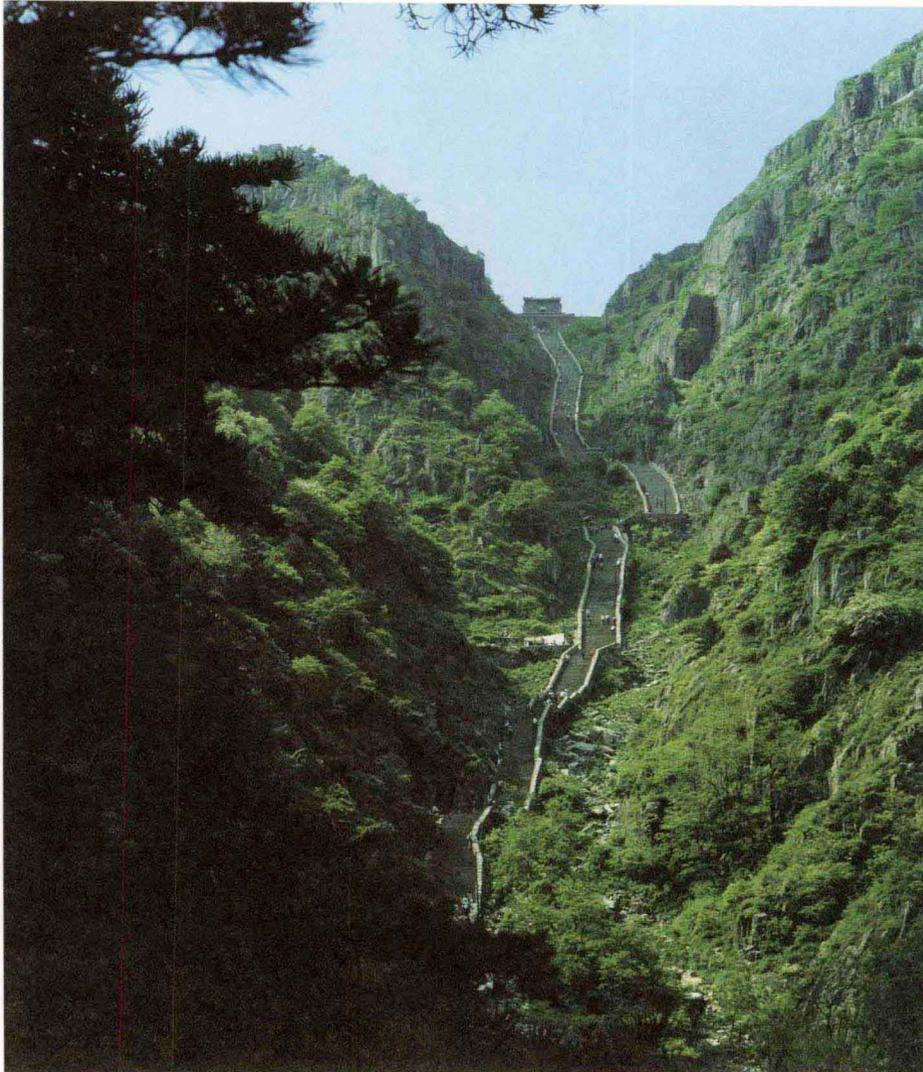
Baiyun (White Cloud) Temple is located on Xibianmenwai Street in Beijing. It's called Tianchang in the Tang Dynasty, Taiji in the Song and Jin (1115-1234) dynasties, and Changchun in the Yuan Dynasty. It didn't take the present name until the Ming Dynasty. Now it serves as the site of the Chinese Taoist Association.

The temple's archway was built in the Ming Dynasty.



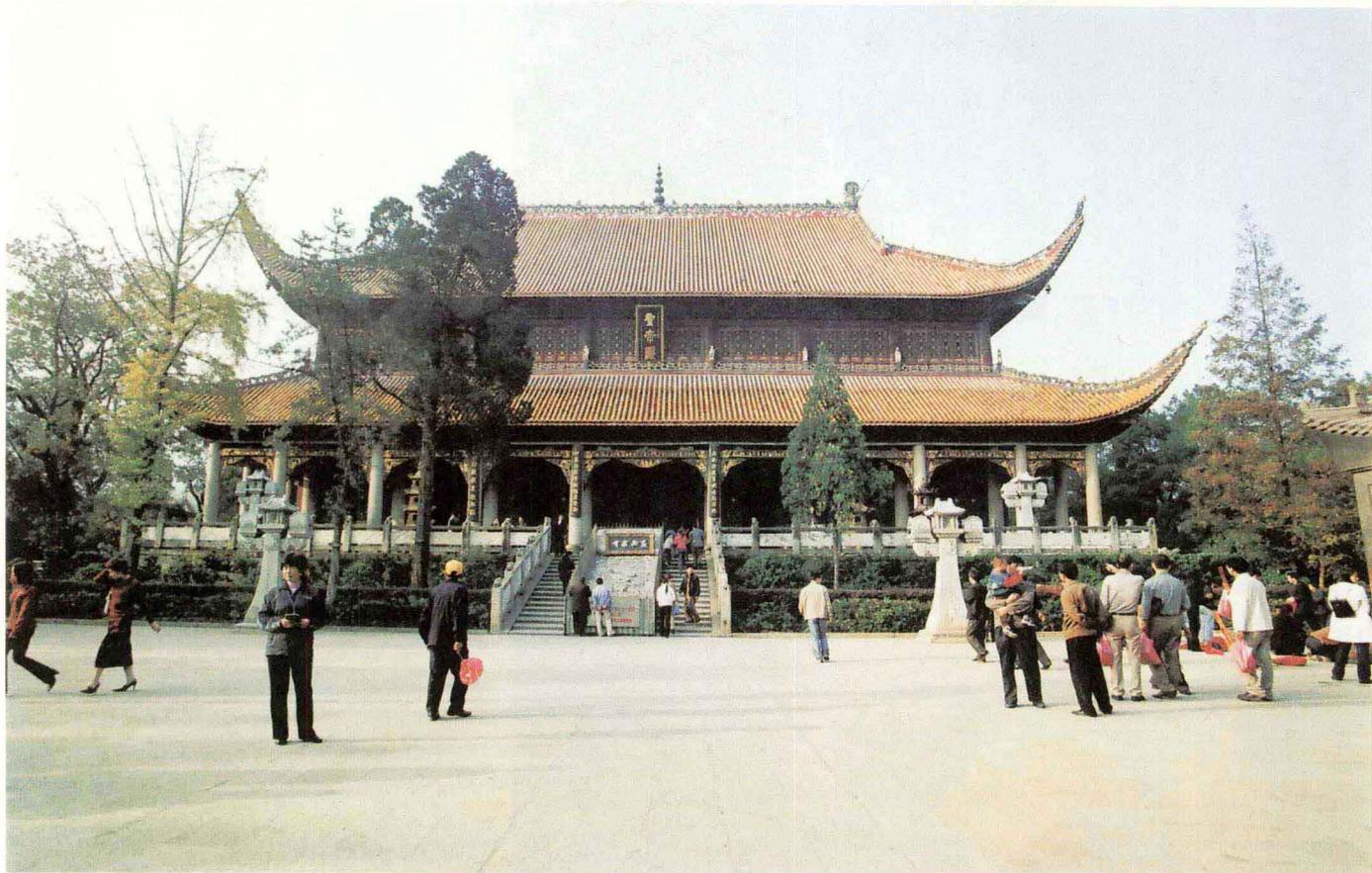
Qizhen Palace, also known as Laolü Palace, of Beijing's Baiyun Temple

Qizhen Palace is a Ming Dynasty building in which are enshrined the clay sculptures of Quanzhen priests Qiu Chuji, Tan Chuduan, Liu Chuxuan, Ma Danyang, Hao Datong, Wang Chuyi and Sun Bu'er. It's also a place where important religious activities are held.



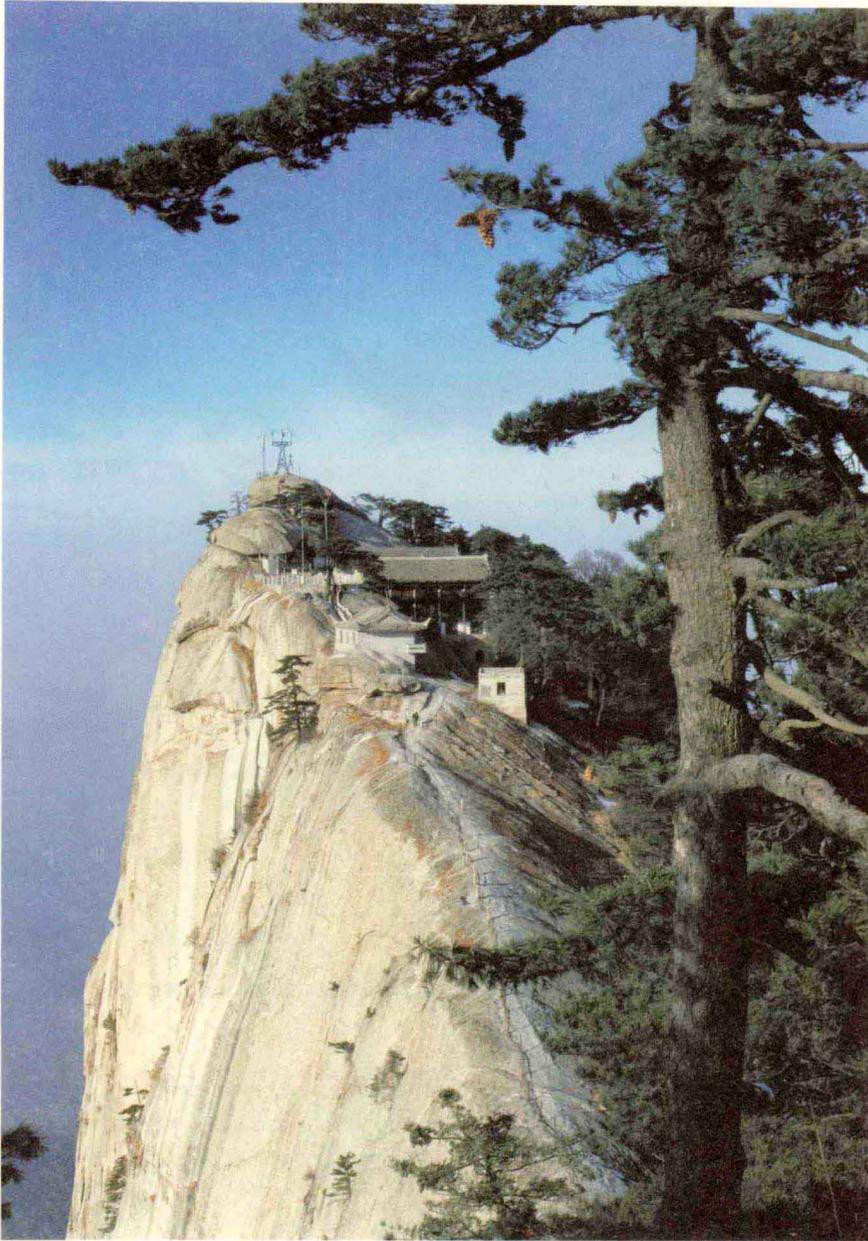
Eastern Sacred Mountain

Mount Tai, the so-called Eastern Sacred Mountain, took its current name during the Spring and Autumn Period. Situated in central Shandong, it's a tourist attraction and a place where ancient emperors offered religious sacrifices. Dai Temple and Temple of Princess Azure Clouds were built on it.



Grand Temple of Southern Sacred Mountain

Mount Heng, the so-called Southern Sacred Mountain, is located in Hengshan County, Hunan Province. Legend goes that Madame Wei of Jin Dynasty practiced Taoism on the mountain and founded later the Shangqing Sect. Many Taoist and Buddhist temples like Huangting Temple and Grand Temple of Southern Sacred Mountain were built here.

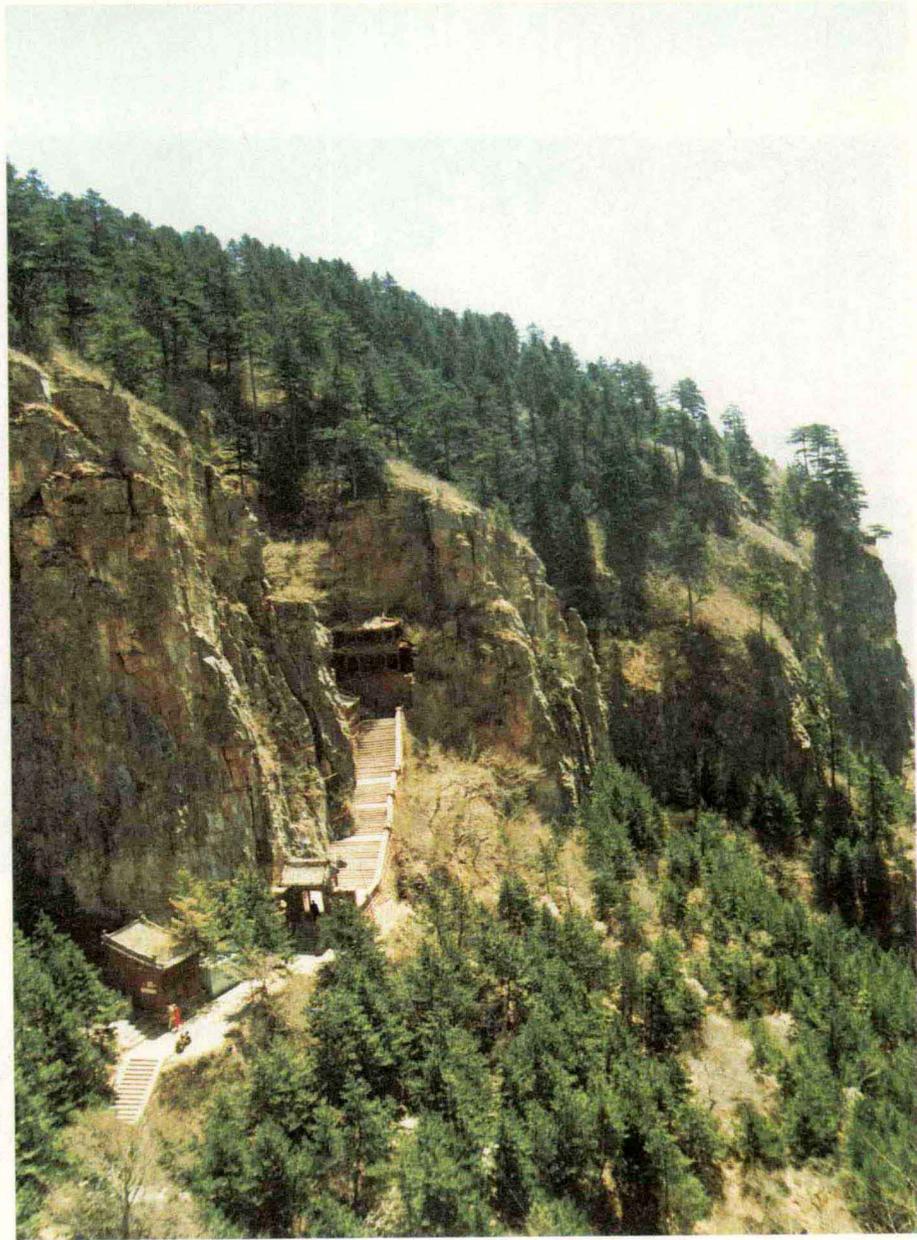


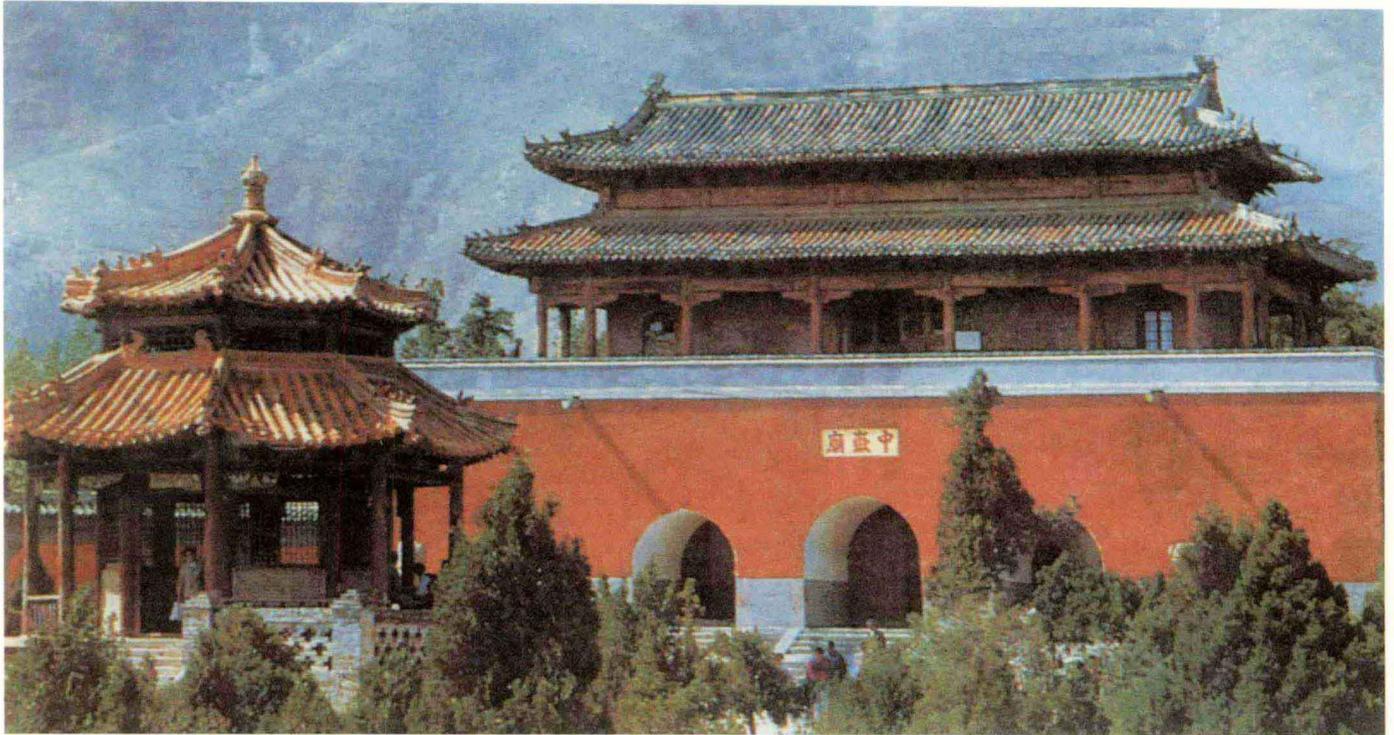
Western Sacred Mountain

Mount Hua, the so-called Western Sacred Mountain and a tourist attraction, lies south of Huayin County, Shaanxi Province. Many Taoist temples like Yuquan Temple and Temple of Western Sacred Mountain were constructed here. Legend goes that Chen Tuan, a famous Taoist theoretician living in the Five Dynasties and the beginning years of the Northern Song Dynasty, went into self-discipline for years on the mountain and later founded the Laohuashan Sect. Chen's cosmic theory exerted a significant influence on the Confucian school of idealist philosophy of the Song and Ming dynasties.

Northern Sacred Mountain

Mount Heng, the so-called Northern Sacred Mountain, lies south of Hunyuan County, Shanxi Province. Legend has it that Zhang Guolao, one of the Eight Celestials, once practiced Taoism here.



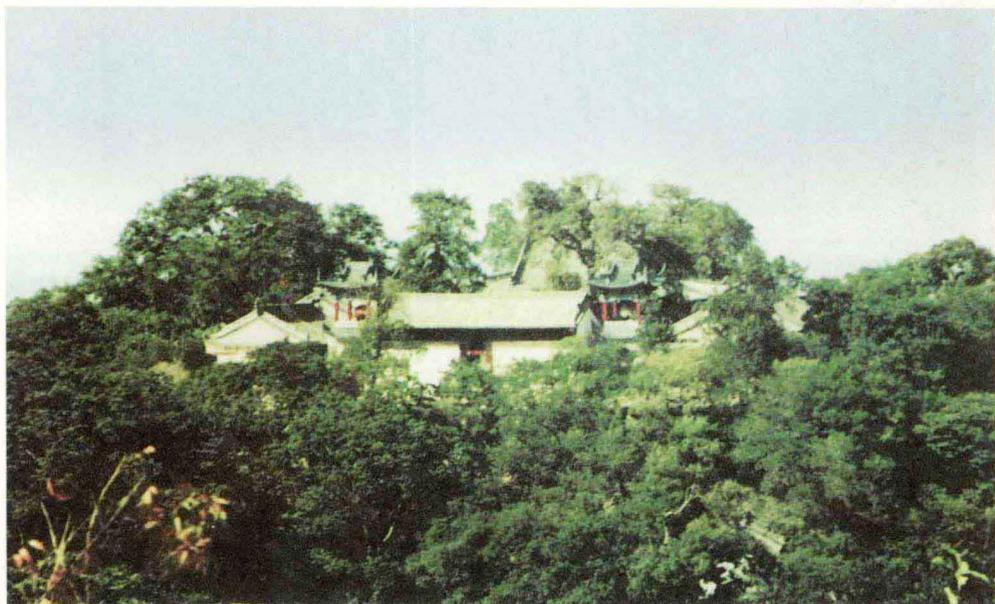


Temple of Central Sacred Mountain

Mount Song, a famous scenic spot, also known as the Central Sacred Mountain, lies east of Dengfeng County, Henan Province. It has been a place where immortals live in Taoist mythology and where ancient emperors offered religious sacrifices. Many noted Taoist theoreticians in history, such as Kou Qianzhi, Chen Tuan and Qiu Changchun, had practiced Taoism on the mountain. A lot of cultural relics from Song to Qing Dynasty are preserved in the magnificent Temple of Central Sacred Mountain.

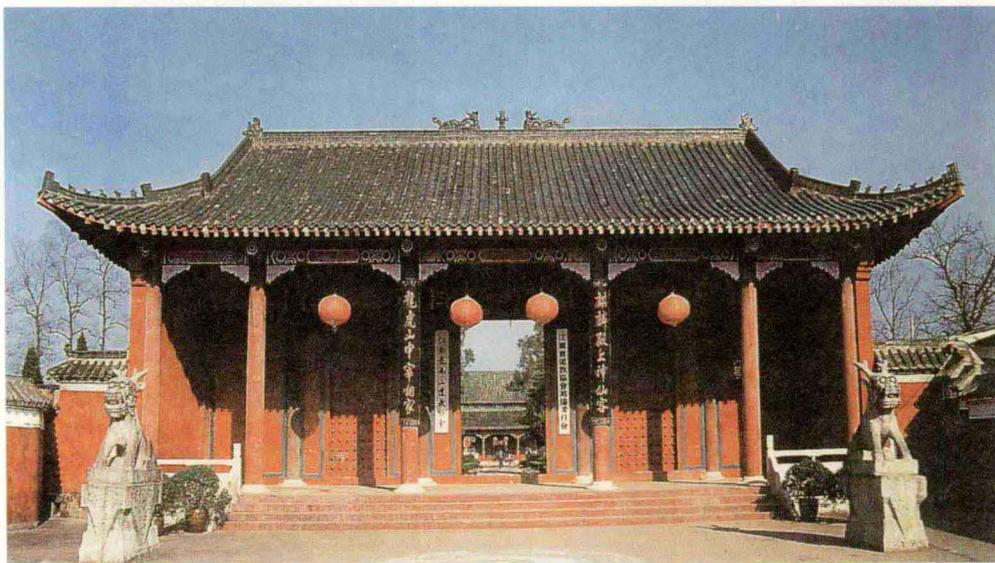
Louguantai

Louguantai, lying at the foot of Zhongnan Mountain in Zhouzhi County, Shaanxi Province, is said to be the most ancient Taoist temple. It was first built during the reign of King Kang of Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 1100-c. 771 BC), extended in Qin (221-206 BC), Han and Tang dynasties respectively. Legend goes that Lao-tzu presented Yin Xi, the magistrate of Hangu Pass, with his five-thousand-word *Tao Te Ching* here.



Heavenly Master's Mansion on Mount Longhu (Dragon and Tiger)

Heavenly Master's Mansion, located in Shangqing Township of Guixi City, Jiangxi Province, is where Zhang Daoling, founder of the Zhengyi Sect, lived.



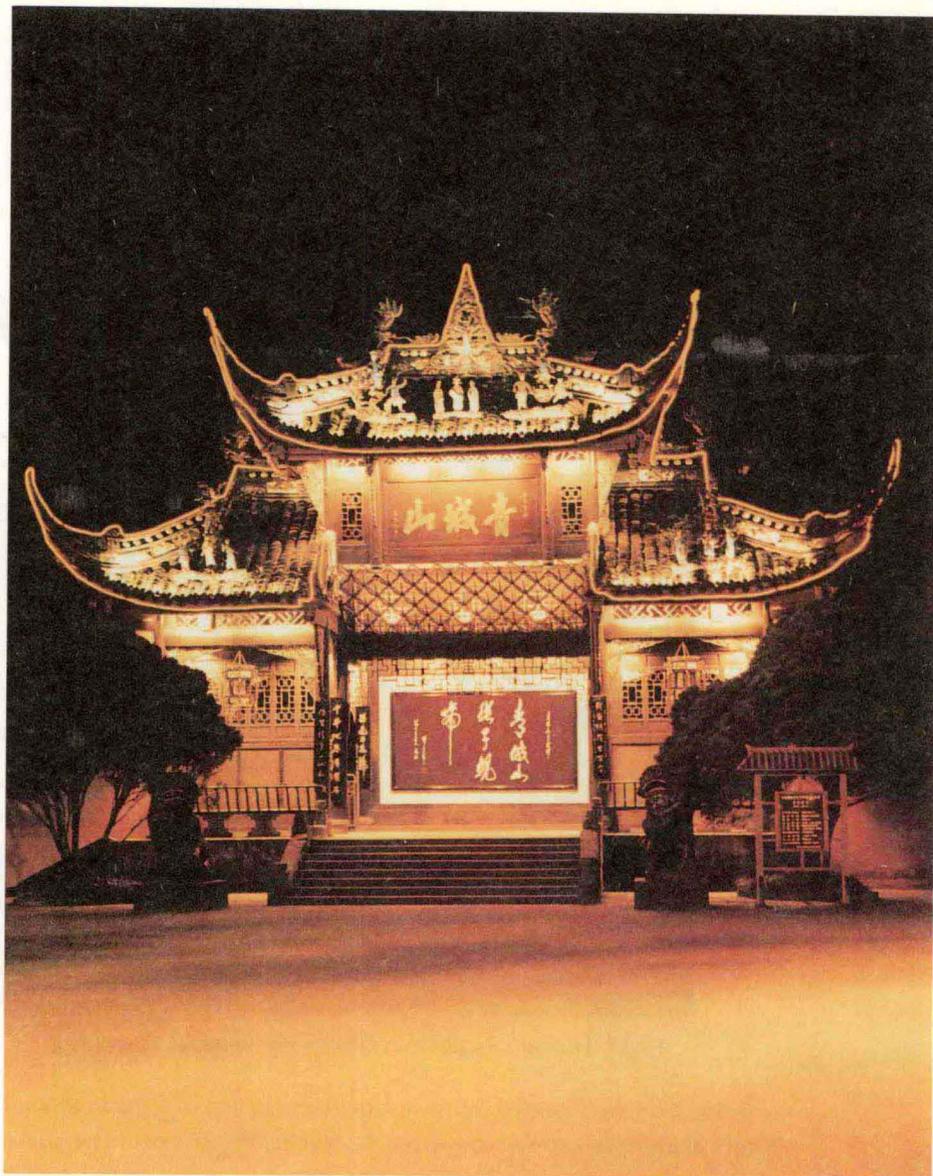


Qianyuan Temple on Mount Mao
in Jiangsu Province

According to *Collected Taoist Scriptures*, Mount Mao, also known as Mount Juqu, lying in Jurong County, Jiangsu Province, is where immortals live. Legend goes that Mao Ying of Western Han Dynasty came here in 153 BC to practice Taoism, later joined by his brothers Mao Gu and Mao Zhong. They were revered as "Three Maos." Both Shangqing and Lingbao sects have boasted close links with the mountain. Famous temples here include Jiuxiao Wanfu Palace, Yuanfu Wanning Palace and Qianyuan Temple.

Night view of the archway in front of Mount Qingcheng

Mount Qingcheng lies west of Chengdu City, Sichuan Province, adjacent to the Dujiang Weirs, an ancient irrigation network constructed in the third century BC and in use to this day. A famous scenic spot in western Sichuan, it's said to be the abode of immortals and has been regarded as one of the birthplaces of Taoism. Legend goes that Huangdi (Yellow Emperor) once sought Taoist advices from Ningfeng-tzu on the mountain and later Zhang Daoling built a hut here to practice Taoism. Well-known temples on the mountain include Jianfu Temple, Guchang Temple, Heavenly Master's Cave and Shangqing Temple.





Eight Trigram Pavilion in Qingyang Temple, Chengdu

Qingyang Temple is located southwest of Chengdu City in Sichuan Province. According to Sima Qian's *Historical Records*, Lao-tzu converted Yin Xi, the magistrate of Hangu Pass, to Taoism here. Yin later became an immortal. A *Collection of Taoist Scriptures* compiled during the Qing Dynasty and some Taoist classics are preserved in the imposing temple that contains a number of halls.





Xuanmiao Temple in Suzhou City, Jiangsu Province

The magnificent Xuanmiao Temple, located on Guanqian Street in Suzhou City, Jiangsu Province, was first built in the second year of Xianning (276) in the Western Jin Dynasty (265-316), and extended during all the later dynasties. It's a celebrated Zhengyi temple in south China. The extant Sanqing Palace in the temple was reconstructed in the sixth year of Chunxi (1179) in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), in which line engraving of Lao-tzu by Wu Daozi and tablet inscriptions by Yan Zhenqing of Tang Dynasty as well as many stone carvings of Song Dynasty are preserved.

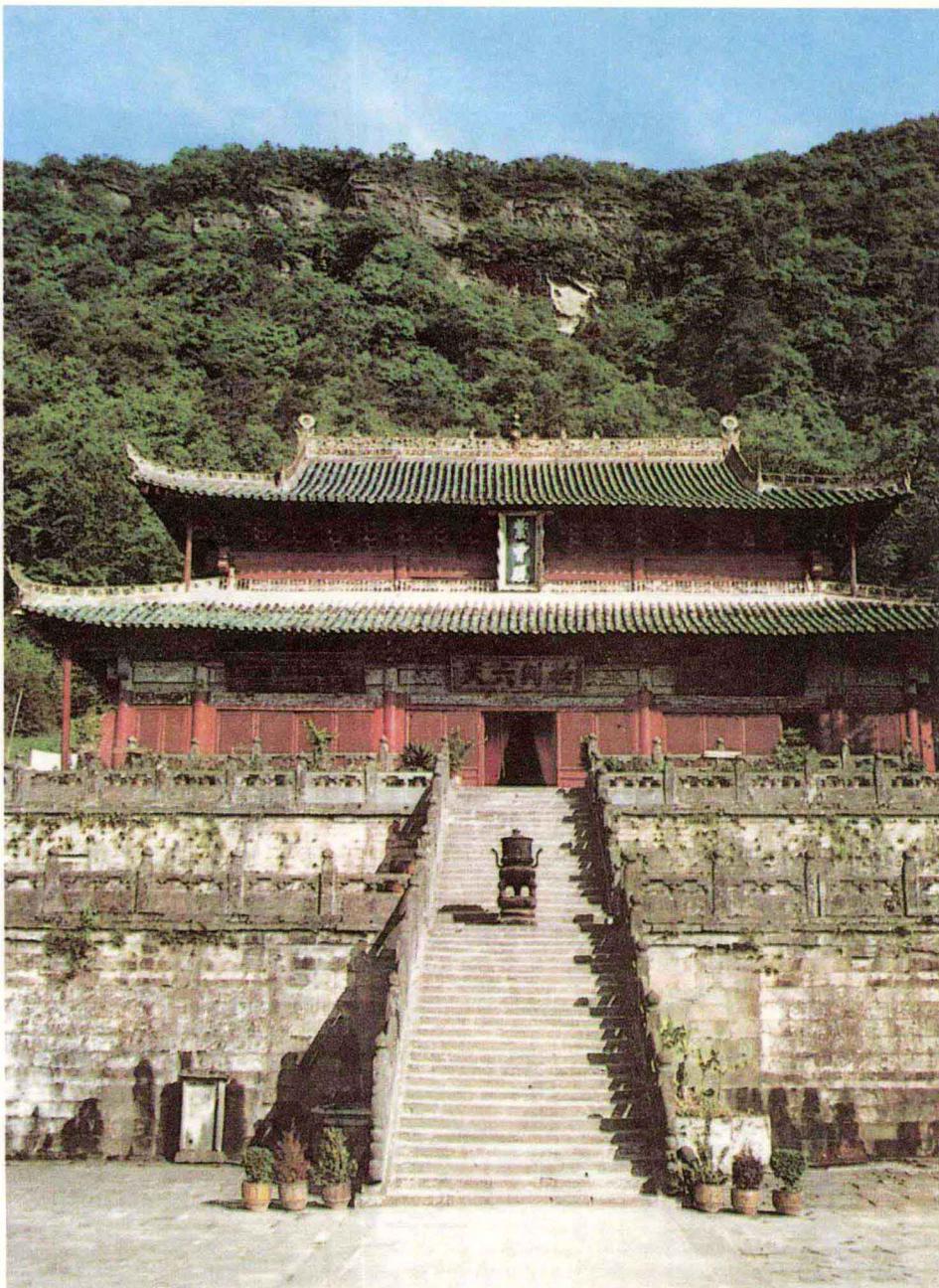


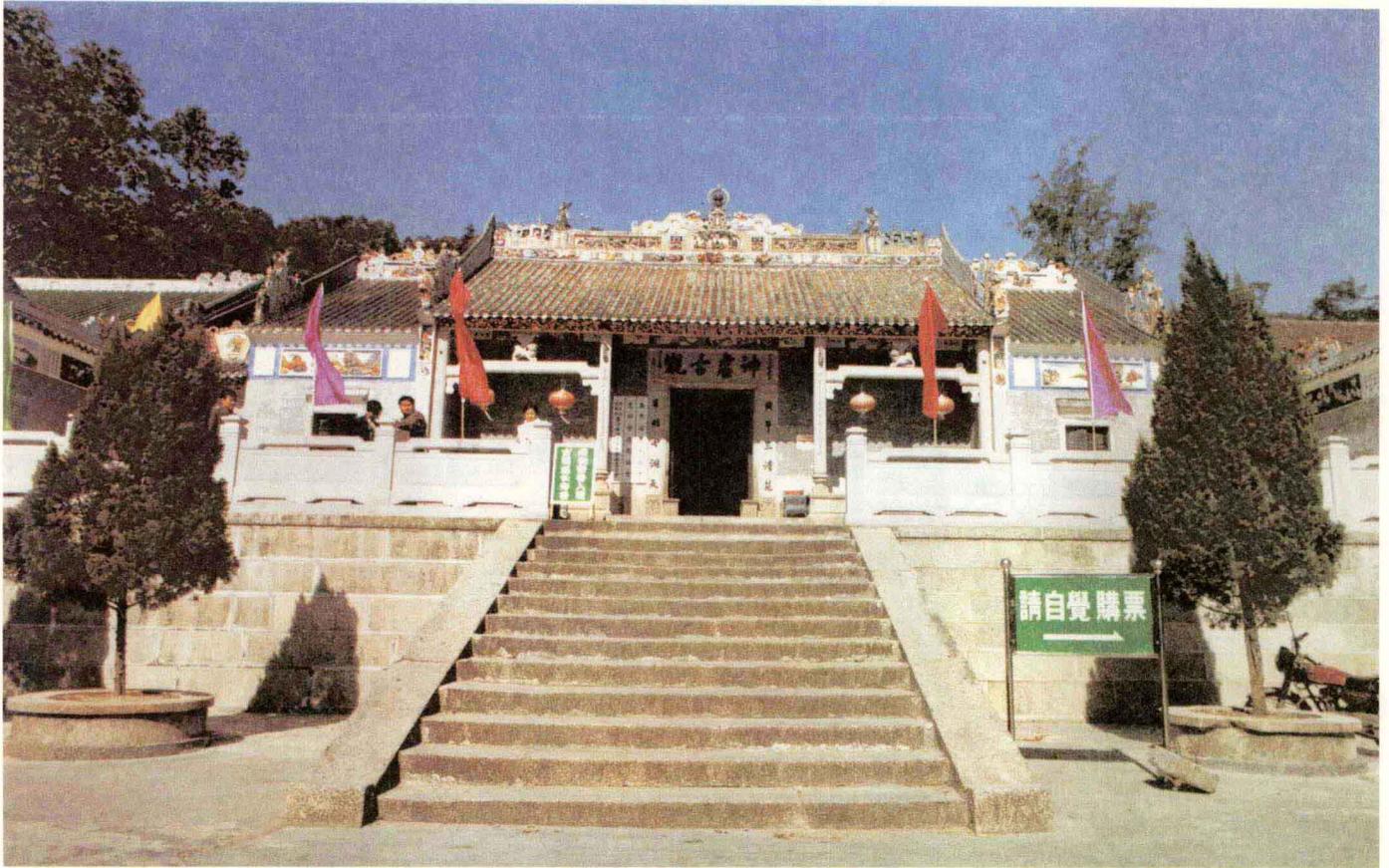
Relocated Baiyun Temple in Shanghai

In line with Shanghai's urban planning, Baiyun Temple has been moved to a new site in the city. Now it's where the Shanghai Taoist Association is located.

Zixiao (Purple Clouds) Palace at the foot of Zhanqi Peak on Mount Wudang, in which a Ming Dynasty bronze statue of the God of Zhenwu is enshrined

Mount Wudang lies south of Junxian County, Hubei Province. Legend goes that the God of Zhenwu, also known as the Northern God, became an immortal after practicing Taoism here for 42 years. Most monasteries on the mountain, including the well-known Zixiao Palace, Taihe Temple and Jin (Gold) Palace, were built during the reign of Yongle (1403-1425) in the Ming Dynasty.





Chongxu Temple on Mount Luofu in Guangdong Province

Mount Luofu, sitting on the riverside of the Dongjiang, northwest of Boluo County in Guangdong Province, is one of China's Top Ten Mountains and a place where immortals live in Taoist mythology. Chongxu Temple on the mountain is where Taoist theoretician Ge Hong of Eastern Jin Dynasty built a hut to make pills of immortality.



Temple of Eight Celestials in Xi'an

Situated on Changle Lane in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, it's originally a nunnery first constructed in the Song Dynasty. Legend goes that a scholar named Zheng met the Eight Celestials here and afterward built the nunnery to mark it. During the late years of the Qing Dynasty, an escaping Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908) stayed in Xi'an temporarily and changed the nunnery into a temple.

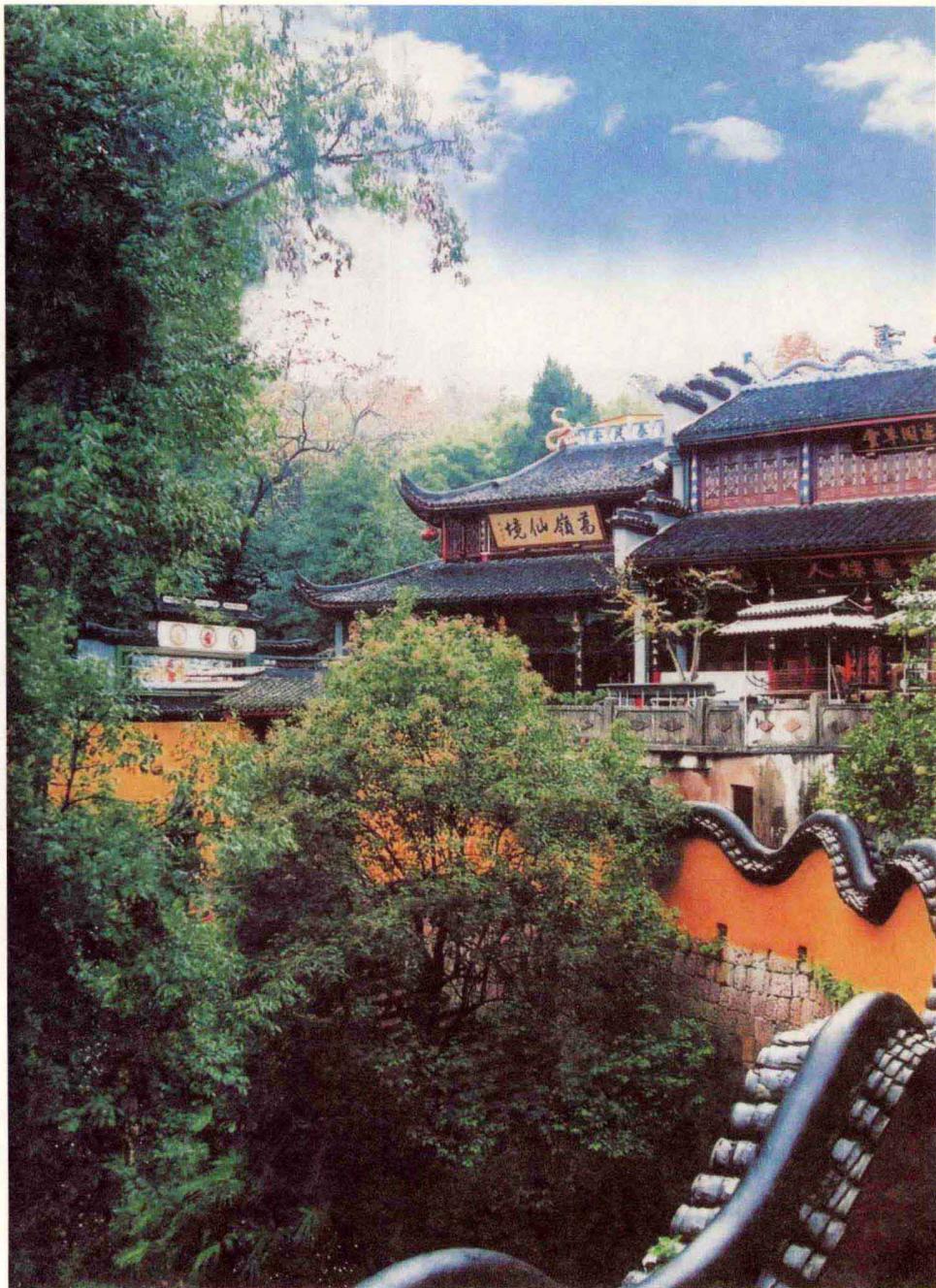


Mount Wuyi

Mount Wuyi, 15 km south of Chong'an County in Fujian Province, is said to be the abode of immortals. People began to build Taoist temples here since the Tang Dynasty. Famous Taoist buildings on the mountain include the Cave of Taoyuan (Shangri-la) where Bai Yuchan of Southern Song Dynasty practiced Taoism.

Pao-pu Temple on Mount Geling

Situated on the western bank of the West Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, the Pao-pu Temple on Mount Geling is so named as legend goes that Ge Hong, writer of *Pao-pu-tzu*, made pills of immortality and practiced Taoism here. It was first built during the reign of Daxing (318-321) in the Eastern Jin Dynasty.





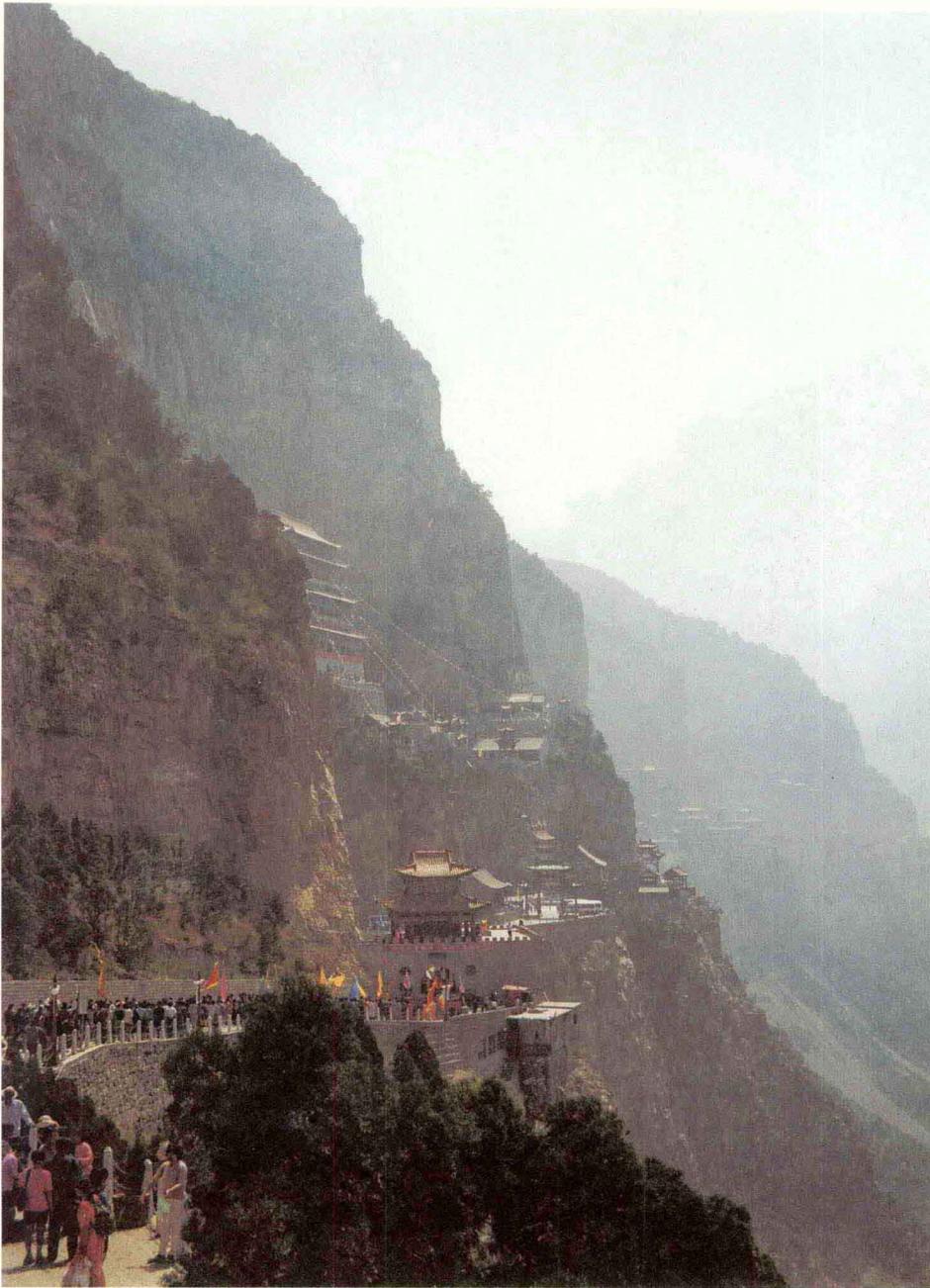
Guandi (Guan Yu) Palace of Taiqing Temple in Shenyang, Liaoning Province

Taiqing Temple in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, first built during the reign of Kangxi (1662-1722) in the Qing Dynasty, was the largest Quanzhen Taoist monastery in northeast China.

Wulong (Five Dragons) Temple
on Mount Qian

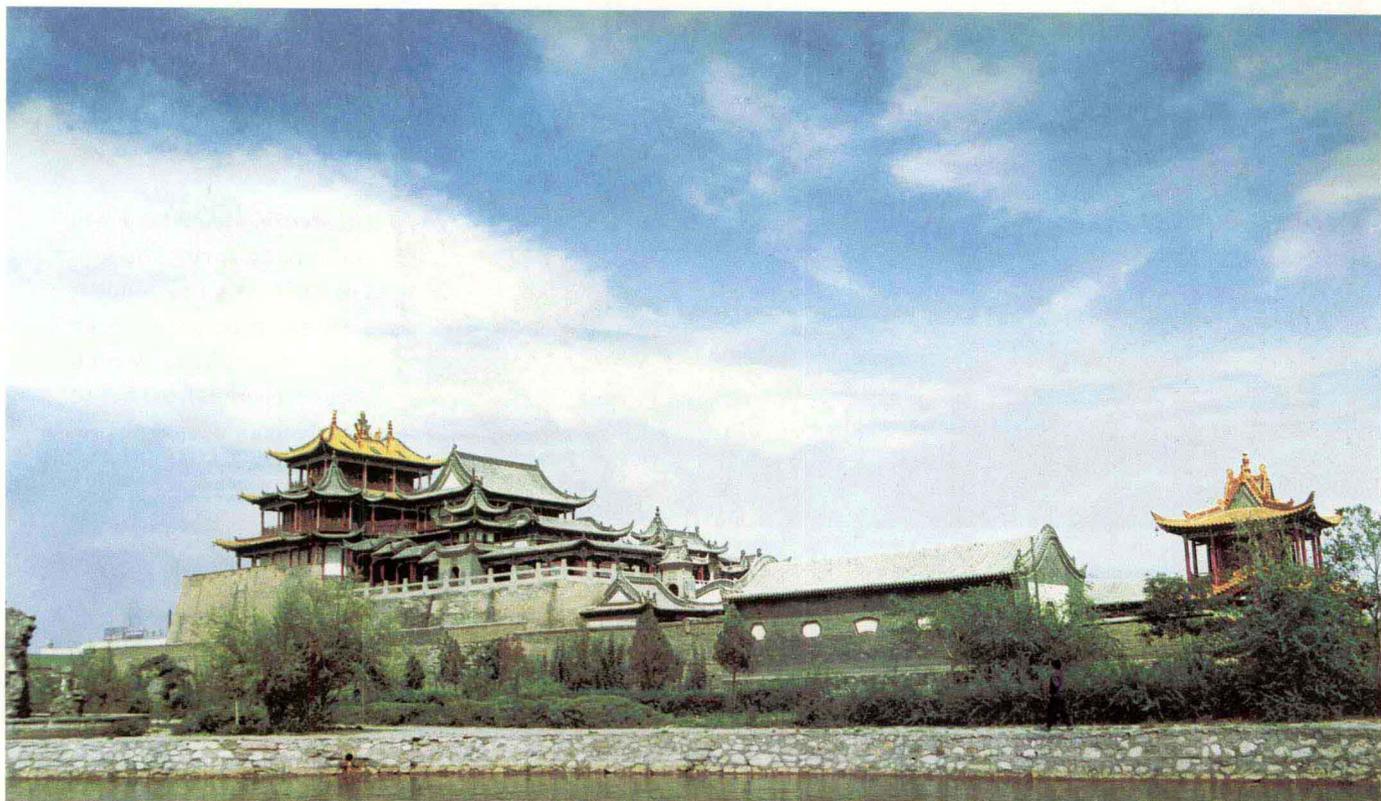
Mount Qian sits 20 km east of Anshan City of Liaoning Province. Wuliang (Immeasurableness) Temple is the largest Taoist monastery on the mountain and Wulong is a recently built one.





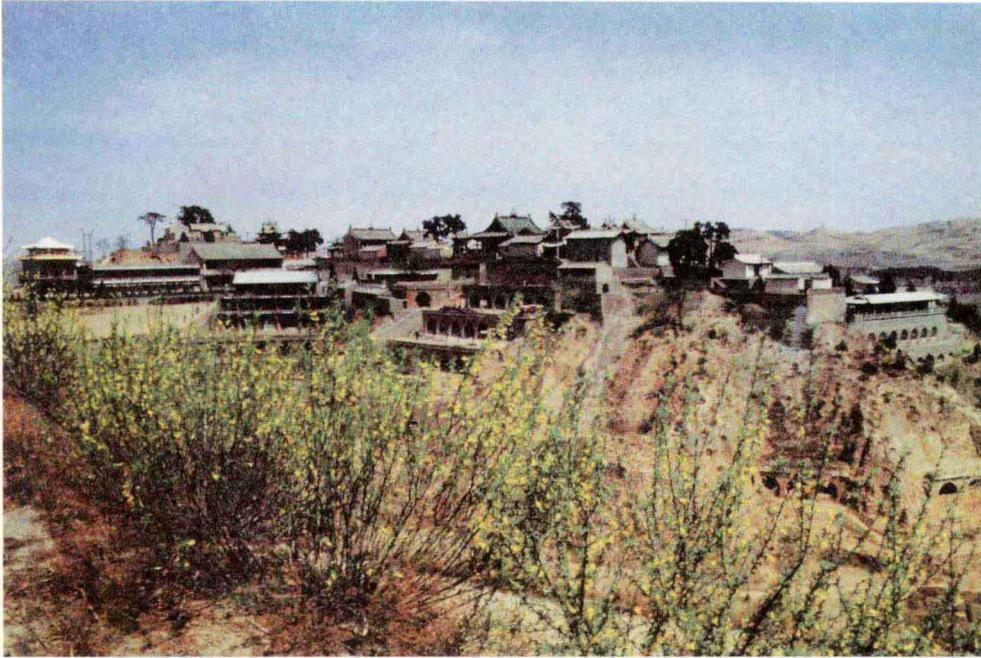
Mount Mian in Jiexiu County,
Shanxi Province

Mount Mian sits 20 km south of Jiexiu County, Shanxi Province. Legend goes that during the Spring and Autumn Period, Jie Zhitui of the Jin State lived in seclusion along with his mother on the mountain, and later both were burnt to death here. Over the mountain are spread a number of Buddhist and Taoist monasteries, which have all been renovated in recent years.



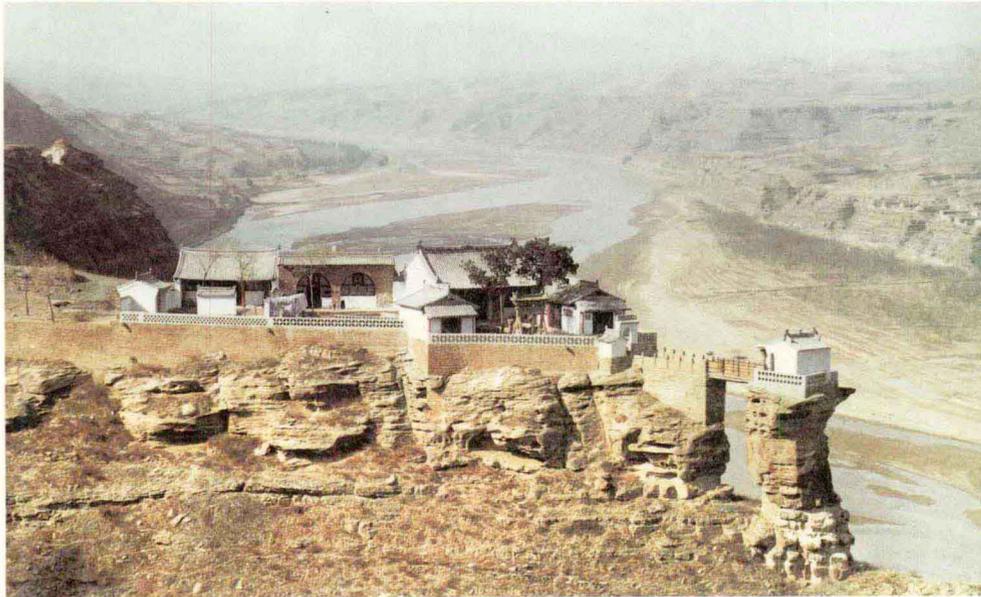
Jade Emperor's Pavilion in Ningxia

Located in Pingluo County, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, the Jade Emperor's Pavilion is a well-known Taoist building in northwest China.



Baiyun Temple in Jiaxian County, Shaanxi Province

Situated on Mount Baiyun in Jiaxian County, Shaanxi Province, it's the biggest Taoist monastery in northwest China, which receives pilgrims from five to six neighboring provinces per year.



Xianglu (Censer) Temple in Jiaxian County, Shaanxi Province

Situated on the western bank of the Yellow River, with Mount Lüliang on the opposite side, this Ming-Qing building is magnificent and unique in style.

Fung Ying Seen Koon in
Hong Kong



Mazu Temple in Macao



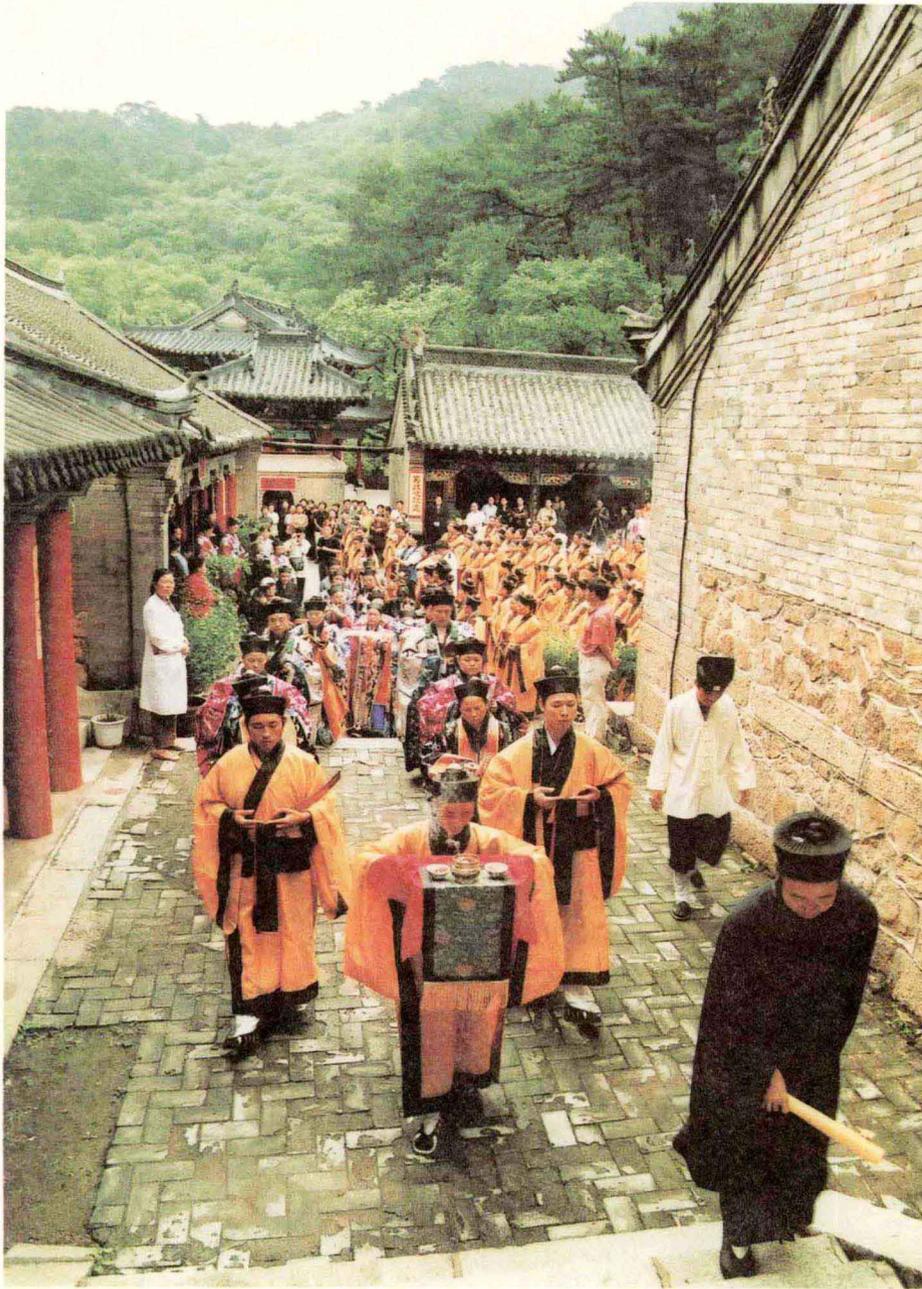


Chi-nan Temple in Taipei City, Taiwan

4. Solemn Taoist Rituals

*T*aoism has solemn rites of primitive simplicity, in which both ceremonies held by ancient people and those by ethnic minorities living in southwest China have been performed to worship gods. Its main rituals include Luotian (a sacrificial ceremony), liturgies for impartation of Taoist instruction, ways to celebrate major deities' birthdays, chanting scriptures in the morning and

evening in a temple, and rites to save the souls of the dead or avert calamities and bring blessings to disciples. For different ceremonies, there are strict rules for worship procedures, dress, utensils, the arrangement of altar tables, and scriptures to be chanted, and they differ slightly from place to place.



Setting out the altar table for worship of the Taoist Triratna -- Tao, sutra and master

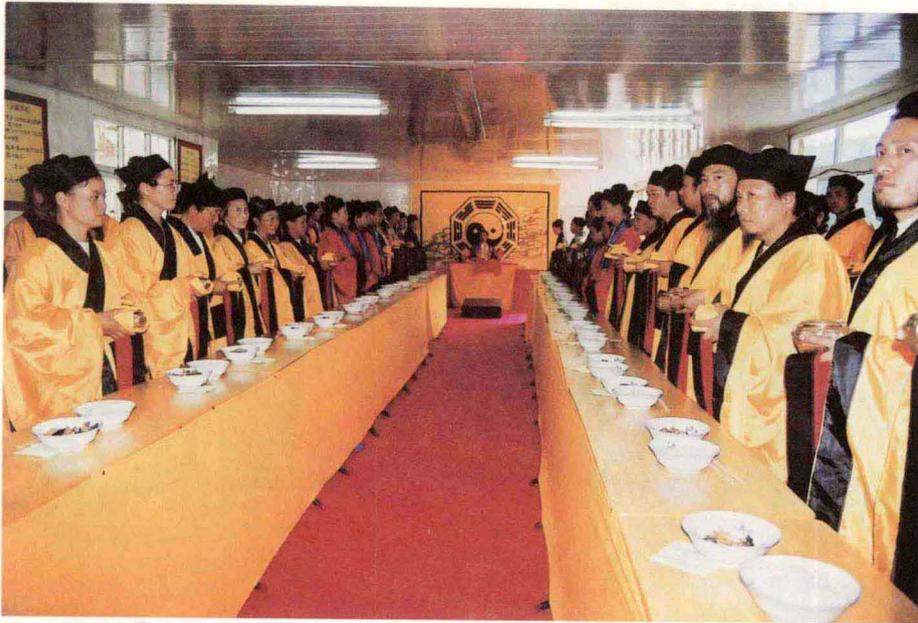
It's a big event for Quanzhen priests to perform the liturgy for impartation of Taoist instruction, which is called *chuanjie* in this sect. According to tradition, at the ceremony an altar table is to be set out for worship of the Taoist Triratna -- Tao, sutra and master, and an abbot teaches three commandments -- *Chuzhen*, *Zhongji* and *Tianxian* - - to priests. In the end, an ordination diploma is issued to those who have passed an examination, marking the ceremony has come to a successful conclusion.

The abbot and Taoist masters take their seats

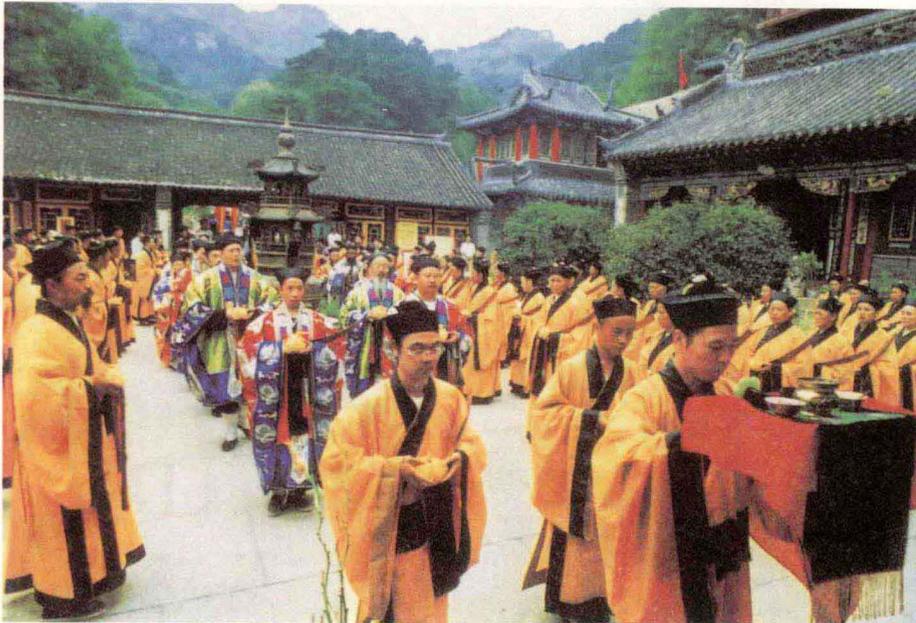


Priests listen attentively to the abbot's explanation of the three commandments during a *chuanjie* ceremony





At a *chuanjie* ceremony performed in August 2002, priests dine together in Wulong Temple on Mount Qian



A *chuanjie* ceremony comes to a successful conclusion



Priests queue up to welcome the "Eight Masters" during a *shoulu* ceremony

It's a big event for Zhengyi priests to perform the liturgy for impartation of Taoist instruction, which is called *shoulu* in this sect.



The "Eight Masters" lead priests to pay homage at a shrine during a *shoulu* ceremony



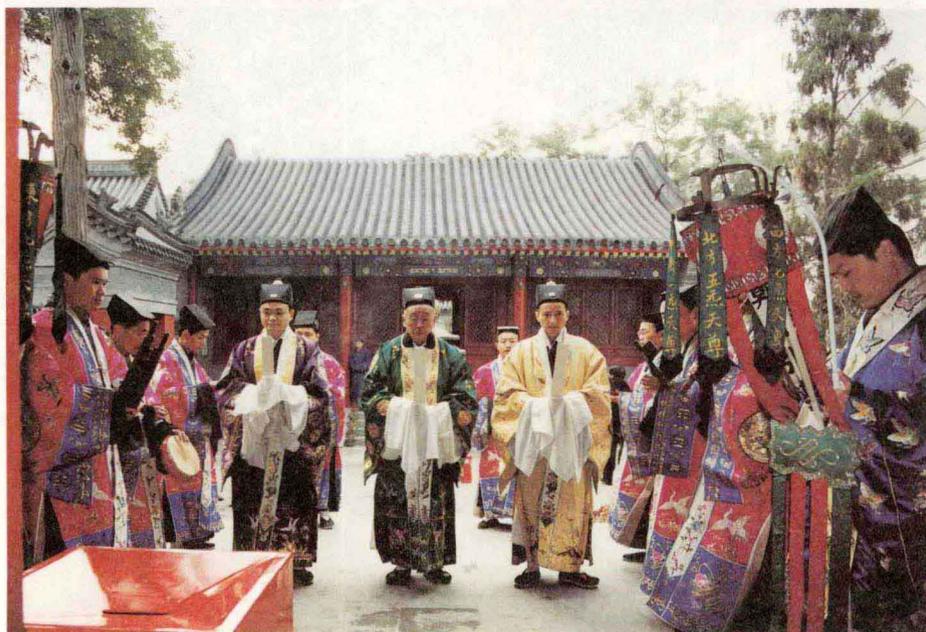
Priests are chanting scriptures at a *shoulu* ceremony

Luotian ceremony opens in Beijing's Baiyun Temple

Luotian (All-Embracing Heaven) is a significant sacrificial ceremony in Taoism. Sponsored by the Chinese Taoist Association, it has been held twice in Beijing's Baiyun Temple and Shanxi's Daluo Temple on Mount Mian in Jiexiu County respectively to pray for the country's prosperity and reunification and world peace.



A delegation of Zhengyi priests from Suzhou gives Taoist services at the Luotian ceremony in Beijing's Baiyun Temple





Priests carry ritual implements in front of a procession to worship gods during the Luotian ceremony in Daluo Temple on Shanxi's Mount Mian



An altar is set out to worship gods during the Luotian ceremony on Mount Mian in Jiexiu County, Shanxi Province



Priests from both sides of the Taiwan Straits give Taoist services in 2004 in front of Lao-tzu's grave on Mount Daling in Zhouzhi County, Shaanxi Province to mark the sage's birthday

An eminent Taoist nun is performing the *kaiguang* ceremony for statues of goddesses

Taoism holds the belief that an immortal could replicate himself (herself) and dwell in his (her) statues enshrined at different temples. Thus a ceremony called *kaiguang* must be performed for a newly made statue. During the ceremony, an eminent priest (nun) takes a mirror to reflect sunlight onto the statue, and then pencils its eyes, ears and mouth with a pigment made of cinnabar and the tuber of hyacinth bletilla.





Zhengyi priests from Xuanmiao Temple in Suzhou are giving Taoist services during a ceremony to pray for good fortune



Priests of Baiyun Temple in Beijing are performing Taoist rites to pray for peace in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of victory in the world's anti-Fascist war and China's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1937-1945)



Priests of Shanghai are performing Taoist rites to pray for world peace

5. Simple Life Style of Taoist Priests

*T*aoist priests are called "qian-dao," and nuns "kun-dao" ("Qian" is the symbol for Heaven and "kun" for Earth in the Eight Trigrams). Priests of Quanzhen Sect must live a strict religious life, vegetarian and single, living collectively in temples. In contrast, most Zhengyi priests are allowed to live close to a temple with their families. They go to temple only when significant religious activities are held.

Besides attending religious ceremonies, priests are required to chant scriptures everyday. Living in a temple, they must study Taoist classics and rituals, do cleanings, engage in farm work, practice calligraphy and painting, learn to play Taoist music, and do exercises in kung fu and health preservation. As most priests have general medical knowledge, it's a tradition for them to treat local people for minor illnesses.



Taoist priests are plucking tea leaves on Mount Qingcheng



Taoist nuns are growing vegetables

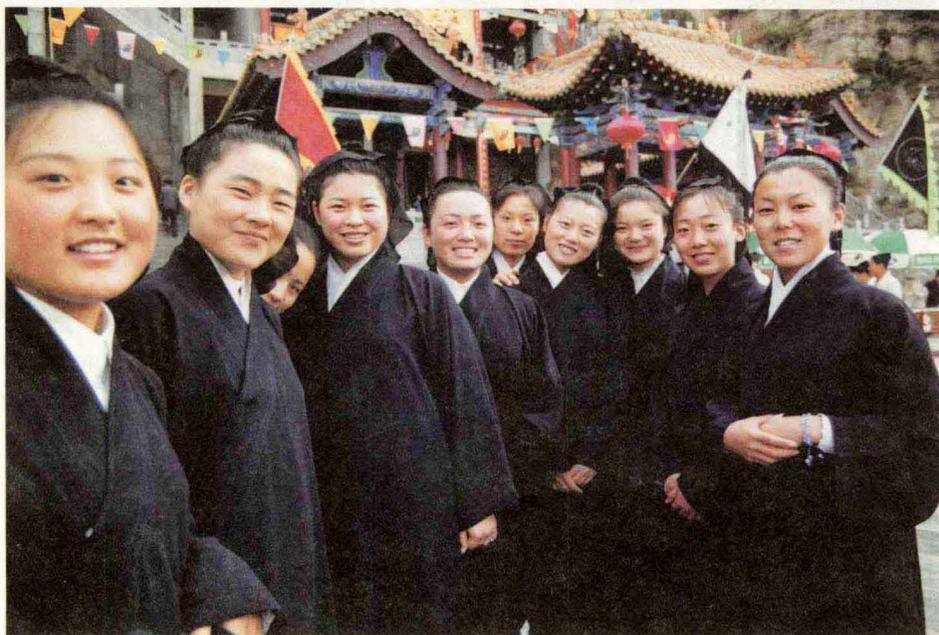
Taoist nuns on Mount Qingcheng are making pickles

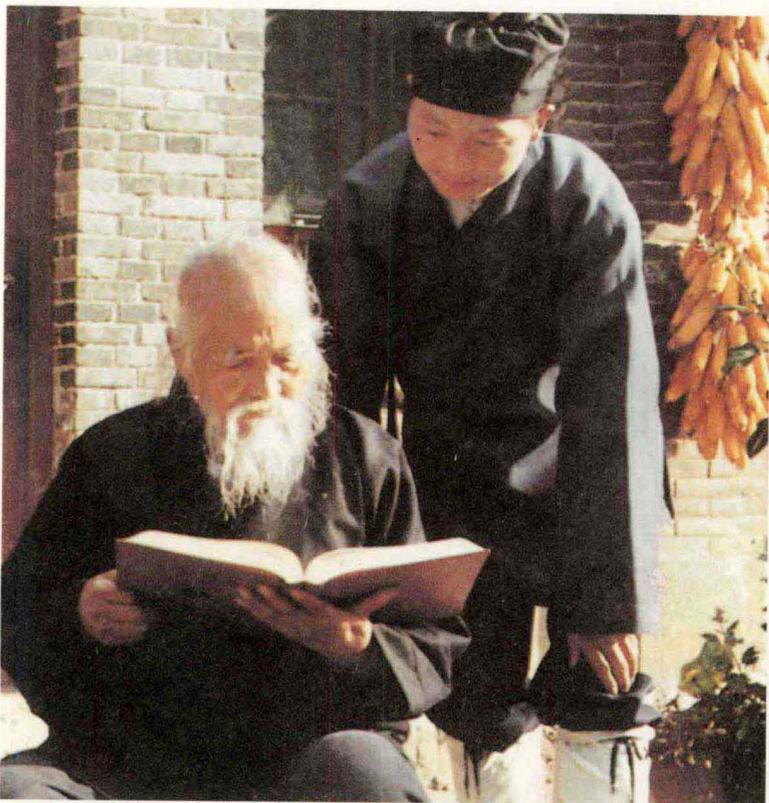
Pickle, tribute tea, kiwi fruit wine and stewed chicken with ginkgoes are called the "Four Superb Products of Qingcheng."



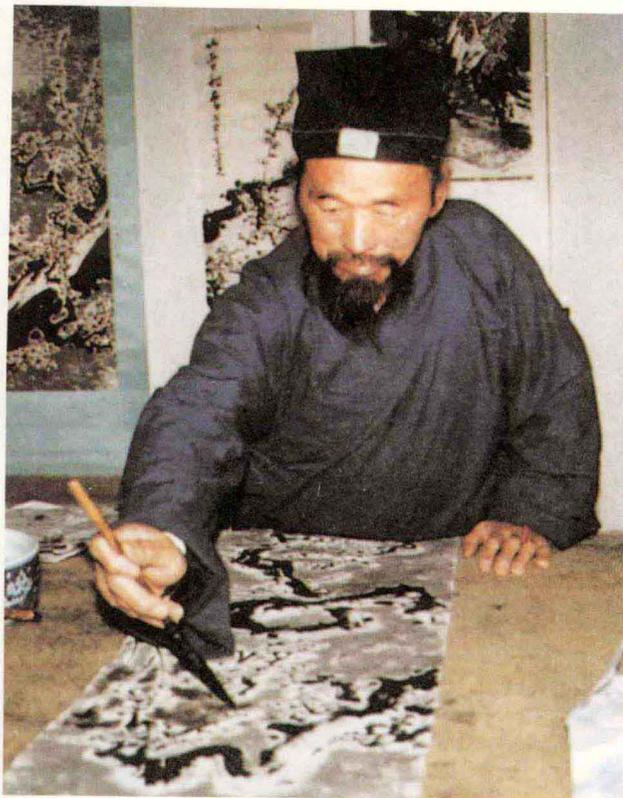
Young Taoist nuns

Nuns and priests are all equals in the eyes of Taoism.





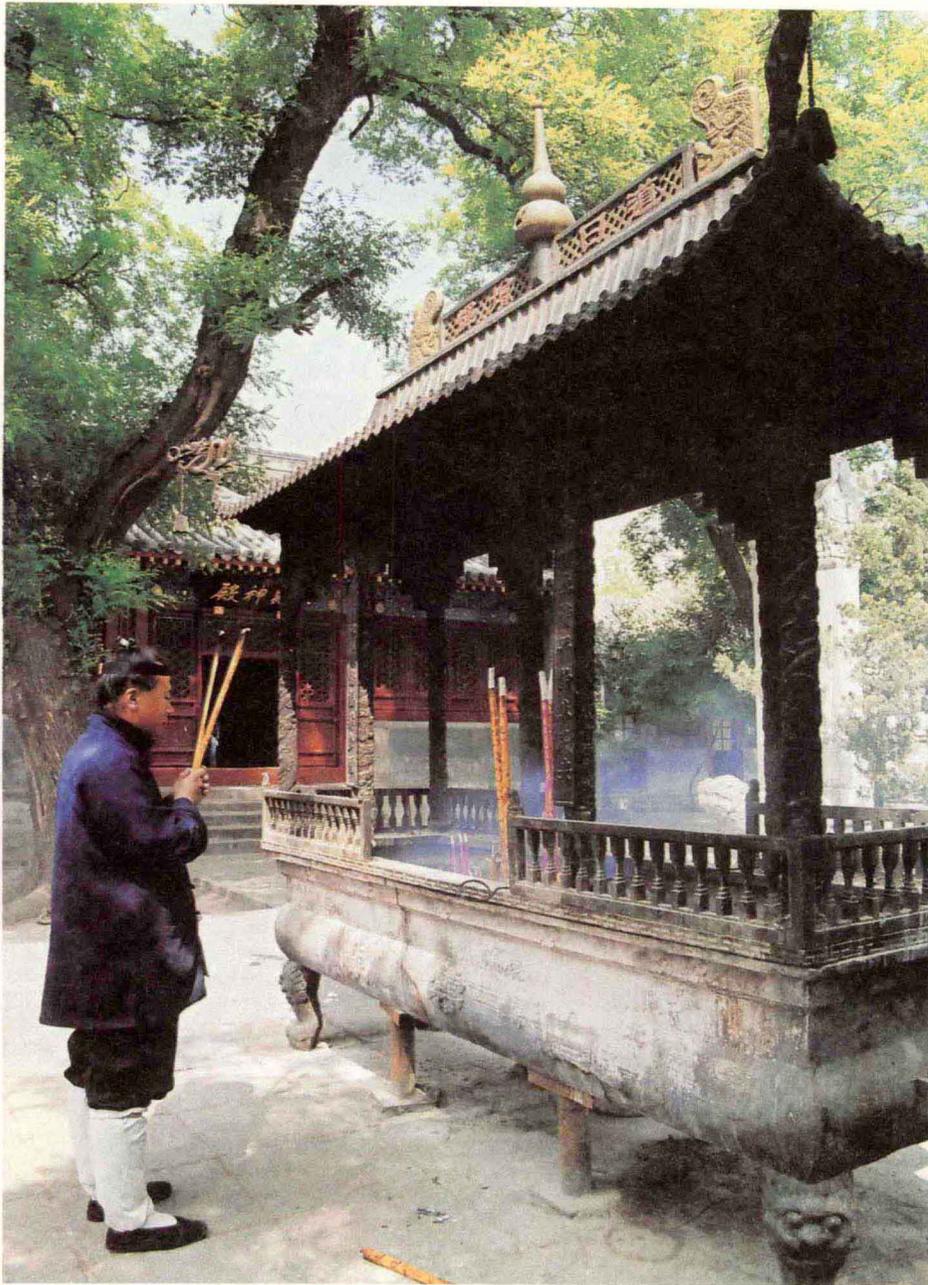
An old priest is reading Taoist scriptures



Chief priest Sun Mingrui is making a wash painting of plum blossoms

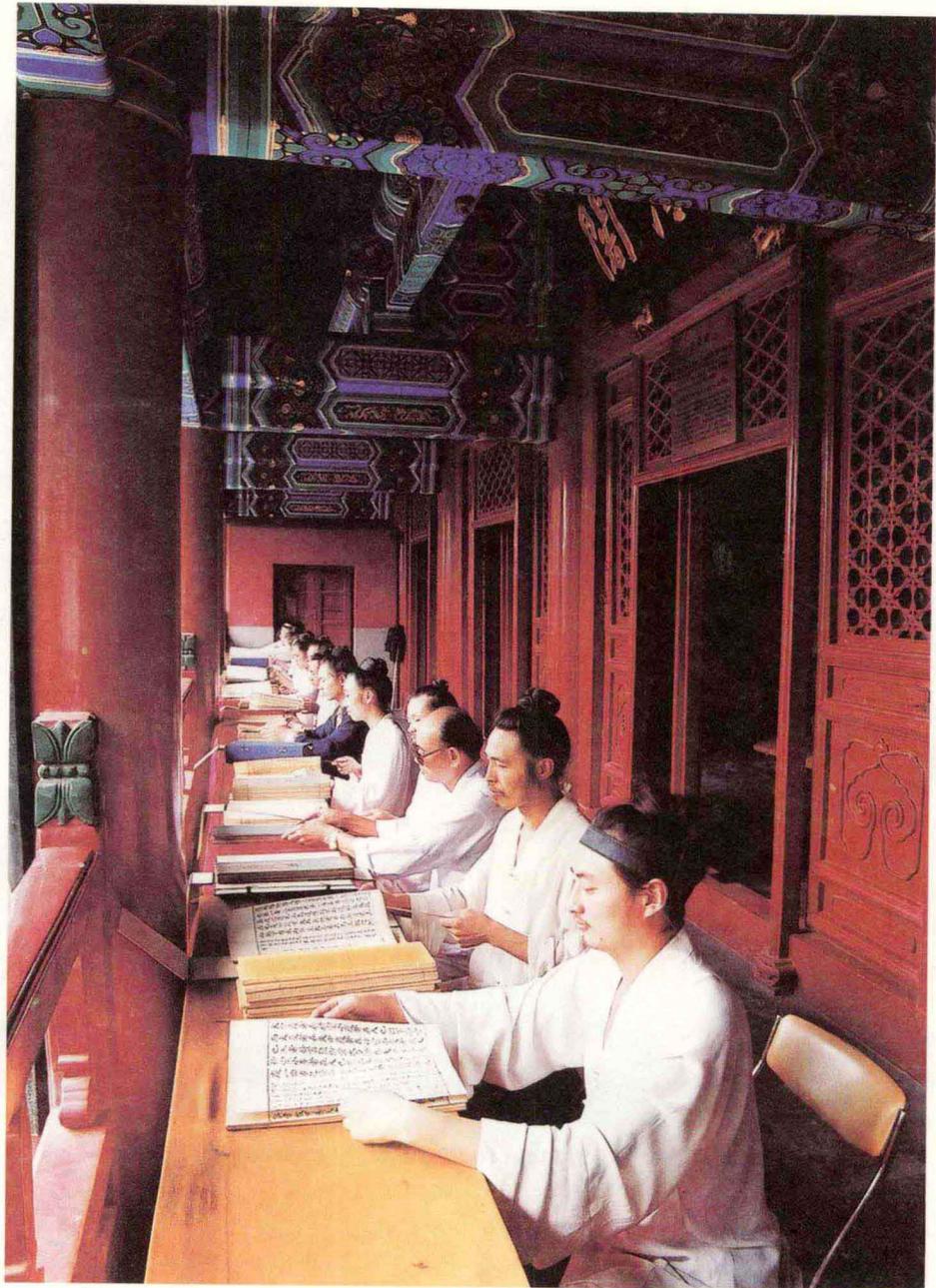


An old Taoist nun is playing the zither



A Taoist priest is burning incense in the early morning

Priests are airing in Beijing's Baiyun Temple the *Zhengtong Collected Taoist Scriptures* compiled during the reign of Zhengtong (1436-1449) in the Ming Dynasty. As a rule, on the sixth day of the sixth lunar month each year, priests of the temple air Taoist classics





A Taoist priest is practicing kung fu in the early morning



A boy member (front) of the Mount Wudang Taoist Music and Wushu Team is performing the children's kung fu

Besides doing breathing exercises and taking food as tonic, in Taoism's belief practicing kung fu is also a very important way to achieve the goal of health preservation. The Nei Chia Ch'uan, originated by priest Zhang Sanfeng on Mount Wudang, has enjoyed great renown. And T'ai Chi Ch'uan, a soft, internal martial art, whose origin some people associated with Zhang, has gained worldwide popularity.

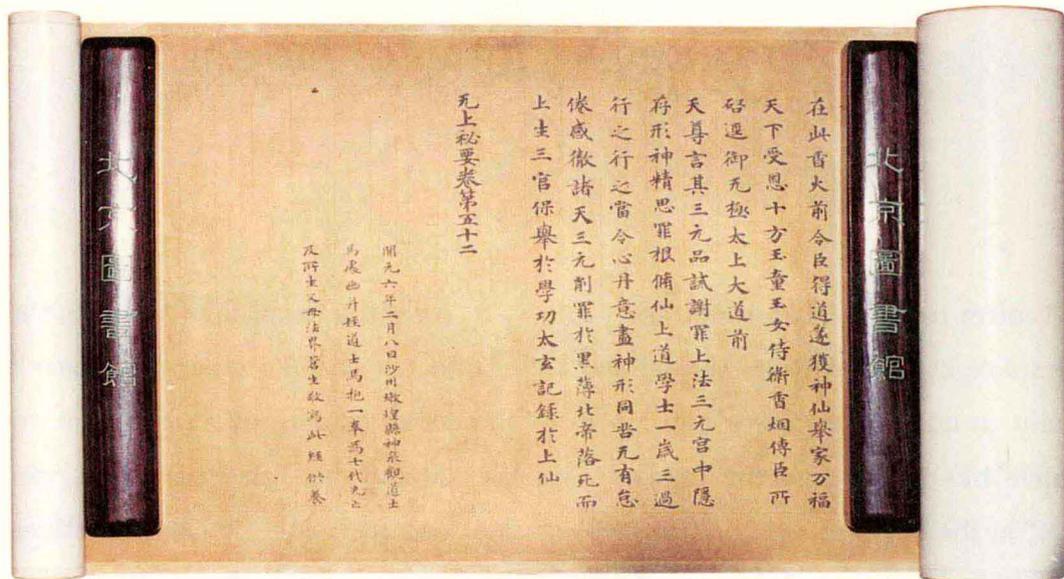


A contingent of Taoist priests is being inspected at the 1999 National Day celebrations

6. Abstruse Doctrines of Taoism

Initially Taoism regarded Lao-tzu's *Tao Te Ching* as its sole classic. With its spread and development in later ages, more and more classics have been added to the religion's "repertoire." In the eighth century, Xuanzong, the sixth emperor of the Tang Dynasty, ordered some scholars to compile the *Kaiyuan Collected Taoist Scriptures*, the first of its kind in history. The later dynasties of Song, Kin, Yuan and Ming followed suit, leading to the constant expansion of the collected Taoist scriptures. The extant *Zhengtong Collected Taoist Scriptures* and *Wanli Continuation of Collected Taoist Scriptures*, both published in the Ming Dynasty, amount to 5,485 volumes.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, studies on Taoism's history and doctrines entered a new stage, witnessing the publication of Taoist periodicals, monographs and academic papers in large quantities and the convention of a series of international symposiums. In the 1990s an *Unofficial Taoist Scriptures* came off the press, containing Taoist classics discovered in Dunhuang through archaeological excavations and those not included in the *Collected Taoist Scriptures*. In addition, the new edition of *China's Collected Taoist Scriptures* compiled by the Chinese Taoist Association came out in 2003.



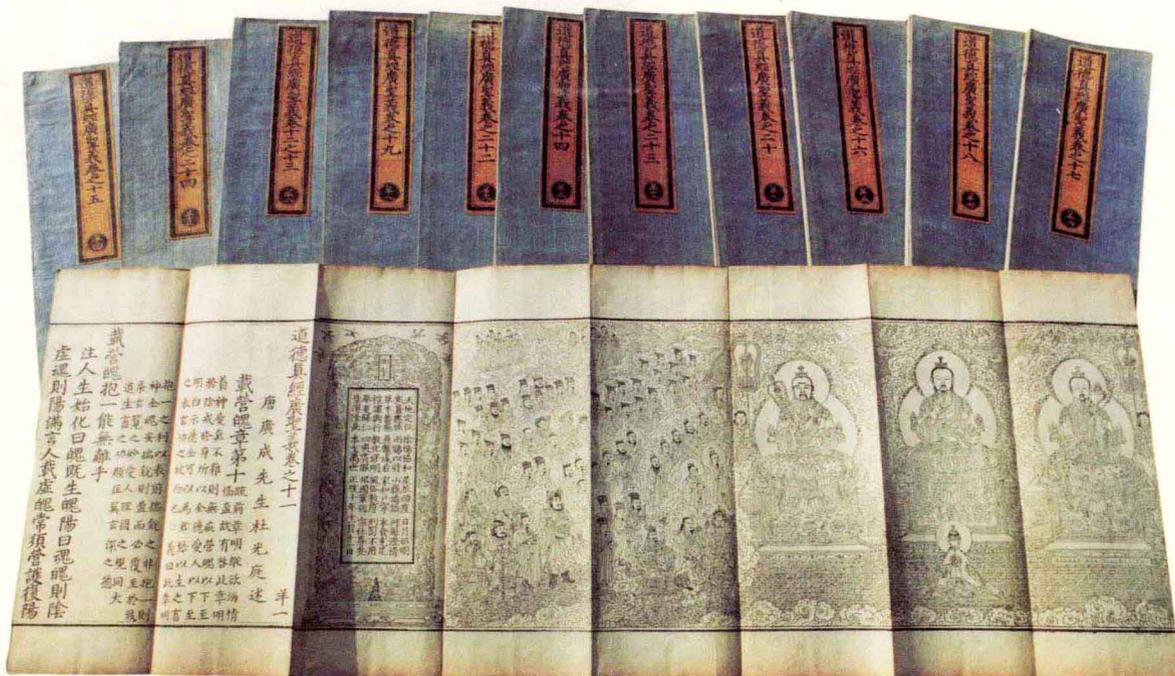
Wushang Esoteric Gists, published in the sixth year of Kaiyuan (718) during the Tang Dynasty, is an important Taoist classic

The Song Dynasty edition of *Seven Bamboo Strips of the Cloudy Satchel*



The Ming Dynasty edition of *Zhengtong Collected Taoist Scriptures*

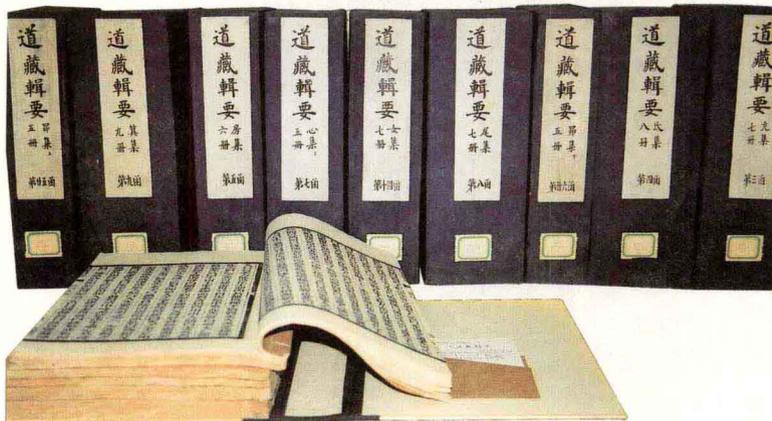
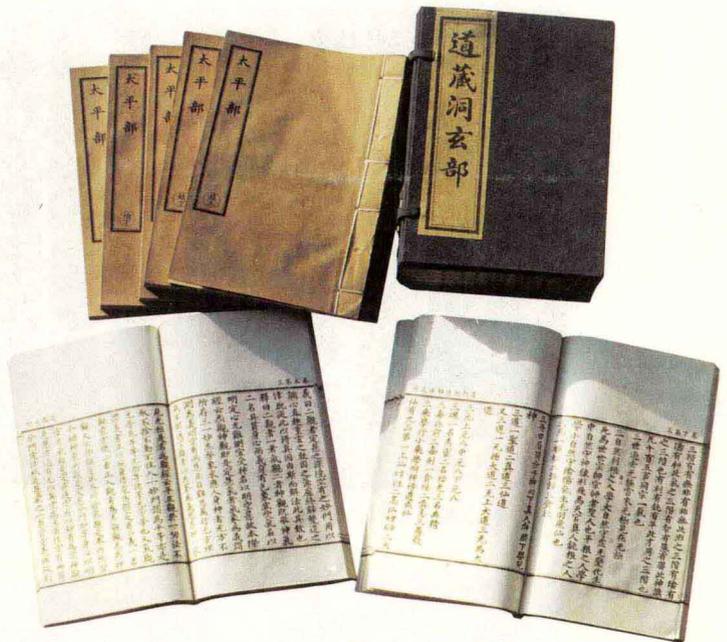




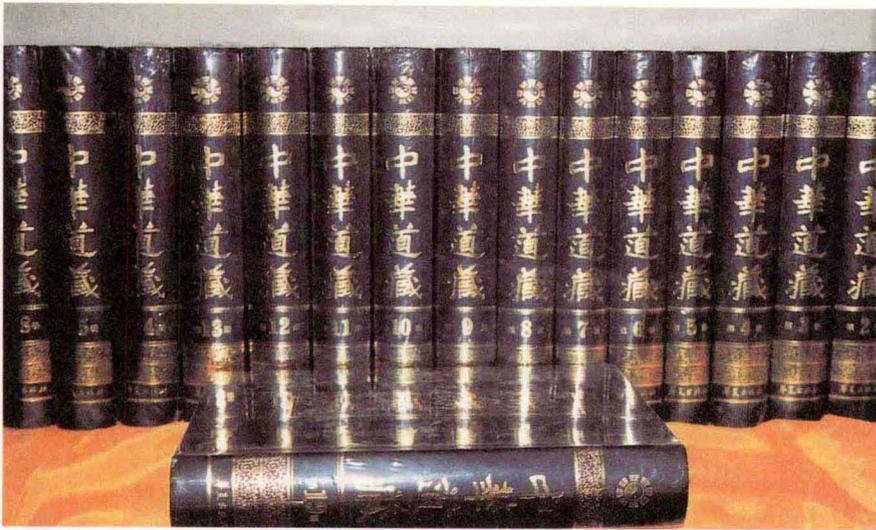
The Ming Dynasty edition of *Zhengtong Collected Taoist Scriptures* kept in Beijing's Baiyun Temple

Zhengtong Collected Taoist Scriptures was published in the 10th year of Zhengtong (1445). *Wanli Continuation of Collected Taoist Scriptures* was compiled by Zhang Guoxiang and published in the 35th year of Wanli (1607). The two Taoist "encyclopedias" of Ming Dynasty amount to a total 5,485 volumes.

The reduced edition of *Zhengtong Collected Taoist Scriptures*, photoprinted by Hanfenlou Press, kept in Beijing's Baiyun Temple



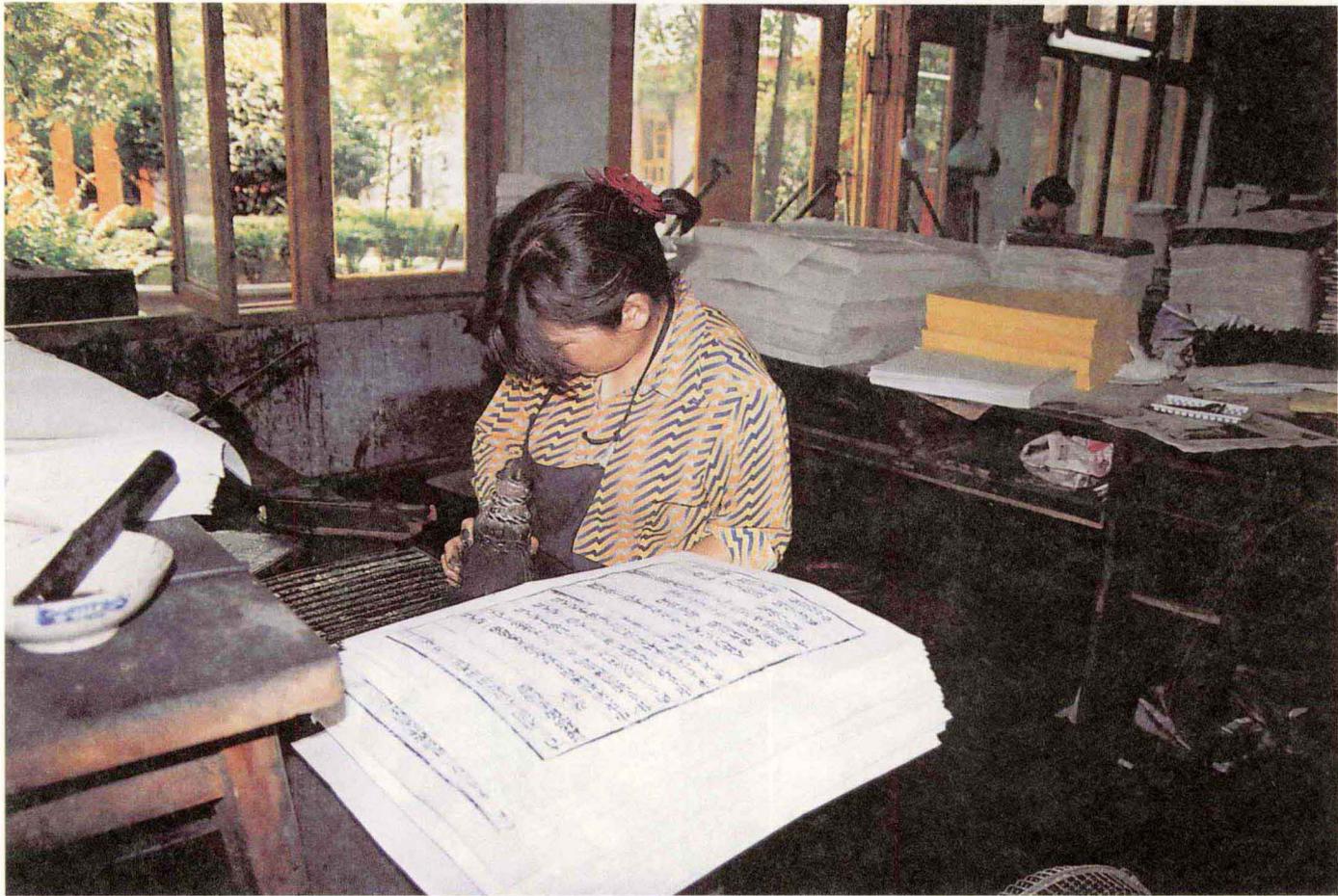
The photo-offset copy of *Zhengtong Collected Taoist Scriptures* by Hanfenlou Press



The 2003 edition of *China's Collected Taoist Scriptures*



Taoist books and periodicals compiled and published by the Chinese Taoist Association



A printer is printing *A Collection of Taoist Scriptures* in Qingyang Temple

A Collection of Taoist Scriptures, kept in Qingyang Temple of Chengdu City, was compiled and published in the late years of the Qing Dynasty.



The first symposium on Taoism and Chinese society's development and progress, co-sponsored by Shanghai Taoist Association and Chinese Taoist Association's Taoist Culture Institute, is held in Shanghai in 2002



Foreign disciples attending a seminar on Chinese Taoist culture

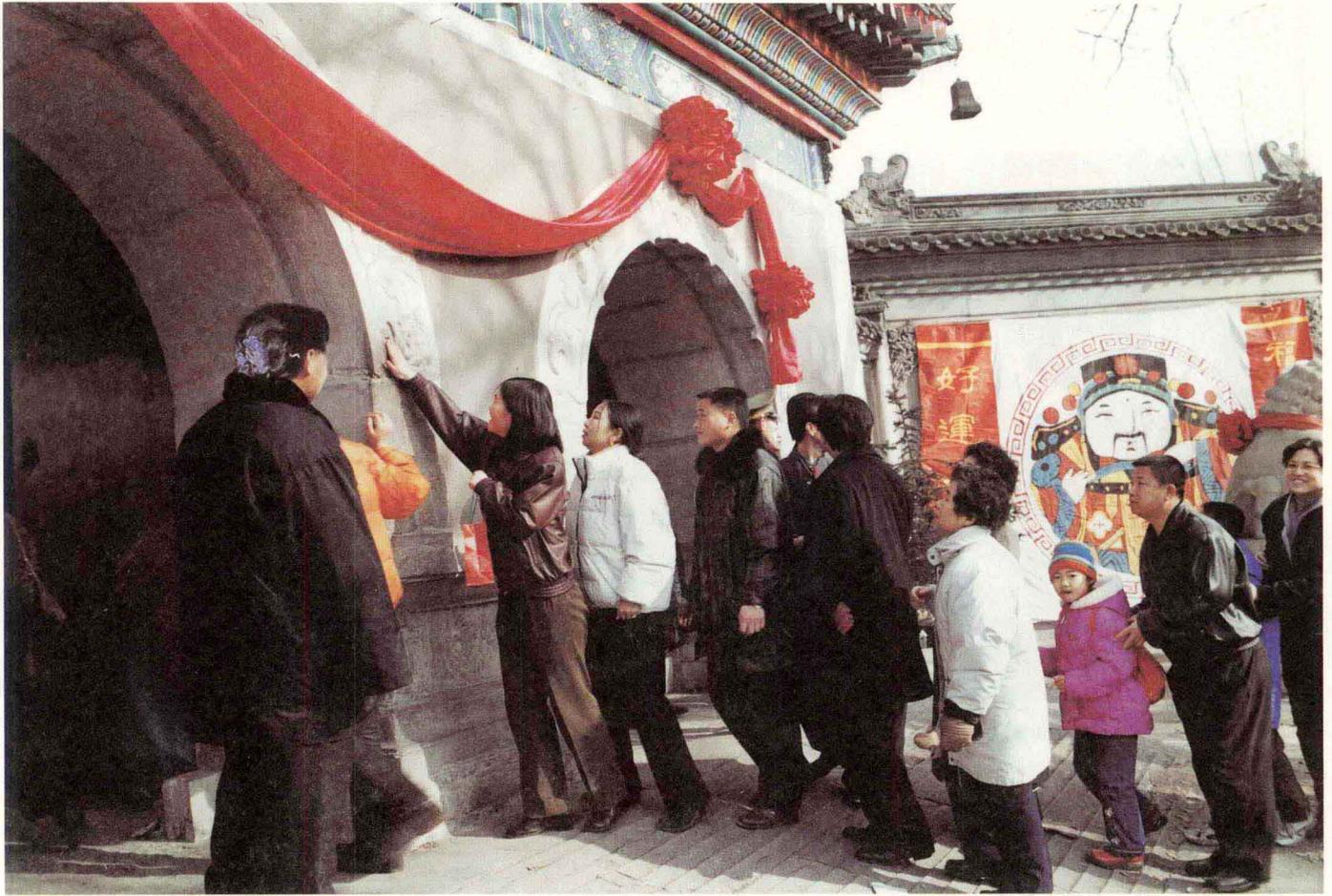
7. Temple Activities of Disciples

China has a long-standing history of holding temple fairs. Traditionally, people gathered in Buddhist or Taoist temples to celebrate certain religious festivals, while worshipping Buddha or Taoist gods, entertaining themselves, or doing

business. For instance, the Spring Festival fair in Beijing's Baiyun Temple, with a history of several hundred years, has become an important event of amusement and trading for the city's residents during the holiday.

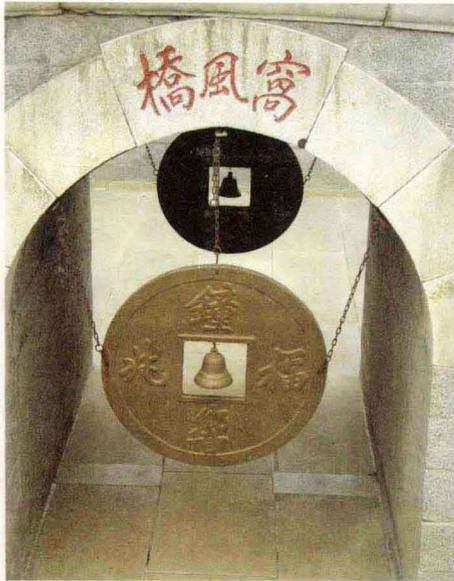


Visitors line up for tickets at the booking office of the folk custom annual party in Beijing's Baiyun Temple

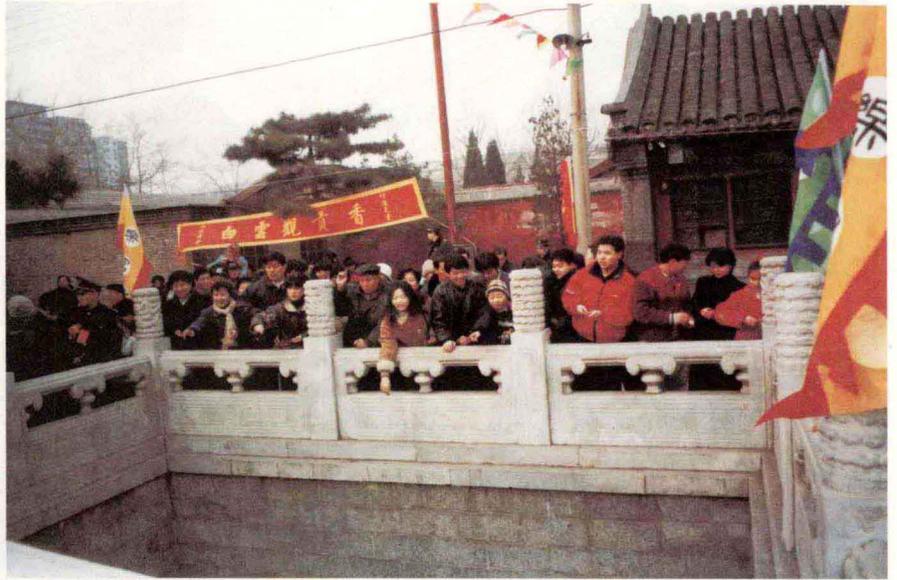


Visitors queue up to touch a monkey in relief in Baiyun Temple for gods' blessings

There are three monkeys in relief located in different places in Beijing's Baiyun Temple. Tradition has it that by touching all of them during the Spring Festival, one can get blessed and succeeds in everything in the new year.



“Jinqianyan” in Baiyun Temple

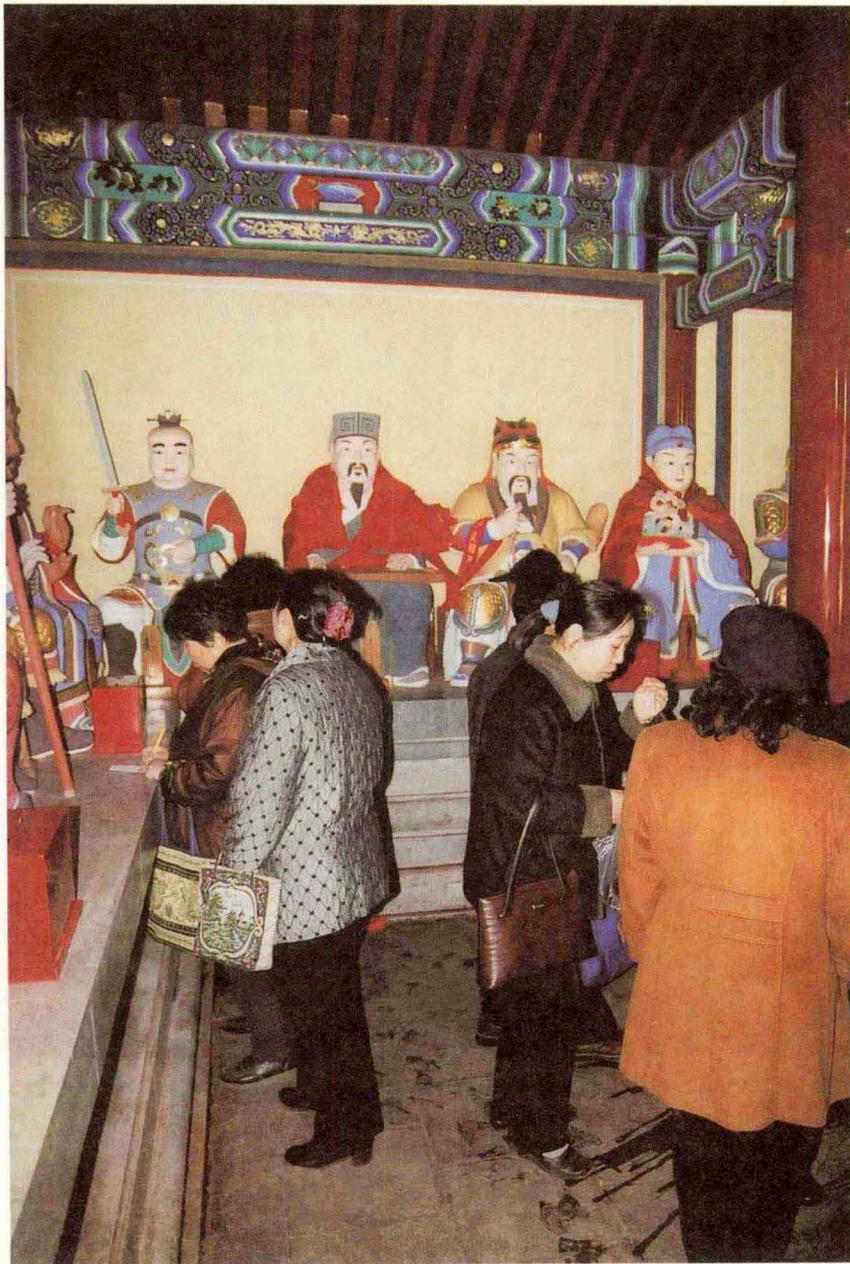


Visitors throw coins to hit “Jinqianyan” for good fortune

A huge model copper coin, with a bronze bell called “Jinqianyan” in its central hole, is hung on each side of Wofeng Bridge's arch in front of Divine General's Palace in Beijing's Baiyun Temple. Tradition goes that by throwing a coin to hit “Jinqianyan” during the Spring Festival, one can be as lucky as he or she wishes in the new year.



Visitors burn incense and make vows to the gods of wealth at a temple fair



Visitors praying at Yuanchen Palace
in Beijing's Baiyun Temple

In Taoist mythology, 60 constellation gods take turns to be on duty in the Sexagenary Cycle. People refer to the duty god in the year in which he or she was born as Benming Yuanchen. As a folk custom, on the seventh and eighth days of the first lunar month, people come to pray their Benming Yuanchen enshrined at Baiyun Temple's Yuanchen Palace for success and good luck in the new year, which is called *shunxing*. The history of *shunxing* in Beijing can be traced back to the Liao Dynasty (916-1127).

Pilgrims burn incense at Baiyun Temple in Shanghai





Visitors watch the inaugural ceremony of an abbot being held in Beijing's Baiyun Temple in 2000

8. Active Taoist Association

*E*stablished in 1957, the Chinese Taoist Association, along with its local branches, is the first Taoist organization in China's history that contains all sects in Taoism. Its leadership is composed of the nation's Taoist celebrities. A patriotic, non-governmental organization, it has been very helpful in assisting the government to carry out the policy of religious liberty and uniting Taoists across the country to actively participate in socialist construction, and thus enjoying a high

reputation within the Taoist circles.

A number of celebrated Taoists have been elected deputies to the People's Congress or members of the Political Consultative Conference. With those from other circles, they took part in the deliberation and administration of state affairs and did their bit in modernizing the country and safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of Taoists.

中國道教協會籌備委員會成立紀念 1956. 11.26.

新會



Group photo of members of the Preparatory Committee for the Chinese Taoist Association

The Preparatory Committee for the Chinese Taoist Association was set up in 1956. It's composed of 23 well-known figures within Taoist circles, including abbot Yue Chongdai of Taiqing Temple in Shenyang, Wang Yueqing of Shangqing Temple on Mount Longhu in Jiangxi, Yi Xinying of Changdao Temple on Mount Qingcheng in Chengdu, Meng Minghui of Huoshen (God of Fire) Temple in Beijing, Liu Zhiwei of Guandi Temple in Front Gate of Beijing, Li Xigeng of Dajing Temple in Shanghai, Yang Xiangfu of Baiyun Temple in Shanghai, Qiao Xinqing of Baxian (Eight Celestials) Temple in Xi'an, Wu Rongfu of Dadao Temple in Hankou of Wuhan, Han Shousong of Qingyun Temple in Nanchang, Shang Shilian of Dai Temple on Mount Tai in Shandong, Taoist theoretician Chen Yingning, etc.



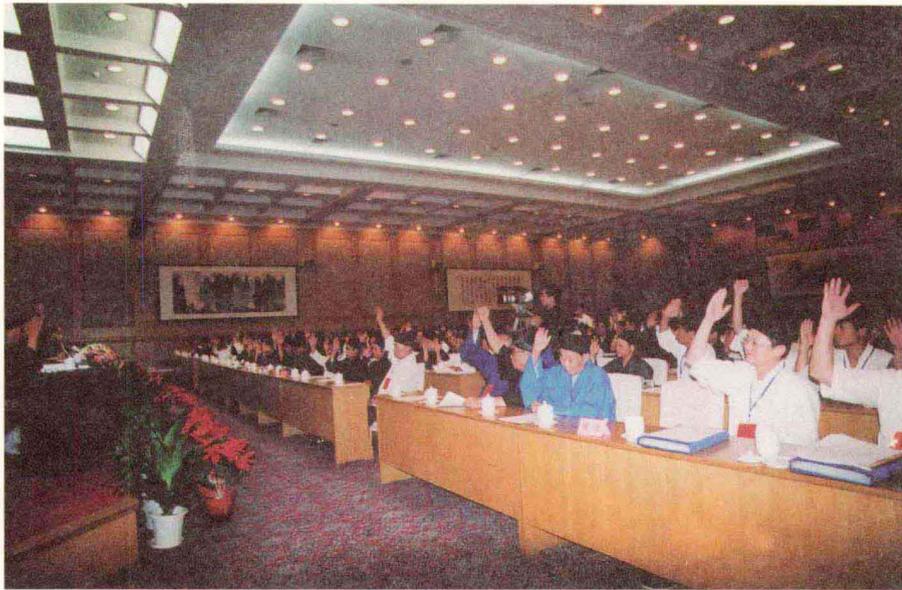
Group photo of attendees of the 1997 commemoration meeting of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Taoist Association



Taoist priests contribute money to help fight the disastrous flood of 1998



A Taoist rally to commend advanced units and individuals



The 7th National Conference held by the Chinese Taoist Association in Beijing , June 2005



A jubilee celebration of Hong Kong's return to the motherland, co-sponsored by the Chinese Taoist Association and Baiyun Temple in Beijing



Personalities of religious circles hold a symposium in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of victory in the world's anti-Fascist war and China's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression

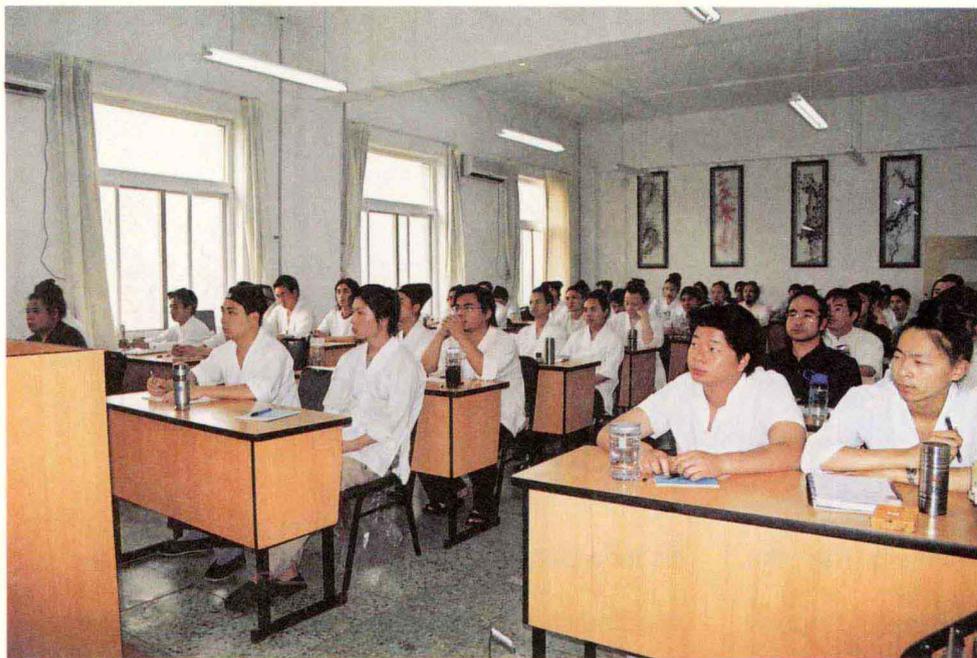


Ren Farong, president of the Chinese Taoist Association, and vice presidents Zhang Jiyu, Huang Zhi'an, Liu Huaiyuan and Wang Quanlin attended a symposium in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of victory in the world's anti-Fascist war and China's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, which was held by personalities of religious circles on August 14, 2005

9. Training of Young Taoist Priests

Being apprentice to old masters was the traditional way for young Taoist priests to grow into fine priesthood. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese Taoist Association sponsored the first class for Taoist priests' further studies in September 1962. Based on this, the association established in 1991 the Chinese Taoist College -- the first of

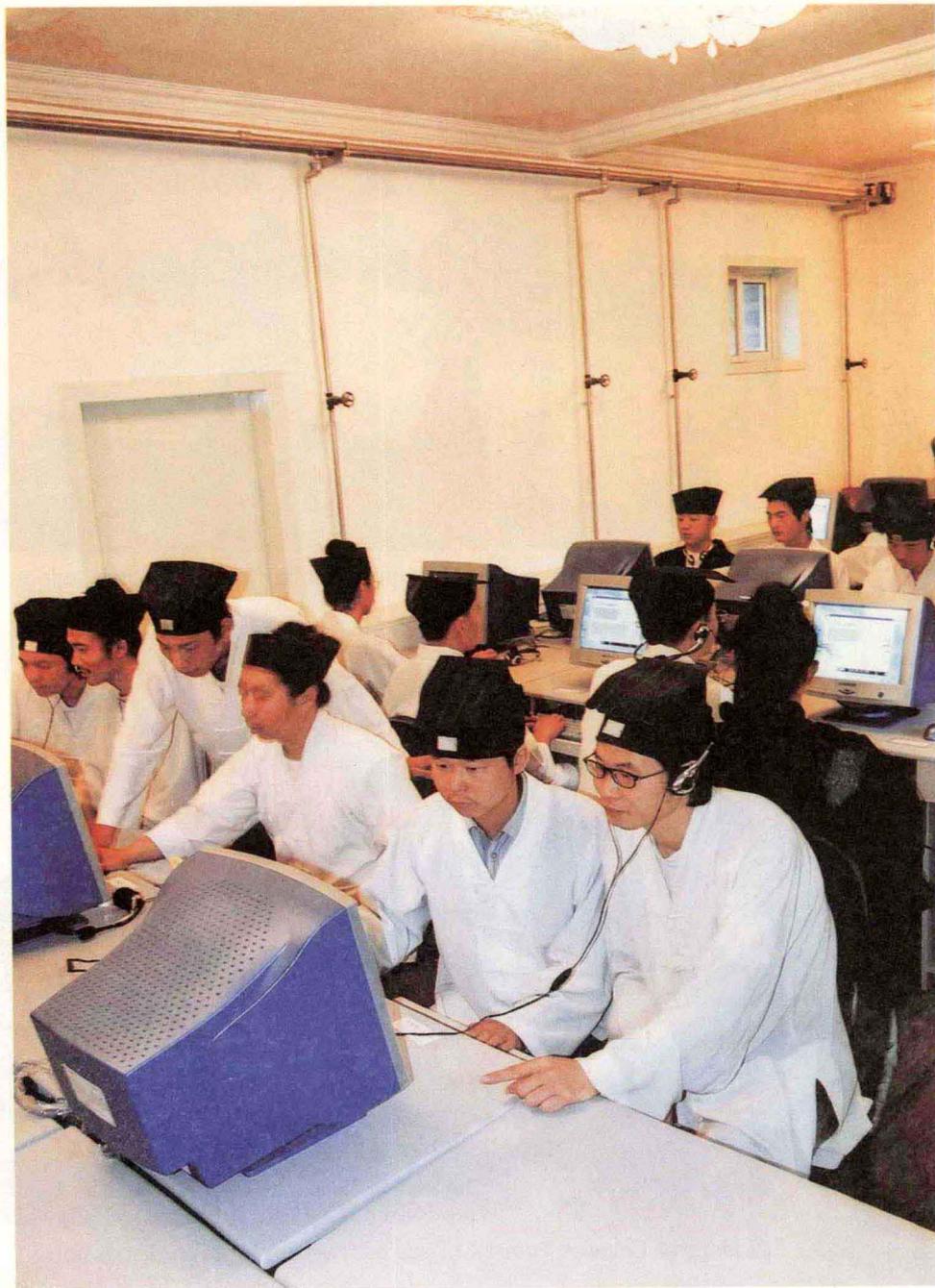
its kind in history to offer classroom teaching, and branch schools in Shanghai and other places. Besides Taoist history, classics, rites and health preservation, students have to study history, philosophy, literature, foreign languages as well as temple management. Large numbers of competent Taoist personnel have been brought up.



Students of Chinese Taoist College are attending a class



Group picture of the graduating "Shanghai class for further studies" at Chinese Taoist College



Students of Chinese Taoist College are attending a computer class



Outstanding nun students are commended at Chinese Taoist College



Students of Chinese Taoist College are holding a group discussion

10. Domestic and International Exchanges

*T*aoism, a religion originating in China, has many followers in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. The government has made a principle of "one country, two systems" for the three regions and carried out a religious policy of "non-subordination, non-interference and mutual respect" there. Over the past half a century, the mainland, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan have witnessed frequent friendly exchanges among their Taoist disciples.

As a result of strengthened cultural

exchanges with foreign countries, more and more Chinese people chose to reside abroad. Taoism has been spread among Chinese communities in 56 countries and regions, and some Westerners have become Taoist followers. A close link has been established between mainland and overseas Taoist disciples. The Chinese Taoist Association and its branches have sent delegations to visit many countries, aiming to enhance mutual understanding and friendship.



Former German Chancellor
Helmut Kohl visits Baiyun
Temple in Beijing



Former Austrian president and
his wife visit Baiyun Temple in
Beijing

A delegation from the Chinese Taoist Association pays a courtesy call to Hong Kong Taoist Federation

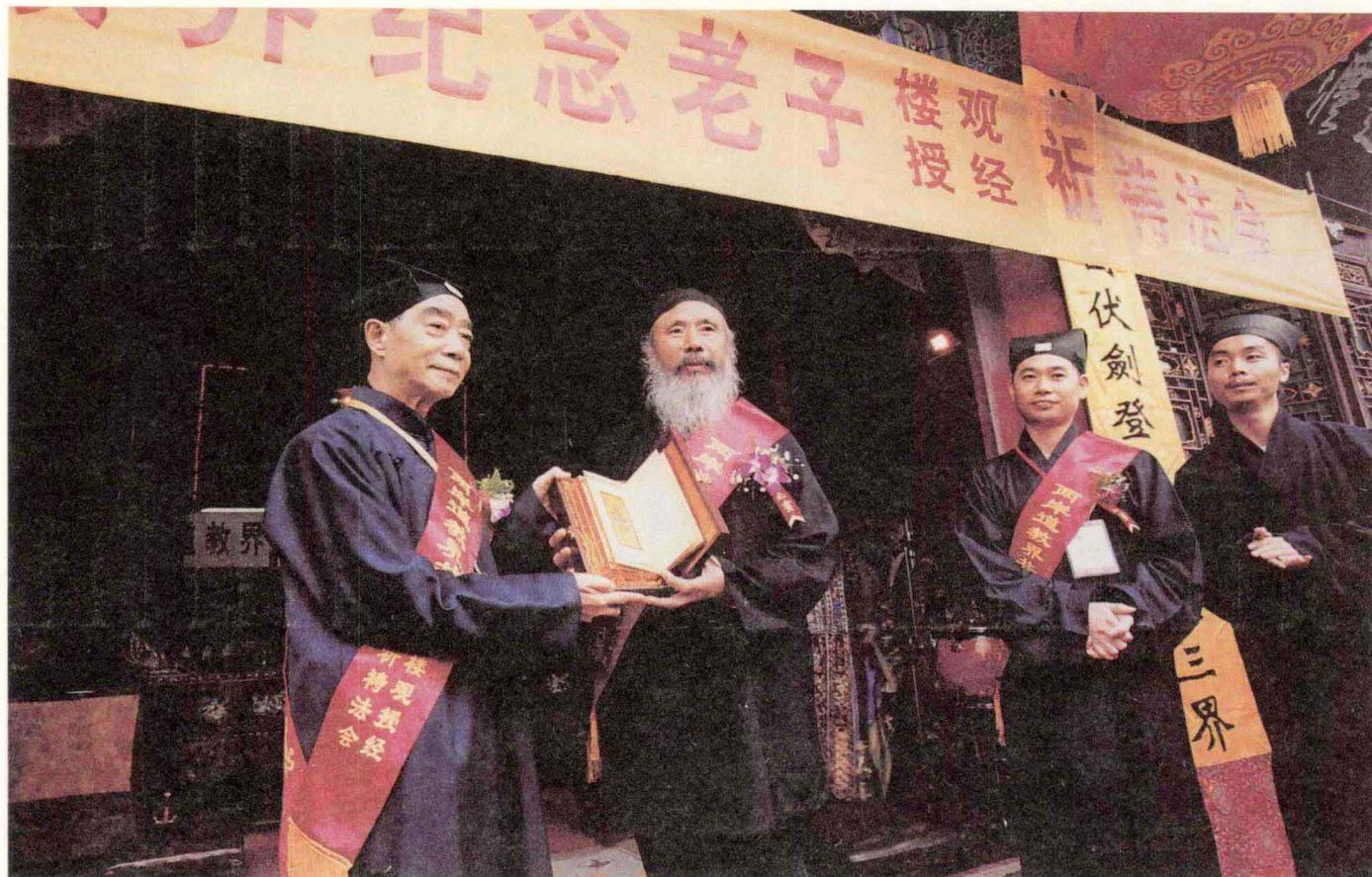


Taoist priests queue up to welcome a delegation from Hong Kong's Fung Ying Seen Koon to attend the Luotian ceremony held in Beijing's Baiyun Temple





Accompanied by Min Zhiting, former president of the Chinese Taoist Association, and Vice President Zhang Jiyu, Qiu Chuanghuan, president of Taiwan's Foundation for the Development of Social Morality, Culture and Education, burns joss sticks at Qizhen Palace in Beijing's Baiyun Temple



Taoist disciples from both sides of the Taiwan Straits jointly celebrate Lao-tzu's birthday

Ren Farong, president of the Chinese Taoist Association, presents Lao-tzu's *Tao Te Ching* to Zhang Cheng, secretary-general of Taiwan's Chinese Taoist Federation.



Foreigners are watching a Taoist service performed in a temple on Mount Laojun in Xinjin County, Sichuan Province



Group photo of foreign Taoist disciples taken in Beijing's Baiyun Temple



Taoist masters of Sichuan are performing the *kaiguang* ceremony for a statue of god in Sanqing Palace in Miri, Malaysia



A delegation from the Chinese Taoist Association attends a welcome banquet at the inauguration ceremony of Sanqing Palace on Mount Lotus in Miri, Malaysia to pray for world peace



Vice President of the Chinese Taoist Association Zhang Jiyu and counselor Xie Zongxin attends the world convention on environmental protection by religious circles, which was held in the United Kingdom



Gusu Taoist Music Ensemble of Suzhou is playing Taoist music during the 4th Singapore Taoist Day



Kazakhstan's First Lady and her entourage visit Beijing's Baiyun Temple in 2004

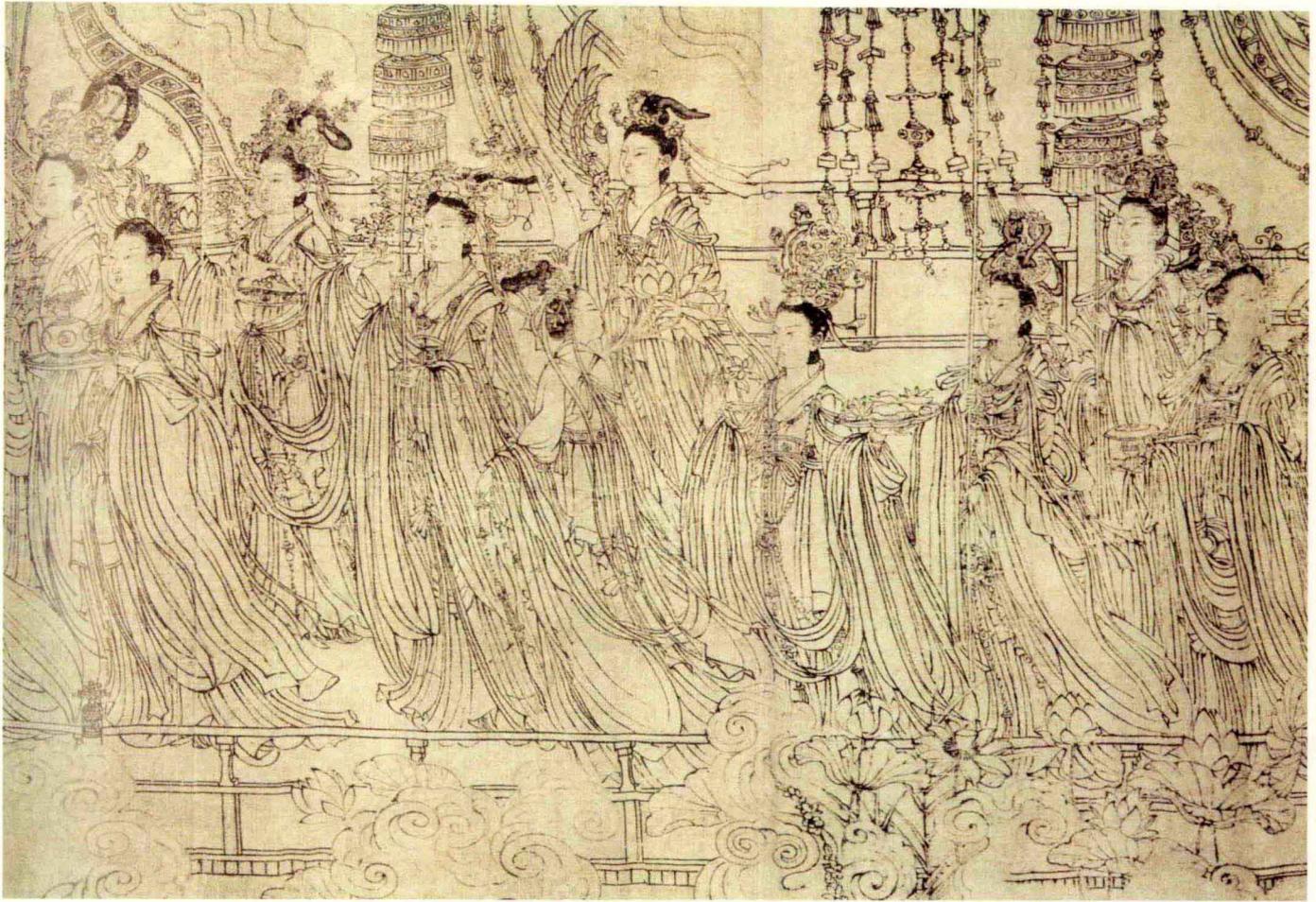
11. Unique Taoist Art

A new, enchanting Taoist art came into being with Taoism's spread, which had produced a great impact on other forms of traditional Chinese art. Such ideas as "going back to nature" and "yearning to become immortals" are characteristic of Taoism's aesthetic thought. Myths, color, designs and symbols peculiar to the

religion have been widely employed in Taoist buildings, sculptures, paintings and attire. Ancient court dance and music, as well as music and sacrificial rites of ethnic minorities living in southwest China, have been largely kept in Taoist music and rituals.



Picture of Lao-tze Leaving Hangu Pass
(by Chao Buzhi, Song Dynasty)



Scroll of Eighty-seven Immortals (partial, by Wu Daozi, Tang Dynasty)

In this masterpiece of figure painter Wu Daozi, immortals forge ahead in proper order. It presents a gorgeous scene of the heavenly court.



Yuan Dynasty mural in
Shuishen (God of Water)
Temple on Mount Huo in
Hongtong County, Shanxi
Province

The mural depicts a theatrical
troupe on stage. It provides
important materials for
studies on the classical dramas
of the Yuan Dynasty.



Goddess of Earth (part of a mural in Yongle Temple in Shanxi's Ruicheng County, Yuan Dynasty)

Goddess of Earth, also known as "Empress Houtu" among the people, is one of the four deities assisting Jade Emperor in governing Heaven and Earth. She takes charge of human fertility and landscape on the Earth.



Papercut of Eight Celestials Going Across the Sea

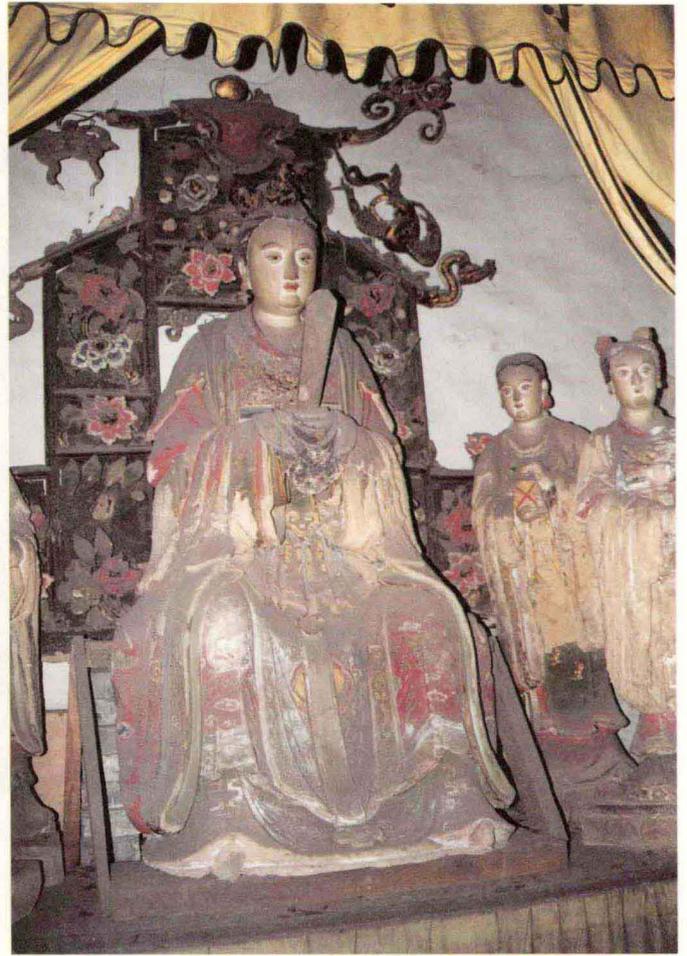


A robe decorated with the "Yuluoxiao Platform" pattern worn by a Taoist master at a religious ceremony

Yuluoxiao Platform is said to be where the Original Divinity ascended the throne. Embroidered on the back of a robe worn by a Taoist master at a religious ceremony, the pattern is usually decorated with auspicious clouds, white cranes, golden dragons and Chinese characters of longevity. Five gods stand above a pagoda in the middle. On the right side of the five gods is a jade hare standing for the Moon; on the left side a golden bird for the Sun. At its periphery are 28 golden stars symbolizing 28 constellations.

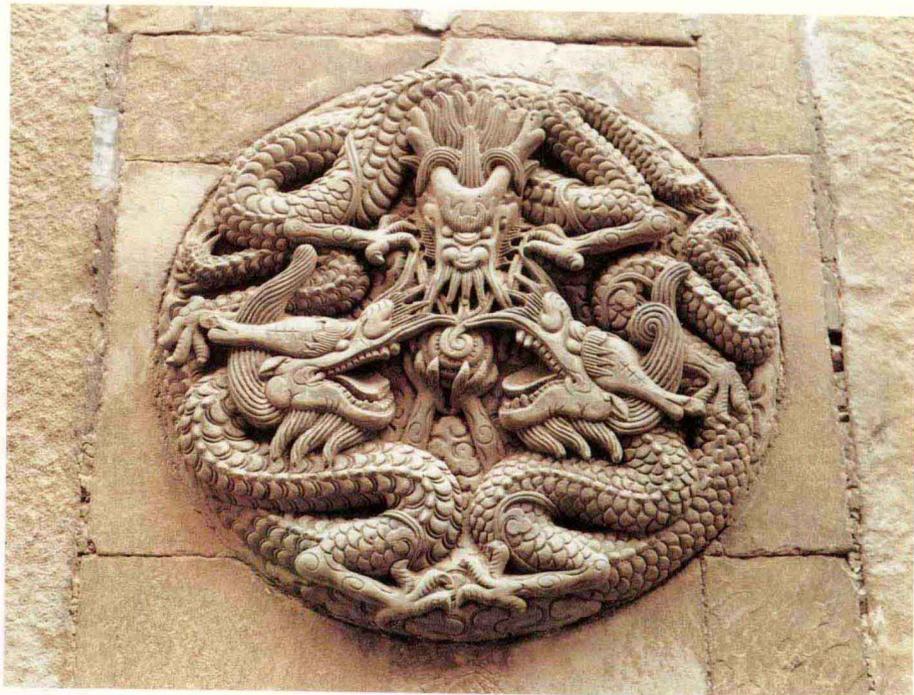


Statues of maidservants (Song Dynasty) in Shengmu (Goddess) Palace of Jin Temple in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province. Yi-jiang, consort of King Wu of the Western Zhou Dynasty, is enshrined and worshiped here



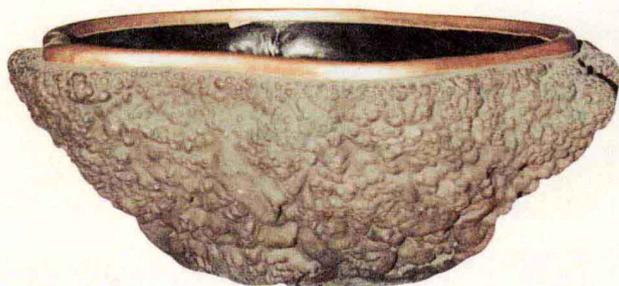
Statue of Empress Houtu in Houtu Temple in Jiexiu, Shanxi Province (clay sculpture, Ming Dynasty)

Dragons in relief in Baiyun Temple of
Jiaxian County, Shaanxi Province



A relief sculpture in Xiwangmu (Queen
Mother of the Western Heavens)
Temple in Jingchuan County, Gansu
Province





A wooden bowl bestowed by Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty to Beijing's Baiyun Temple

The bowl was made of a tree tumor. Emperor Qianlong allegedly promised that the temple's priests, if running out of food, could beg alms with it in the imperial palace.

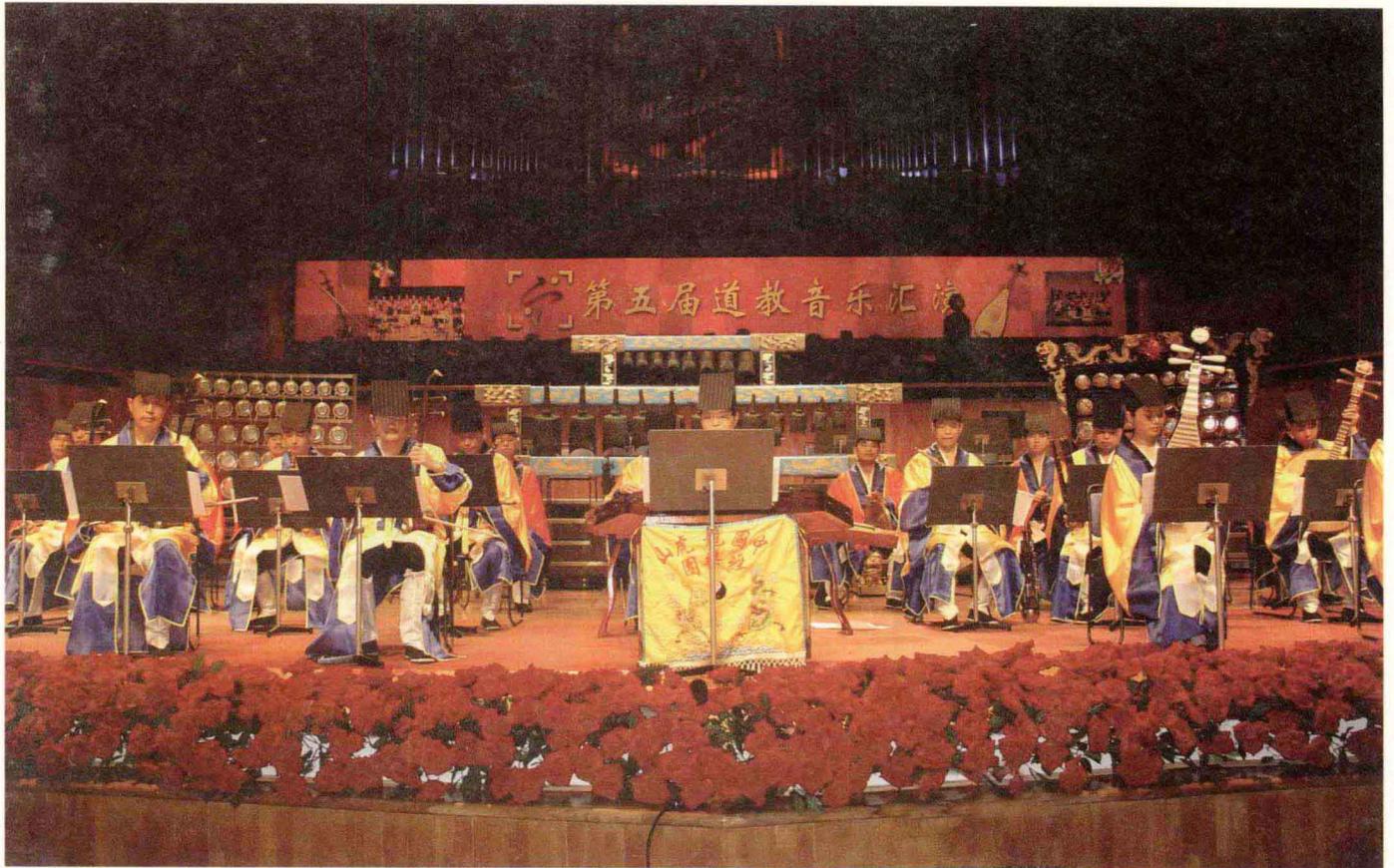


A gilded bronze censer in Beijing's Baiyun Temple

It was made during the reign of Jiajing (1522-1566) in the Ming Dynasty. Forty-three dragons in high relief were carved on its body.

A stone censer decorated
with relief sculptures in
Jiaxian County, Shaanxi
Province





An ensemble from Heavenly Master's Mansion on Mount Longhu is playing Taoist music



A performance of the ancient chime bells