

# Daoism in the Twentieth Century

## Between Eternity and Modernity

Edited by David A. Palmer and Xun Liu

*Published in association with the University of California Press*

“This pioneering work not only explores the ways in which Daoism was able to adapt and reinvent itself during China’s modern era, but sheds new light on how Daoism helped structure the development of Chinese religious culture. The authors also demon-

strate Daoism’s role as a world religion, particularly in terms of emigration and identity. The book’s sophisticated approach transcends previous debates over how to define the term ‘Daoism,’ and should help inspire a new wave of research on Chinese religious movements.” **PAUL R. KATZ**, Academia Sinica, Taiwan

In *Daoism in the Twentieth Century* an interdisciplinary group of scholars explores the social history and anthropology of Daoism from the late nineteenth century to the present, focusing on the evolution of traditional forms of practice and community, as well as modern reforms and reinventions both within China and on the global stage. Essays investigate ritual specialists, body cultivation and meditation traditions, monasticism, new religious movements, state-sponsored institutionalization, and transnational networks.

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New Perspectives on Chinese Culture and Society, 2

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**XUN LIU**

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NEW PERSPECTIVES ON CHINESE CULTURE AND SOCIETY

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*Edited by*

DAVID A. PALMER and XUN LIU



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A note on romanization and Chinese characters: We use *hanyu pinyin* for transliterations, except in cases where alternative spellings are more common (for example, Chiang Kai-shek and Kuomintang/KMT). The Chinese characters for proper names and specialized terms are given upon first occurrence in each chapter.

*D.A.P. and X.L.*

# Foreword

It is as if the alternation between the positive and the negative—the principle of Daoist cosmology—also is a key for understanding its history. For instance: when the early ecclesia of the Heavenly Master was banished from its homeland in northern Sichuan, its dioceses spread all over China, and what was at first a disaster transformed itself into triumph. Later, when in the fourth century CE North China was massively converted to Buddhism, the ecclesia began to flourish in the South. But when the North reverted to Daoism, the South changed also and embraced Buddhism.

The Tang saw the revival of the classical *ru* 儒 learning and henceforward it was the “Three Teachings” 三教 that interacted, borrowed from one another, and alternatively occupied the limelight. Daoism’s fortunes for a time were high under the Yuan, only to end in the persecution of 1282. Then Buddhism rose to eminence, but the founding of the national Ming dynasty—by a former Buddhist monk—advanced the *ru*. Over time, a certain homeostasis developed among the three. Although their fortunes alternated, each one retained its own niche, with that of Daoism being local society. The Three Teachings became to be seen as the three legs of the tripod symbolizing the state: none should be lacking. When we refer to “Chinese religion,” it is this composite institution we have in mind.

The very stability of these religious institutions rendered all forms of innovation difficult. The leaders of the recognized Three Teachings branded all new organizations heterodox and prevented them from obtaining legal status. The resulting immobility created a situation of sclerosis and corruption that contributed greatly to the crisis of state institutions at the end of the Ming. The accidental victory of the “Manchus” in 1644 brought an even more conservative rule, and this caused the system to degenerate at an ever quicker pace. When, then, the Western powers finally appeared

with their opium “trade” and their militarily backed “religion,” modern China was born in the torment of material and cultural genocide.

Temples used to be the very heart of Chinese society and culture. Every village had one or several, every township hundreds and hundreds. Some temples in northern China were more than two thousand years old. The vast majority of temples were built and managed by local lay communities (*hui* 會). They were dedicated to one of the many gods and saints of the Chinese pantheon, while in principle they were home to all of them. Temples were established and mutually affiliated through the institution of the “division of incense” (*fenxiang* 分香). The resulting networks had ramifications throughout the nation. All of the temples, old or new, big or small, were the guardians and repositories of the nation’s history, of its ethics, of its culture in all its forms. For the individual, they offered free access for worship and established direct contact with the gods and saints through divination. Temples also organized or sponsored many communal activities.

For the consecration of the temples, the celebration of their festivals, the installation of their leadership, and for all other important community events, the *hui* invited their “Master,” the local Daoist scholar (*daoshi* 道士). As “Heaven’s Agent of Transformation” (*daitian xinghua* 代天行化), this Master provided guidance to the community and presided over the performance of the highly elaborate rituals. This was the *ke* 科, the same word as in *kexue* 科學, “science,” but here meaning not only “to classify” but “to give a grade” or “to promote” in harmony with the natural evolution of all beings. Through this *ke*, the temple and its community was received within the realm of the Dao. Without it, a local temple would be considered heterodox.

All this explains why the imperial edict ordering the “destruction of temples in order to create schools” (*huimiao banxue* 毀廟辦學) issued by the Hundred Day Reform of 1898 had such a terrible impact. It was senseless. It led to widespread abuses. Yet the measure was never rescinded and in the long run no temple was spared.

With the ruin of the temples, whether through transformation into schools and government agencies, through the confiscation of their property, or through organized or wanton destruction, the Daoist *ke* ceased to be meaningful. In due time it was forgotten to the extent that many educated people started to ignore its very existence.

As to Buddhism, the famous decree of 1898 did not spare the great monasteries and the imperial shrines. Their leaders turned to the Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧—a devout Buddhist—for protection. As is well known, Cixi

punished the young Guangxu 光緒 Emperor who had issued the decree by depriving him of all authority. But she could not stem the tide. Many monasteries had to close down, and just as with the temples, the trend continued unabatedly during most of the twentieth century. Almost no Buddhist monastery was spared.

In the wake of the abolition of temples came the abolition in 1905 of the official examination system. It put an end to the recruitment of officials on the basis of their proficiency in the classics and meant the end of Confucian scholarship as it had existed in China for more than two thousand years.

The adversities that Chinese religion now encountered were different and more profound than any of the previous tribulations that befell one or the other of the three religions. Here it was not just one of the components that was persecuted, but Chinese religion as a whole was abolished.

Marcel Granet noted that in China religion never became a distinct social function. Whereas some things were definitely more sacrosanct than others, there was nothing in public or in private life that was not sacred in some way. Hence, for the vast majority of people, the suddenly imposed measures toward "modernization" were difficult to understand. The abolition of the examination system, the ruin of the temples, and the closing of the monasteries meant the end of all the social activities these organizations had organized or sponsored. Whatever had made life meaningful and had given it purpose was gone. The loot from the temples and monasteries ended up being sold abroad as Chinese antiques. The sacred traditions of China were thrown on the garbage pile of history.

Nevertheless, as the present volume makes evident, Chinese religion, including its Daoist component, has not completely died. One century has passed, and what was considered definitely lost has somehow survived and is stirring. Once more the law of alternation has demonstrated its workings. After going through the severest of crises, Daoism is resurrecting. By adopting channels of diffusion other than the traditional ones, by opening up to the world at large, through adaptation and reinvention, and through spontaneous diffusion outside China, Daoism lives again. Moreover, whereas one hundred years ago Daoism could hardly be called a world religion, it now can begin to claim this status.

These chapters cover and discuss the entire historical process of the twentieth century, so here I will touch only on a few points. Efforts to salvage the traditions and give them new relevance took different forms. With the demise of the imperial government, the so-called sectarian movements

finally could come out in the open. As propagators of traditional culture while also proposing personal salvation, they were well suited to bridge the divide between Chinese religion and modernity.

The most prominent among them, the Tongshanshe 同善社, founded in 1912, was in fact a successor of the previous existing Xiantian dao 先天道. In 1930 with the founding of the Yiguandao 一貫道 by Zhang Tianran 張天然, this same organization became the most important religious organization of the land. Many adepts learned the Daoist scripture *Taishang laojun shuo chang qingjing miaojing* 太上老君說常清靜妙經 by heart.

The Western model of religion that was touted as an example by reformers favored the emergence of new religions. Especially important was the Daoyuan 道院 (the “Church”) and its subsidiary, the philanthropic Red Swastika Society (Hong wanzi hui 紅卍字會), which had the mission of spreading peace and spiritual welfare in a way comparable to what Christian organizations professed.

Many of these new movements also had a political agenda. All of them, at one time or another, had to face interdiction, repression, and persecution. As a result, during most of the second half of the twentieth century on the mainland only traditional Chinese medicine could maintain itself. This allowed for the massive development of *qigong* 氣功, at times assuming such proportions that the expression “*qigong* fever” is by no means exaggerated.

During this same period China as a social, cultural, and religious body broke out of its geographical frontiers. Throughout the twentieth century, a massive emigration movement has brought Chinese to every corner of the world, and this has been a strong, perhaps even the strongest, agent for China’s modernization. The exact nature of Chinese emigration is insufficiently understood. Too often we hear it characterized as a “diaspora.” But the Chinese were not forcefully dispersed over the world because they lost their own country. Nor was this a purely political occurrence. On the contrary: even if among the emigrants there were those who opposed the political evolution of modern China, strong ties were always maintained with the fatherland, especially with the friends and family members that remained behind. Instead of a diaspora, it is more correct to speak of an expansion, taking into account that this expansion followed a typical Chinese model.

Emigrants not only diffused a new food culture abroad but also brought many other important traditional values. In almost all of the 35,000 Chinese restaurants that serve customers in the United States alone, one can find small altars for the worship of Guanyin 觀音, Tudi 土地, or Lord Guan

關公。As ever so many “little Chinas,” restaurants provide links for travel, medical aid, and self-cultivation teachings. Sectarian movements are very present in overseas communities. But most important perhaps is that the fact of expatriation brought about the search for identity. Many Chinese thus rediscovered their own culture once they were abroad. Chinese emigration therefore is not only an economic but also a cultural expansion.

Whereas Chinese cosmology and theology were formerly known only to an elite of scholars and clerics in China, and only to a tiny number of specialists outside, nowadays Tao (Dao 道), yin 陰, yang 陽, and *taiji* 太極 have become familiar terms for millions of people everywhere. Translations of Chinese classics such as the *Yijing* 易經, the Laozi 老子, and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 that were originally made for a very restricted public now are durable and universal bestsellers. Daoism influences people everywhere. Again the same law of alternation: Chinese religion was banned in its homeland—to the point that some even denied that there ever was something as a Chinese religion—and consequently was spread out over the entire world.

When in 1968 at the first international conference of Daoist studies I presented a paper on Daoist ritual, this was greeted as a surprising novelty. Holmes Welch, one of the conveners of the conference, remarked that if I had been the first European to take part in a *jiao* 醮 I might also very well be the last. He believed that this liturgical tradition, when not yet totally extinct, was certainly bound to disappear in a near future. It must be said that at the time we only disposed of field data from Taiwan and Hong Kong. It was only some fifteen years later, with the fieldwork of Ken Dean in South Fujian, that the Daoist liturgy there was studied and its essential similarities to what existed in Taiwan confirmed.

Since that time, Daoist rituals from many other areas in China have been studied and important monographs have been published. In the present volume we find important new materials not only from South Fujian but also from southern Guangdong. This kind of fieldwork offers unique insights into the role of Daoism in contemporary China. Indeed, as all these studies bear out, the liturgy of the Daoist masters remains the essential nexus uniting all levels of local society, thus greatly contributing to the harmonious society that is today the focus of national debate in China.

Temple restoration and temple building has also again become a common occurrence. In many old cities, such as Quanzhou 泉州 in South Fujian, many famous old temples have been restored, even enlarged, and are again active. The City Temple (Chenghuang miao 城隍廟) in the his-

torical city of Xi'an is reclaiming its place as one of the most important religious centers of the region. Its gradual restoration and the renewal of its activities is a good example of how these historical monuments claim their place in modern Chinese society. The case of this temple can be compared to that other famous City Temple, the Chenghuang miao of Shanghai. Both remain sites of intensive commercial activities. In Xi'an, the religious character of the place has been given precedence over the commercial interests, so that it is now, together with the equally famous Baxian gong 八仙宮, one of the most important places of worship of the region. In Chengdu the Qingyang gong 青羊宮, another very ancient and famous sanctuary, is reviving the liturgical service of Universal Salvation (*pudu* 普度) on the Zhongyuan 中元 festival on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month. This has met with immense response. Equally impressive are the data for Guangzhou on the restoration and reactivation of three Daoist temples in the city that together welcomed some two-and-a-half million worshippers in 2005, a dramatic increase in comparison with only five years earlier.

Following the Chinese worldwide expansion, temple building in the United States, in Canada, and in Europe is equally impressive. These overseas *miao* 廟 are invariably linked through "the division of incense" (*fenxiang* 分香) to their "ancestral temple" (*zumiao* 祖廟) in China proper. Many of the latter have recovered their status thanks to the support of their affiliated temples in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, who have made great efforts to rebuild their ancient *fenxiang* networks, also because of the latter's economic potential.

The linkage between communities that are established and reinforced through the institution of *fenxiang* are important, and many historical networks such as the Mazu 媽祖 temples of maritime merchants are clearly linked to China's commercial expansion. But the economic role of temples was not limited to this function only. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, Daoist communities taxed their members and also outsiders in a variety of ways: through an initial membership fee (*chalujin* 插爐金), by receiving contributions at each festival, by auctioning leadership positions, by taxing merchants at the temple fairs, and so on. One of the salient characteristics of the temple organization was the importance, and also the perfect transparency, of financial management. All accounts were made public through posters affixed on the temple walls. After meeting the costs of the different communal celebrations, the money was used for charity and welfare, for medical services, public works, and so on. But in many instances associations and temples also provided venture capital, and this usage has



today become important in overseas communities. Indeed, in countries like the United States or Canada, there is no need for Chinese temples to train militia, build roads and bridges, and to invest large sums in charity, whereas the procurement of venture capital is a most necessary means of mutual support.

There is much more to be said and to be researched on the link between Daoist temple organizations and economic development, and not only in modern times. These important issues remind us that Daoism from the historical and anthropological points of view remains very much terra incognita. The present volume has broadened and deepened our understanding in a significant way. Let us hope many others will follow.

*Kristofer SCHIPPER*



# Introduction

## *The Daoist Encounter with Modernity*

David A. Palmer and Xun Liu

For the mainstream of Chinese reformers, modernizers, and revolutionaries, as well as for many Western scholars of China, the twentieth century was long seen as the twilight of Chinese religion in general and of its chief institutionalized indigenous form, Daoism, in particular. Dismissed as a crude assortment of superstitions, whatever remained of Daoism after the effects of modernization could only be the exotic remnants of an archaic Chinese past. And yet, in the early twenty-first century, as secularist ideologies are reevaluated and their utopian promises put into doubt, Daoism appears to be playing an increasingly significant role in a variety of social and cultural developments: structuring much of the revival of popular religion in contemporary rural China; providing a trove of symbols, concepts, and practices for the elaboration of new intellectual discourses and cultural movements aiming to revitalize Chinese tradition or to synthesize it with modernity; and supplying many ingredients to the palette of spiritual and therapeutic resources popular in the West under the rubrics of “alternative medicine” and “Oriental spirituality.”

These contemporary developments are both a product and a continuation of an evolution that has taken place since the late nineteenth century, as Daoist practitioners, communities, and networks attempted to survive, to adapt, and to thrive under the impact of ideological and political campaigns, modern state construction, and global capitalism. The field of Daoist studies, however, has until now paid little attention to this fascinating period in the religion’s history. An important reason is simply that Daoism remains one of the least studied of the world’s main religions; its foundational scriptures, rituals, practices, and early movements are still not adequately understood and have thus drawn more attention than modern developments.<sup>1</sup> Another reason is that for too long our understand-

ing of Daoism has been affected by two doggedly persistent views. One has held that Daoism was a timeless system of philosophical and ethical teachings, which has remained little changed since its inception from time immemorial. The other has viewed Daoism as a religious tradition whose political power and cultural relevance have declined irreversibly since the Song era.<sup>2</sup> These views derived partly from the long-held Confucian view of Daoism, which privileged its early philosophical classics over its later religious traditions, and partly from the early Western missionary bias that regarded Daoist spiritual and religious beliefs and practice as superstition.

Until recently these views have hindered a social and historical understanding of the development of Daoism during China's late imperial and, especially, modern and contemporary periods. Since the late 1990s, however, scholars from various disciplines and fields in the West and China have begun to focus on this gap. Using multidisciplinary methods of analysis, historians, anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, scholars of religion, and Sinologists have investigated various aspects of the relationship between Daoism and social and political change in the modern period. The new data they have uncovered through fieldwork and textual analysis, as well as the fresh perspectives and innovative arguments they have advanced through their individual work, have opened our eyes to the history of modern Daoism by creating a new area of inquiry for scholars of both Daoist studies and modern China.

For example, Vincent Goossaert, in *The Taoists of Peking* and other publications,<sup>3</sup> as well as his ongoing project on "Temples and Taoists,"<sup>4</sup> has engaged in a pioneering study of Daoist institutional history and clerical changes from the late Qing until the present. Xun Liu's *Daoist Modern* follows Chen Yingning 陳櫻寧 (1880–1969) and his associates' efforts at reforming and reformulating Daoist inner alchemy theories and practice in the context of rising nationalism, science, and new urban culture in Shanghai, while his "Quanzhen Proliferates Learning" examines how a major Daoist temple in Nanyang actively participated in modern social and educational reforms in the late Qing and Republican periods. Kenneth Dean and Lai Chi-tim, through painstaking historical and ethnographic research, have reconstructed the modern history of Daoist traditions within the broader context of the religious culture of the Putian 莆田 plains of Fujian and in the Pearl River Delta, and traced the impact of the revival of Daoist ritual among rural communities in South and Southeast China in the wake of China's reforms.<sup>5</sup> Several works on Daoist temples, ritual specialists, and spirit-writing cults in Hong Kong and southern

China consider the impact of historical and political changes during the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> John Lagerwey, Wang Chiu-kui, Stephen Jones, Alain Arrault, Patrice Fava, and their collaborators, in the course of collecting oral histories and organizing local field studies on communal religious traditions in the Southeast, the North, and in Hunan, have uncovered several previously unknown local Daoist ritual traditions that remain alive today.<sup>7</sup> Yang Der-Ruey's Ph.D. thesis, "The Education of Taoist Priests," traces the influence of modern educational reforms and their impact on the Zhengyi 正一 Daoist clerical training in post-Mao Shanghai. Adeline Herrou's *La vie entre soi*, an ethnographic study of Quanzhen monasticism in contemporary southern Shaanxi, describes the revival and reconfiguration of inter-monastic networks in a context of market reforms and state management of religious affairs. David Palmer's study of the *qigong* 氣功 movement in the post-1949 period, *Qigong Fever*, looks at attempts to reinvent Chinese tradition through modernizing Daoist self-cultivation technologies and their impact on contemporary Chinese health care, sports, science, social life, and politics.<sup>8</sup> Elijah Siegler has studied the dissemination and transformations of Daoism in American religious culture.<sup>9</sup> Georges Favraud's forthcoming Ph.D. dissertation (University of Paris-Nanterre) shows the imbrication of many of the above-mentioned issues through the historical anthropology of a Daoist temple, lay congregation, and martial arts tradition in Hunan.

At the same time, the past few years have seen a rapid growth in the scholarship on religion in modern and contemporary China. These works have led to questioning the longstanding narrative of the decline and destruction of Chinese religion followed by its partial revival in the post-Mao era, pointing instead to complex and intense processes of constant reinventions and innovations of Chinese tradition in which the pivotal changes occurred in the very last years of the Qing and during the Republican era (1911–1949).<sup>10</sup> Three decades after the pioneering work of Holmes Welch on modern Chinese Buddhism,<sup>11</sup> Prasenjit Duara, in *Rescuing History from the Nation and Sovereignty and Authenticity*, was one of the first to evoke how the process of modern Chinese and Japanese nation building entailed a profound restructuring of the Chinese religious field, with campaigns against "superstition" on the one hand and the invention of new forms of religion on the other. These themes have been pursued in more detail in studies of the anti-superstition policies of the Nationalist regime in Nanjing, by Rebecca Nedostup, and in Guangzhou, by Poon Shuk Wah.<sup>12</sup> The continuities between Republican-era state policies on religion and superstition and those of the Peoples' Republic of

China, and in forms of religious reinventions and reconfigurations spanning the entire twentieth century, have led to fruitful dialogues between scholars of both periods, resulting in works such as Mayfair Yang's edited collection *Chinese Religiosities*, and Goossaert and Palmer's *The Religious Question in Modern China*.<sup>13</sup>

We are thus beginning to understand how Daoism, as a set of religious institutions and self-cultivation traditions, has fared during the profound social, political, and cultural transformations of the past century. Studies are beginning to reveal how Daoist monasteries, lineages, clerics, practitioners, techniques, and traditions interacted with modern ideologies and social processes such as nationalism, scientism, gender revolutions, state and nation building, and social and political movements. We are even beginning to gain some insights into how modern Chinese culture and society might have in turn been affected or even shaped by their encounter with Daoism as a living tradition.

This book is an initial exploration of the social history and anthropology of Daoism from the end of the nineteenth until the early twenty-first centuries, with special attention to the interactions between Daoism and the sociopolitical transformations of the modern era. In this introductory chapter, we begin with the question of labeling: in the absence of a universally recognized Daoist orthodoxy, on what grounds can we consider a certain group or practice to be relevant to a discussion of "Daoism"? Having laid out some parameters, we continue with a brief outline of the historical development of Daoism during this period, providing the broader context within which we can place each of the individual case studies in this volume. This leads us to two conceptual questions that need to be raised in order to frame a social-scientific approach to the study of Daoism, and which are touched on from different angles by the contributors to this volume. First, the issue of modernity—how can we trace and understand how broader processes of social and cultural change play themselves out in Daoism? And second, the issue of analytical categories, such as religion, superstition, science, sports, and medicine—how do these categories not only shape our understanding of Daoism but also the modern evolution of the Daoist tradition itself?

#### STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The essays presented in this book cast a wide net, showing the range of uses and reinventions of Daoism in the twentieth century. The chapters are ordered into three thematic parts, beginning with Daoist clergy and

temples. The first chapter, by Lai Chi-tim, focuses on the Zhengyi tradition in Guangdong and Hong Kong, in a study that spans the period from the late Qing until the early twenty-first century, looking at the impact of several political regimes, from nationalist and socialist China to British colonialism. The socialist institutionalization of Daoism is considered in detail in chapter 2, by Yang Der-ruey, which examines how Zhengyi priests are trained today in the newly established official Daoist academies. His ethnographic study of the Shanghai Daoist College demonstrates how the academic training of Daoist priests introduces an alienating temporality—industrial clock time, with rigid divisions between study, work, and rest—which destroys the traditional, embodied temporality of Daoist knowledge. Yang’s essay underscores the result of the clash between traditional and modern forms of cultural reproduction, in which new institutions churn out a lifeless “Daoist culture” that seems fit only for commercial consumption. With Adeline Herrou’s essay in chapter 3 on Quanzhen monks and nuns in a small temple in southern Shaanxi, we shift to the institution of celibate monasticism and how its construction of gender and fictive kinship is transmitted and experienced in the contemporary context. Official temples have become nodes for both the traditional “cloud wandering” 雲遊 of Daoist clerics and for the territorial grid of state-sponsored Daoist associations. The next chapter, by Fan Guangchun, discusses how the official Daoist Association in the provincial capital of Xi’an negotiated with the government for the restoration of the City God Temple, and how the temple’s new management aims to combine religious, tourist, and commercial uses for the site.

In part II, we focus on Daoist body cultivation traditions. We begin with Vincent Goossaert’s study of self-cultivation masters in Beijing in the late Qing and Republican periods, who operated through a wide variety of organizational forms and affiliations and competed in a “market” for spiritual services. This leads us to chapters 6 and 7, by Xun Liu and David A. Palmer, respectively, on Republican-era projects to modernize the Daoist tradition spearheaded by Chen Yingning and Li Yujie 李玉階, both of whom rejected traditional Daoist institutions and attempted to recast Daoist practices and concepts in a scientific idiom. While Chen Yingning eventually became the chairman of the China Daoist Association in Maoist China, Li Yujie moved to Taiwan, where he founded a new religious movement—a story further analyzed in chapter 8, by Lee Fongmao, who takes Li Yujie’s Heavenly Lord Teachings 天帝教 as one case in his study of a set of five Taiwanese self-cultivation groups as they adapted to modern values and social structures. Lee argues that the stimulus of mod-

ern ideas and scientific methods is leading to a new wave in the evolution of inner alchemy, comparable to the enrichment of the tradition by the introduction of Buddhism between the third and tenth centuries CE. On the mainland, a major expression of this wave was the post-Mao *qigong* movement, which is the subject of chapter 9, by Lü Xichen. Her case study of the Yuanjidao 元極道 tradition, which master Zhang Zhixiang 張志祥 recast into a scientific system of knowledge and was used in prisons for the reform of criminals, shows how Daoist tradition could be married to modernist ideology and even socialist governmentality.

Part III focuses on transnational networks and globalization. Kenneth Dean discusses the liturgical traditions of Fujian, and the continuities and changes they have undergone after spreading, via migration, to Singapore and Southeast Asia in the modern era, and interacting with the post-Mao revival of Daoism on the mainland. Finally, in the last chapter, Elijah Siegler examines how Daoism has been reconfigured (into what he calls a “postmodern simulacrum”) by Western spiritual practitioners and entrepreneurs, taking as a case study the Healing Tao school and its activities in the United States and China.

#### THE “DAOIST” LABEL

When we consider what is done and said in the name of “Daoism” today, we are confronted with a diversity of practices and discourses that do not present themselves as a unified whole. For the purpose of our discussion, we have decided to include *whatever is claimed by the actors themselves to be Daoist*, but do not require that the Daoist affiliation be *exclusive*. By using such a working definition, we have been able to include a wide array of groups, practices, and individuals.

We need to remember, however, that the “Daoist” affiliation may, in some cases, be weak. Field research has shown that the lay clients of ritual specialists, for example, are often completely indifferent to the religious affiliation of their priests; for the priests themselves it often hardly matters. Daoism is usually only a *secondary* affiliation of redemptive societies and *qigong* groups. Westerners who sign up for courses in Mantak Chia’s courses in Healing Tao may also be involved in Sufism, Native American shamanism, or other contemporary spiritual movements. It is among Quanzhen 全真 clerics that the sense of exclusive Daoist identity is strongest—but, in spite of its high visibility and (or perhaps because of) its orthodox and government-supported status, Quanzhen monasticism is perhaps the least dynamic of all the social forms of Daoism (in stark con-



trast to its monastic counterparts in Buddhism). The result of all this is that although Daoist ideas and practices are widely diffused in Chinese societies and rapidly spreading in the West and elsewhere, there is little sense of a collective Daoist identity or a broader Daoist community encompassing all the different types of groups and networks we call “Daoist.”

One of the questions we collectively raised in the development of this volume was thus how Daoism could be defined. There was unanimous agreement that we should not limit ourselves to the Quanzhen and Zhengyi orders. At the other extreme, the understanding of Daoism shouldn't be so broad as to encompass all of Chinese culture, based on its purported roots in Daoism or its expression of Daoist patterns of thought. The question lies with borderline communities and movements such as local temples, *qigong*, redemptive societies, martial arts, and Chinese medicine, which are not affiliated with Daoist institutions but draw heavily on Daoist practices, concepts, and symbols, and often consciously engage with what is posited as the “Daoist” tradition and assign it a place within a repertoire of other traditions and discourses such as Buddhism, science, or Western medicine.

Indeed, any consideration of the evolution of Daoism in the twentieth century must consider the relationship between the broadly defined tradition of texts, symbols, and practices commonly designated as “Daoist” and specific forms of social networks, organizations, and movements which consciously, but not necessarily exclusively, draw on that tradition. In spite of the diversity of forms we might call “Daoist” presented in this book, all draw, directly or indirectly, on practices recorded in a self-consciously Daoist scriptural tradition, especially as it pertains to ritual and liturgy, the cultivation of the body, and philosophical texts—what Schipper has called the “gene bank of Chinese culture”<sup>14</sup>. Much of the practical and symbolic *content* of modern Daoist practices can be linked to this common scriptural tradition, while the social *containers* of the tradition present a bewildering diversity. Different “containers” draw on different components of the scriptural tradition, mix them differently with elements of other traditions and ideologies, interpret them in different ways, and associate them with different sets of practices. With the onset of modernity and the appearance of new types of social organization, new ideologies and forms of discourse, as well as new configurations of social life, we see the appearance of many new or hybrid social containers, each of which has been the result of efforts to reform or repackaging the Daoist tradition so that it could better suit contemporary times.

What is of interest in these cases is not whether or not they correspond

to an essentialized definition of Daoism, but how their claimed links to Daoism are constructed. Any group, movement, or discourse that claimed an affiliation to Daoism as part of its self-identity or genealogy would then be considered relevant to our discussion. Such a definition can just as well encompass rural ritual specialists of the Three-in-One Teachings 三一教 in Fujian and Canadian practitioners of Taoist Tai Chi™. The Daoist affiliation need not be exclusive, nor even the primary affiliation of the group in question. Many Republican-era redemptive societies, for example, often claim to incorporate Daoist practices and teachings alongside those of Confucianism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, while post-Mao *qigong* groups typically claim to combine the best of Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Chinese medicine, and martial arts. To include such groups in the history of twentieth-century Daoism is not to say that they are *primarily* Daoist; indeed, they should also be considered in any history of Buddhism, Confucianism, or martial arts. Similarly, recent fieldwork has discovered that many ritual specialists in parts of South and Southeast China claim both Buddhist and Daoist affiliations; they are thus legitimate subjects for the history and anthropology of both Buddhism and Daoism.<sup>15</sup> As we know too well, rigid compartmentalization is simply not a common feature of Chinese religion in its lived practice.

But discussion of, say, a temple cult or of *qigong* would need, to be relevant, to consider how the temple or movement in question conceived of and constructed its affiliation to, or relationship with, “Daoism.” How such claims are constructed, justified, contested, and diffused in the modern era thus becomes one possible line of questioning that can allow the comparison of a broad array of groups and practices within a common historical framework. Indeed, the revolutions and transformations that mark the history of the twentieth-century Chinese world have seen the breaking off of lineages and the loss of genealogies, but also their reconstruction and reformulation. While on the one hand much has disappeared, on the other hand modern mass literacy, printing, media, and information technologies have made possible the dissemination and appropriation of the memory of Daoism to an unprecedented degree, often in new forms and new settings.

#### A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In the course of our discussions, some colleagues argued that the “modern period” for China or Daoism begins in the Qing, the Ming, or even as early as the Song.<sup>16</sup> Here, however, we focus on the twentieth century, with allowance for the late nineteenth century, a time when Chinese soci-

ety and culture, including Daoism, began their intensive encounter with various forces of modernity such as state building, nationalism, science, social and gender revolutions, and Christianity. When we speak of “modern Daoism,” then, we simply mean Daoism within the modern period beginning in the late nineteenth century.

By the late Qing (1644–1911), the Zhengyi tradition—which claimed to inherit the teachings of the Han dynasty Heavenly Masters 天師道, and had been privileged by the imperial state during the Ming (1363–1644), had now lost official favor and its social status was in decline. It did maintain an orthodox status, however, with its hereditary masters conferring prestigious ordination certificates to Daoist priests who visited their headquarters at Longhushan 龍虎山, paid a fee, and demonstrated their knowledge of Daoist ritual.<sup>17</sup> To have an ordination certificate from Longhushan was a rare and highly respected accomplishment among the hundreds of thousands of local priests who served the ritual needs of communities and temples throughout China, claiming Zhengyi but also Lüshan 閩山, Meishan 梅山, and other Daoist affiliations.<sup>18</sup>

It was the elite Quanzhen order, however, which was favored by the imperial state as the dominant, orthodox institution of Daoism. Although in its idealized form it was a monastic community exclusively devoted to spiritual cultivation and textual study, in reality the vast majority of Quanzhen clerics were employed by small temples that lacked a strong Daoist affiliation. The Quanzhen label<sup>19</sup> was also claimed by a proliferation of spirit-writing cults that received revelations from Daoist immortals such as Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 and Zhang Sanfeng 張三丰, and that had their own lay priests who were not celibate monks but claimed a Quanzhen lineage—a situation especially common in South China. Texts revealed by these groups included manuals of inner alchemical meditation, medical and ritual healing prescriptions, exhortations to philanthropic deeds, and morality books. Many of these groups were small and loosely organized and overlapped with even more diffuse networks of body cultivators, while others were organized on a more permanent basis as philanthropic societies, the *shantang* 善堂.<sup>20</sup>

Several martial arts lineages and traditions that appeared during this period, such as the Taijiquan (太極拳), Baguazhang 八卦掌, and Wudangshan 武當山 lineages, were based on Daoist practices and concepts of self-cultivation and were loosely organized as networks of masters and disciples.<sup>21</sup> Also widespread were the salvational movements, often referred to in the scholarly literature as the “popular sects,” which worshipped the Unborn Mother goddess (*wusheng laomu* 無生老母) and subscribed to an

incipient millenarian message.<sup>22</sup> These groups, the most widespread of which was Xiantian dao 先天道, practiced Buddhist vegetarianism as well as Daoist inner alchemy.<sup>23</sup>

The Republican period (1911–1949) was marked by the collapse of the imperial social order, the construction of a modern state in a context of civil and international war, ideological polemics, and campaigns for cultural reform, which had a differential type of effect on the various forms of Daoism. The newly introduced concepts of “religion” (*zongjiao* 宗教) and “superstition” (*mixin* 迷信) had a profound impact, creating a new standard of orthodoxy for Daoism. The monastic Quanzhen order, which corresponded most closely with Western, Christian-derived notions of religion, fared best under the new configuration, although, as was the case with Buddhist monks, Daoist clerics were under pressure to devote themselves exclusively to spiritual pursuits and stop providing ritual services for communities. Such activities clearly fell under the category of “superstition,” which was banned by law in 1929 and was the subject of iconoclastic campaigns.<sup>24</sup> These campaigns primarily aimed to convert temples into schools or government offices,<sup>25</sup> and, as described by Lai Chi-tim in chapter 1, had a direct impact on the Daoist priests and ritual specialists who worked for those temples and their communities. They were ostracized as mere peddlers of superstition, falling outside the purview of the new discourse on the “freedom of religion.” In this generally hostile sociopolitical context, Daoists of both the Quanzhen and Zhengyi traditions established modern-style national representative associations, both to defend their interests vis-à-vis the new state and to propose reform projects (which never came to fruition).<sup>26</sup>

It was outside of the monastic institutions and liturgical lineages, however, that Daoist practices were the most widespread, in the form of the “redemptive societies” that grew out of the flourishing spirit-writing groups and salvational movements.<sup>27</sup> From the 1910s to the 1930s, offshoots of Xiantian dao such as the Tongshanshe 同善社, for instance, disseminated *neidan* 內丹 meditation to millions of followers,<sup>28</sup> as did the Daoyuan 道院, which operated the Red Swastika Society (Hong wanzi hui 紅卍字會), China’s largest charitable organization during that period.<sup>29</sup> One such redemptive society, Tiande shengjiao 天德聖教, and its offshoot, Tiandijiao 天帝教, is the subject of chapter 7, by Palmer. Some individuals, notably Chen Yingning, who operated outside of Daoist institutions, also set out to modernize the Daoist tradition, as described in Xun Liu’s chapter 6.

After the establishment of the Peoples’ Republic of China in 1949, the

redemptive societies were banned and ruthlessly exterminated as “reactionary sects and secret societies” (*fandong huidaomen* 反動會道門).<sup>30</sup> The priests and ritual specialists fared little better under the land reform campaigns and later during the collectivization of the late 1950s, in which they were accused of engaging in “feudal superstition” and ordered to engage in “productive” activity. The large urban temples and mountain monasteries were maintained, however, and with the establishment of the state-sponsored China Daoist Association in 1957,<sup>31</sup> Daoism was belatedly admitted as one of the five officially recognized religions, alongside Buddhism, Protestantism, Catholicism, and Islam. Chen Yingning, with his credentials as a reformer and secularizer of Daoism, was appointed as one of the early leaders of the association, which was largely composed of representatives of the Quanzhen tradition—which came to be seen as the only orthodox and legitimate Daoist school.

After the interval of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), in which even the Daoist Association was dissolved and the monasteries closed or converted to secular uses, Daoism, together with the four other official religions, was reinstated. The China Daoist Association was re-formed, and provincial and local associations gradually were established in most parts of the country under the supervision of the Religious Affairs Bureau. A process began, through arduous negotiations with the government departments that occupied the premises, of restoring Daoist monasteries to religious uses under the management of the local Daoist association, as described by Fan Guangchun in chapter 4, on the Xi’an City God Temple. The academic study of Daoism, which during the Maoist period had been largely confined to Japan and France, began to flourish on the Chinese mainland, giving Daoism a legitimate place within scholarly discourse and giving rise to a generation of researchers who, in a context in which most Daoist clerics were poorly educated, acquired the role of exponents of Daoist politico-religious orthodoxy, compatible both with textual tradition and Marxist ideology. Chinese and foreign scholarship thus played a significant role in changing the image of Daoism from a heap of superstitions to a rich textual tradition with a systematic body of knowledge and important contributions to Chinese philosophy, art, music, architecture, medicine and health cultivation, and local culture. All of this helped to enhance the status of Daoism in the eyes of the Chinese state—a status consecrated with the World *Daodejing* Forum, held in Xi’an and Hong Kong in April 2007 under the auspices of the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA).<sup>32</sup>

The post-Mao period also witnessed the revival of local temple reli-

gion in many parts of rural China, as well as the activities of unregistered Zhengyi priests and other liturgical specialists. Although most of these temples and priests still theoretically fell under the category of superstition, being recognized as neither religious nor Daoist, by the end of the twentieth century many had found paths to legitimacy: official Daoist associations in various parts of China began registering popular temples and priests; SARA began to consider the issue of “popular faith,” while ritual practices were in some places designated as “intangible cultural heritage.”<sup>33</sup>

Daoist practices were also widely disseminated in the post-Mao era through the *qigong* movement, in which mass transmission networks of body cultivation techniques, led by charismatic masters, many of them claiming Daoist affiliations, were able to expand under the guise of Chinese medicine, traditional health and life-cultivation practices, sports, and the promise of a new paranormal science. Tens if not hundreds of millions were exposed to Daoist self-cultivation practices during the *qigong* boom in the 1980s and 1990s, until the crackdown on Falungong 法輪功 in 1999 led to the disbanding of all mass *qigong* groups.<sup>34</sup> Many *qigong* practitioners then turned to more explicitly religious forms of Daoism (as well as Buddhism and Christianity)—as did many readers and viewers of martial arts fiction, popularized by the best-selling works of the serial novelist Jin Yong 金庸,<sup>35</sup> as well as Hong Kong kung fu films, which were often replete with Daoist themes and characters.

In Taiwan, the historical and political context led to a different configuration after the Kuomintang 國民黨 (KMT) regime moved to the island in 1949. Quanzhen monasticism had little historical presence there, while the Zhang Heavenly Master fled to the island and became the chairman of the Daoist Association of the Republic of China, through which the state hoped to control the Daoist community.<sup>36</sup> Many of the redemptive societies had also moved to Taiwan from the mainland; although most were banned by the KMT, they drew a wide following and often secured legal protection by becoming members of the Daoist Association. Overall, although there were restrictions on religious activity prior to the lifting of martial law in 1987, they were light in comparison with the mainland: Daoist body cultivation traditions, as described by Lee Fongmao in chapter 8, took a wide range of forms ranging from loose networks to the fully formed new religious organization of Tiandijiao.

Daoist temples in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia played an important role in the revival of Daoism on the mainland and in the spread of Daoism in the West. Most of the early Daoist temples in Hong Kong

were originally spirit-writing cults or branches of the Way of Anterior Heaven (Xiantiandao), a lay tradition best known for being the matrix out of which the Way of Pervasive Unity (Yiguandao 一貫道), the largest redemptive society in Republican China and Taiwan, was born in the late nineteenth century.<sup>37</sup> In Hong Kong, the trend has been for the Way of Anterior Heaven temples to be progressively integrated into the Daoist mainstream, and for the largest temples to abandon the practice of spirit-writing.<sup>38</sup> These temples have financed the reconstruction of Daoist temples on the mainland, sponsored multilingual websites and international conferences, and established branches overseas. They have become key nodes in an expanding transnational circuit of Daoist funds, personnel, events, and practitioners, albeit one that yet has little overlap with another global network: that of Western Daoists—practitioners of *qigong*, tai chi, and “Daoist yoga”—which grew through the followers of Chinese masters who first emigrated to North America and Europe in the 1950s and 1960s, dovetailing with the growth of the counterculture and New Age movements.<sup>39</sup> These masters and groups established their own training centres and retreats, and organized spiritual tours at Daoist sacred sites in China.<sup>40</sup>

#### THE QUESTION OF MODERNITY

Parallel to these developments at the level of organizations and practices has been an intellectual exploration of the potential contributions of Daoism to contemporary public discourse. The issue of Daoism and modernity has been the subject of several conferences and edited volumes in China in the past few years,<sup>41</sup> fruits of a lively and ongoing debate among Chinese scholars of Daoism. These discussions have mostly focused on points of convergence between an abstracted “Daoist culture” and modern needs and values, such as in the areas of health cultivation, ecology, or ethics. In contrast to those discussions, this volume focuses on historically situated practices and takes a critical perspective toward “modernity” as an ideological, political, and social construction, looking at how concrete instances of practices and discourses claiming a link to Daoism interacted with, resisted, or participated in the historical processes collectively referred to as “modernity,” including ideologies, socio-political systems, and individual subjectivities. While a critical perspective on modernity informs our discussions, we do not focus exclusively on the conscious engagement of Daoists with “modernity,” which would limit the discussion to urban elites and leave out most rural Daoists and thus, arguably,



most of the communities in which the Daoist tradition plays a significant role in ritual, social, and cultural life.

How, then, has the encounter with modernity changed Daoism? We may look at this question by considering several related but distinct dimensions of the concept of the “modern”: First, in terms of “modernism” or “modernist ideology,” which self-consciously aims to bring about a wholesale transformation of culture and society, defining itself against the “traditional.” Second, in terms of “modernization”—the objective changes that have occurred in society, culture, economics, and politics since the late nineteenth century. And third, in terms of “modernity”—the changing subjectivity and increasing self-reflexivity of individuals who live and experience the world as it undergoes such transformations.

At the level of ideology, in the early twentieth century Chinese modernism was especially hostile towards Daoism. Reformist intellectuals, inheriting their Confucian forbears’ disdain for Daoism, saw Daoism as emblematic of the thick forest of traditional superstition that needed to be cleared to make way for the advance of modern science, which was seen as China’s only path to salvation. Daoism was only belatedly accorded the status of “religion” within the new organization of knowledge, but, as was the case with Buddhism, only if it was purged of its superstitious elements. These attacks did not fail to provoke a response from Chinese traditionalists, who sought to preserve and defend the “national essence” (*guocui* 國粹) in the fields of culture, philosophy, art, Chinese medicine, and the martial arts. Common to these projects was the notion that Chinese civilization not only is morally and spiritually superior to Western culture, but also possesses within itself the resources for strengthening the Chinese nation and restoring its lost dignity. Thus, as described by Xun Liu in chapter 6, Chen Yingning saw in inner alchemy the key to restoring the weakened body of the Chinese nation, while in chapter 7, Palmer shows how Li Yujie’s mystic connection with Dao is seen by his followers as having saved China from defeat at the hands of the Japanese. Both of these cases are examples of how Daoist cosmology and practices are drawn on to build a concept of the Chinese nation. Such attempts typically draw heavily on scientism, reformulating Daoist ideas in scientific terms and repackaging self-cultivation regimens into rationalized body cultivation technologies, thereby claiming that Daoism not only has scientific validity but is itself a form of science that goes further in piercing the mysteries of the universe than the mechanistic methods of the West. Such ideas were particularly salient in the *qigong* movement, as Lü Xichen describes in chapter 9, and have been popularized in the West through best-selling books such as



Capra's *Tao of Physics* and Gary Zukav's *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*.<sup>42</sup> The compatibility of Daoism with progressive social ideals has also been stressed by some advocates, beginning with Chen Yingning's reflections on gender and his popularization of feminine inner alchemy in the 1930s, and continuing today with a stress on the ecological orientation of Daoist thought and practice.<sup>43</sup> Drawing on these elements, the scholar Hu Fuchen 胡浮琛 at the China Academy of Social Sciences, a student of the architect of China's atomic bomb and promoter of paranormal research Qian Xuesen 錢學森, has been advocating the adoption of "neo-Daoism" (*xin dao xue* 新道學) as a new ideology for China in the twenty-first century.<sup>44</sup> At the level of ideas, Daoism has thus been recast by advocates as a scientific system of knowledge and practice rooted in ancient spirituality and mysticism, one that is essentially compatible with ecological and progressive social ideals.

Looking at the level of objective social changes brought about through modernization, however, a far more complicated picture appears. Urbanization and the associated changes in social structure have radically changed Daoism's social base. In late imperial China, social life was largely structured through the ritual life of families, lineages, and corporate and territorial communities; Daoist priests (alongside Buddhist monks, Confucian ritualists, and others) were among the most widespread types of ritual specialists. In both cities and villages, most people, even if they did not identify themselves as Daoist, regularly participated in rituals officiated by Daoists—thus, Kristofer Schipper has argued that Daoism provided the "liturgical structures of Chinese society."<sup>45</sup>

Daoism was thus an integral part of the dense fabric of local community, with its lineages, guilds, and neighbourhood and temple associations in which everyone took part—a type of traditional community life that has largely disappeared in most of the cities where the majority of the Chinese people now live. Even in Hong Kong—where Daoist priests were never persecuted as they had been on the mainland during much of the twentieth century, and have, as described by Lai Chi-tim, preserved the historical continuity of the Heavenly Masters tradition—the Zhengyi priests now operate primarily in the indigenous villages of the New Territories and the outlying islands, while the vast majority of the inhabitants, living in dense apartment blocks, have no contact with them or their rituals save at funeral services, which are centralized at two locations in the city that offer a choice of standardized packages, one of which includes a Daoist service.<sup>46</sup> In Shanghai, Hangzhou, and other large cities, the number of Daoist priests is increasing—but their current repertoire of services is not as extensive as it was before 1949.<sup>47</sup>

To be sure, in many parts of rural China, as described in Kenneth Dean's work, liturgical Daoism is resilient, even flourishing in some areas, and it has fully integrated the financial, technological, and cultural resources offered by modernity, with priests plying transnational circuits connecting mainland and diasporic temples. But in the urban context where the majority of Chinese now live, what remains of liturgical Daoism is but residual fragments of a once mighty tradition. The type of Daoism that urban residents are likely to encounter—besides exposure to the *Daodejing* 道德經 and Daoist themes in martial arts films and novels—is in its self-cultivation technologies. Be it through *qigong*, martial arts, *taijiquan*, inner alchemy, or meditation techniques promoted by new religious movements, this type of Daoism fits well with modern urban lifestyles, with their individualized life trajectories and concern for the care of the body. Whether through redemptive societies, mass *qigong* organizations, new religious movements, or looser networks of adepts (in chapter 8 Lee Fongmao provides a useful typology of groups), or even the commercialized packages described by Siegler in chapter 11, Daoist body cultivation traditions have been promoted in a wide diversity of forms and social settings, both in the Chinese world and abroad.

Another key feature of modern life is the pervasive expansion of capitalism. In this area, it has been easy for Daoist practices, be they ritual services or body cultivation techniques, to be offered in a commercial context: as mentioned by Goossaert, a self-cultivation “market” has long existed in China, with masters of self-cultivation techniques competing against each other to offer their services to spiritual seekers; the same holds for priests offering their ritual services, for a fee, to communities and temples willing to hire them. What has changed in the twentieth century has been the forms of organization, marketing, and packaging adopted by some groups, especially in the realm of *qigong* and body cultivation regimens.

It might appear, then, that, having survived decades of ideological and political assaults, Daoism's encounter with modernity is finally turning out to be more than a story of victimization and persecution. Indeed, it promises to be a more optimistic experience than might have been expected. Liturgical Daoism flourishes in some areas where its social base continues to exist; Daoist teachings offer the possibility of marrying tradition and spirituality with avant-garde science and are compatible with environmentalism and progressive social principles; Daoist health and meditation techniques are well-adapted to modern life, offering a form of individual spirituality grounded in the care of the body that can be practiced by people of any cultural background; and the practices lend themselves easily to

commercial dissemination and can be practiced in a wide variety of formats, from isolated individual practice and one-off retreats and courses to more structured membership in religious communities.

#### CATEGORIZING DAOISM

But if that is the case, why is Daoist identity so weak? After all, in China Daoism has by far the lowest number of *self-identified* followers—a number which is dwarfed by the rapid growth in the number of those who identify as Christians and Buddhists.<sup>48</sup> The immediate explanation for this problem is simply that Daoism is not a mass religion and does not require formal membership in the way Christianity or Islam do. The same, however, was true of Buddhism in traditional China, but by the late twentieth century growing numbers of lay Chinese have identified themselves as Buddhists, a trend which began in Taiwan and has spread to Singapore, Hong Kong, and mainland China.<sup>49</sup> One explanation for this phenomenon is the success of the modern Buddhist movements such as Foguangshan 佛光山 and Tzu Chi 慈濟, which have created viable paths of Buddhist identification for masses of lay people.<sup>50</sup> And yet, although there is no shortage of modern mass movements with a strong Daoist content or inspiration—from redemptive societies to *qigong* movements to new religious groups like Tiandijiao—few of these groups has claimed a dominant Daoist identity, thereby offering a path for mass identification to Daoism. Another historical explanation might be that Daoism never underwent a robust and expansive lay-centered activist revival movement in its name in the early twentieth century, as its Buddhist counterpart had.<sup>51</sup>

This question remains to be further explored and debated, but any discussion needs to consider the role of modern categories in shaping not only debates on the nature of Daoism but also the forms of relating to and identifying with the Daoist tradition. Indeed, a crucial factor in the diverse trajectories of different Daoist practices and networks through the twentieth century has been the classification, by both the emerging modern state and reform-minded intellectuals within and outside Daoist circles, of the tradition within sets of exclusive categories imported from the West in the early 1900s—classifications that could have significant legal and political consequences. One of the first of these sets of categories was religion and superstition—in which, from Republican China until today, the former is regarded by the intellectual elite as having some degree of legitimacy, while the latter should be stamped out. For Daoism to be recognized as a religion at all, and thus for its institutions and temples to

enjoy legal protection, was not a given: both in the Republican period and in the PRC, Daoism was almost forgotten when the state identified which “religions” would enjoy official recognition. Claiming Daoism as a legitimate “religion” involved purging it of its “superstitious” elements—practically and politically speaking, this meant further stigmatizing liturgical Daoism and favoring the more “otherworldly” Quanzhen.

But “religion” was not necessarily the preferred category of all those who engaged in or drew on the Daoist tradition: in the case of redemptive societies, for instance, while some, such as Tiandijiao, explicitly tried to present themselves as fully fledged religions, with their own scriptures, priesthood, hymns, and rituals, others, such as the Daoyuan 道院, rejected the exclusivist connotations of the “religion” concept. For some individual reformers such as Chen Yingning—who promoted the notion of “immortalist studies” (*xianxue* 仙學)—and for many *qigong* groups, which aimed to create a new “somatic science” (*renti kexue* 人體科學), the goal was to see the Daoist tradition as part of a *scientific* and *not* religious project. These “scientific” approaches implied an emphasis on body technologies and rational cosmology, and the discarding of rituals and divinities. And then there was the Western-style academic institution, which saw a place for Daoism in philosophy departments—but this required making a distinction between a so-called “philosophical Daoism,” based on abstract speculations and divorced from any form of practice, and “religious Daoism,” which became a catch-all term for everything that wasn’t relevant to Western philosophical discourse. Other groups have stressed the medical, sports, cultural, heritage, or touristic nature or value of Daoist traditions—categorizations that, in the PRC, could make it easier to promote them, but also implied eliminating, circumscribing, or commodifying the elements of worship and community associated with Daoism. And in the West, Daoism was often pursued under the category of “spirituality,” which was seen as a way to avoid not only organized “religion” but any kind of obedience to master, lineage, tradition, or precept, in a consumer-oriented spiritual supermarket.

All of these categories were narrower than the Daoist tradition itself, which had come into being and achieved a stable form long before the introduction of the categories from the West in the early twentieth century. Applying them to Daoism, then, inevitably implied to divide, cut, and sort elements of Daoism in ways that were not natural to the tradition itself—leading to endless controversies and debates, and to a profound tearing apart of the fabric of the tradition—even if, ultimately, it was impossible to neatly separate the “religious,” “superstitious,” “scientific,” “medical,” or “cultural” aspects of Daoism.

The history and sociology of modern Daoism thus largely intersect with the story of how an array of containers of the tradition have appeared, evolved, and been categorized in changing sociopolitical contexts, in the form of different types of social groups, configurations of practices, and conceptual and symbolic formulations. The lack of a strong identity and sense of community, coupled with the easy commercialization of Daoist practices, has turned the Daoist tradition into a storehouse of cultural resources, available to any and all who wish to delve into it, to mine gems from it, to sell or buy from it, and to pack it into new containers.



PART I

Daoist Clerics and Temples  
in Changing Sociopolitical Contexts





# 1. Zhengyi Daoist Masters in the Pearl River Delta

## *Ruptures and Continuities in the Transmission of Tradition*

Lai Chi-tim

### INTRODUCTION: THE STUDY OF DAOIST MASTERS IN MODERN CHINA

From Ming times on, Daoism comprised two main schools: that of the Zhengyi 正一 (Orthodox Unity) Heavenly Masters, passed on hereditarily since the Han dynasty in the second century CE, and that of the ascetic school of Complete Perfection (Quanzhen 全真). The former fostered local communities and temple organizations and provided them with their liturgical framework and ritual specialists,<sup>1</sup> while the latter was based, following the Buddhist model, in monastic communities. The majority of the Zhengyi priests, or “dignitaries of the Tao” (*daoshi* 道士), lived a married life at home, wearing ritual vestments for the performing of classical Daoist ritual, a practice that continues today. These married Zhengyi priests are also called *huoju daoshi* 火居道士, “hearth-dwelling” Daoist Masters, because, in contrast to the celibate monastics of the Quanzhen order, they live among the common people.<sup>2</sup>

In the study of the tradition of Zhengyi Daoist Masters per se as well as its liturgical tradition, Kristofer Schipper’s contribution is pervasive. The importance of the coherent living tradition of the Zhengyi Heavenly Masters from the later Han period to the present day is at the center of Schipper’s study of Daoism.<sup>3</sup> Schipper’s fieldwork in southern Taiwan in the 1960s opened up the study of the living Daoist ritual tradition in local society, with special attention to its connection with the *huoju daoshi* as ritual specialists, performing death rituals (*gongde* 功德) and community offerings (*jiao* 醮) in the classical language.<sup>4</sup> Schipper’s seven years of formal learning of the ways of a Daoist Master in southern Taiwan, Tainan 台南, led to the realization that “the liturgical function, the role of ritual

specialist, defines the *tao-shih* [*daoshi*].<sup>5</sup> Along with his discovery that the liturgical manuscripts used in the contemporary rituals actually replicated the *Daozang* 道藏 (Daoist Canon) of the Ming, Schipper argued that the liturgical role of the Daoist Masters maintains an extraordinary unity and continuity with the communal and liturgical tradition of the ecclesia of the Heavenly Masters (Tianshi dao 天師道) of the second century CE.<sup>6</sup> Following this discovery, many Daoist scholars in the West have gradually paid more attention to the Daoist ritual tradition from the Six Dynasties period to the present day, especially in Taiwan and southern Fujian.

Most scholars agree that the Song (960–1279) was a time when Daoism assimilated local cults, producing the vernacular priests referred to by such titles as *fashi* 法師, *shigong* 師公, or *duangong* 端公. According to Schipper, the distinction between the *daoshi* of classical rituals and the *fashi* of vernacular rituals can be traced back to the rise of many rites “related to exorcist practices [that] became institutionalized [and] independent of the existing Daoist liturgical structures.”<sup>7</sup> Apart from Schipper’s illumination of the distinction and relationship between the *daoshi* of classical ritual and the *fashi* of the vernacular rituals, Kenneth Dean, in his study of the living Daoist ritual tradition in southern Fujian, equally claims that “Daoism provides the liturgical framework which enables local cults to expand and develop.”<sup>8</sup>

More recently, Western scholarship on Daoist ritual study has tended to turn its gaze to the symbiotic and antagonistic interactions between vernacular liturgy and local cults. The shift of Western scholars’ interest away from the priority of the liturgical role of Zhengyi Daoist Masters in local communities can be seen in recent research that has tended to focus increasingly on vernacular *fashi*, who are not *daoshi* and have no affiliation with any organized Daoist tradition.<sup>9</sup> If Schipper’s study of Daoist ritual appears to focus more on the “classical” ritual tradition of *daoshi* as well as the influence of the Daoist liturgical framework in structuring local religious observances, to borrow Schipper’s terms, recent turns in studying “popular” cults, or “vernacular” rituals, in local Chinese society contrarily aim at an alternative model seeking to explain how lay *fashi* play “active” roles in performing Daoist liturgy mixed with spirit possession, exorcistic rituals, and cults of local deities.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, recent field studies conducted in local villages and towns throughout the Chinese countryside have proposed that these popular temple cults, instead of being elaborate Daoist ritual, should be considered as the substratum of the religious life of the Chinese people, contributing to structuring local society. For these anthropological studies, popular temple cults in praxis represent a kind of ritual

nexus that is conflated with multiple layers of liturgies, including cults of local deities, shamanistic exorcism, and Daoist and/or Buddhist liturgies.<sup>11</sup>

Western scholars of Daoist ritual tradition and vernacular cults have usually conducted their fieldwork on Taiwan and more recently in Fujian. In these regions, the great community festivals are invariably carried out in the temples of local tutelary gods.<sup>12</sup> The flourishing of local temples cults in these two areas enables researchers to better capture the interaction and tension among the three groups of ritual specialists, namely Daoist Masters (*daoshi*), Ritual Masters (*fashi*), and spirit-mediums in temple festivals. As Dean described, “they are usually connected with specific temples, and work together in the open courtyard between the temple and the stage.”<sup>13</sup>

In contrast, in Hong Kong, local temple cult organizations are not the main driving force in carrying out communal festivals. Instead, the powerful dominant lineage associations in Hong Kong’s village communities play a chief role in organizing large-scale communal festivals.<sup>14</sup> I am now working extensively on Zhengyi Daoist ritual in Hong Kong, Macau, and the Pearl River Delta of Guangdong province. Contrary to the findings of most fieldwork, which is primarily conducted on temple cults in Taiwan and Fujian, we rarely observe any interaction or tension between Daoist Masters and vernacular priests of local cults, or a liturgical connection and cooperation between Daoist Masters and spirit-mediums.<sup>15</sup> To my knowledge, the “barefoot” vernacular priests one always finds in Taiwan and Fujian are not evident in Hong Kong and Macau. In the Pearl River Delta of Guangdong, the vernacular ritual specialists of the School of Lüshan 閩山 are not in evidence.<sup>16</sup> Instead, Daoist Masters of the Zhengyi ritual tradition are apparently the only group of ritual specialists to perform Daoist *jiao* and *zhai* 齋 services.

My aim in the present study is to provide a preliminary study of the living Zhengyi *daoshi* tradition in southern Guangdong, including Hong Kong and Macau. It will provide more historical depth to understanding how local Zhengyi Daoist Masters maintain their liturgical identity of belonging to the Zhengyi Heavenly Master tradition. Most of the Zhengyi Daoist Masters in southern Guangdong are no longer tied to and have rarely obtained ordination from the Tianshifu 天師府 (the head offices of the Heavenly Master) at Longhushan 龍虎山 near Guixi 貴溪 (now in Jiangxi). In this study, we will see how the liturgical link between Daoist Masters in southern Guangdong and the Longhushan Heavenly Master tradition is built upon in terms of “classical” liturgical manuscripts, their ritual performance, and ordination titles.

Not surprisingly, it is not easy to find historical information on Zhengyi Daoism in southern Guangdong, including Hong Kong and Macau, in the modern period. This is not simply because Daoist Masters are not a matter of great interest to officials, scholars, and elites. Especially during the Qing (1644–1911) and the Republican periods (1911–49), the *huoju* Daoist Masters of the Zhengyi order were repressed. In particular, the hostility of the literati was crucial. In view of the destructive effects of the state's official restriction and interdictions upon Daoism, Schipper summarizes that it "survives, poor, and maligned."<sup>17</sup> In the reign of Qianlong 乾隆 (1736–95), the Qing court prohibited the Heavenly Master Zhang from holding nationwide ordinations in his name for local Zhengyi Daoist Masters in other provinces, restricting the Heavenly Master's administration to Longhushan.<sup>18</sup> The Republican government of 1912 continued the persecution of the Zhengyi Daoist Masters. In 1933, the Nationalist government in Canton banned all *huoju daoshi* in the city from performing any kind of Daoist ritual service. Not surprisingly, the Cultural Revolution (1965–75) completed the destruction of Daoism in the mainland.

From the 1980s on, many scholars' fieldwork on and studies of Daoism in mainland China have witnessed the huge revival of Daoist ritual tradition in local society.<sup>19</sup> Despite the recent "Daoist recovery," however, historical studies devoted to the important tradition of the Zhengyi Daoist Masters tied to local society are still rare. I consider this article as a case study of the local Zhengyi *daoshi* tradition in Hong Kong, Macau, and the Pearl River Delta, and as an attempt to contribute to our understanding of how local *huoju daoshi* function in and sustain Daoism in southern China.

#### THE LITURGICAL INSTITUTION OF THE ZHENGYI ORDER

Schipper is right to point out that Daoism was never "a religion that became institutionally defined by attaining autonomy from its social background of local cults."<sup>20</sup> Ultimately based upon the early ecclesia of the Heavenly Master of the second century CE, Daoism has been a liturgical tradition in the enduring sense that the office of ritual specialist defines the *daoshi*.<sup>21</sup> During the Tang (618–907), there appears to have been an integrated system of liturgical organization and ordination of Daoist Masters<sup>22</sup>. Based upon this unified Daoist ordination system, Daoist Masters were subjected to a hierarchical order of ordination by the conferral of *lu* 錄 (registers [of gods]) and *jing* 經 (scriptural corpus).<sup>23</sup> Besides this ordination system, the liturgical role that defined Daoist Masters also remained profoundly rooted in Daoism.

After the Tang, however, the liturgical tradition of the Zhengyi Heavenly Masters became integrated with local communities and temple organizations by providing ritual specialists.<sup>24</sup> Zhengyi Daoist Masters served the local communities and popular temples. In identifying the transformation of Daoism with the advent of the Song dynasty, Schipper points out that “the ancient Way of the Heavenly Master, with its elaborate liturgical organization, had gradually ceased to exist in the late Tang and Five Dynasties period.”<sup>25</sup> During the Northern Song period (960–1127), there was a further establishment of three separate liturgical sects: the Shangqing 上清, the Lingbao 靈寶, and the Zhengyi. Each sect identified itself with one of three mountains and gained the privilege of being an official Daoist ordination center, namely Maoshan 茅山 (modern Jiangsu), Longhushan, and Gezaoshan 閩皂山 (modern Jiangxi), usually called *sanshan fulu* 三山符籙 (the conferrals of talismans *fu* and registers *lu* at the three mountains). Meanwhile, the liturgical development of Daoism in the religion of the townspeople was further found in the rise of a variety of Daoist ritual methods (*daofa* 道法), distinguished by new revelations of different methods, such as the Shenxiaofa 神霄法, the Wuleifa 五雷法, the Tianxin zhengfa 天心正法, the Jingming zhongxiaofa 淨明忠孝法, and the Qingweifa 清微法.<sup>26</sup> The emergence of these new liturgical methods can be seen as a “remarkable testimony of Daoism’s adaptability”<sup>27</sup> in the Song period, as it transformed the great medieval liturgical tradition of the Heavenly Masters by meeting the new religious challenges from lay organizations of local cults in the regions south of the Yangzi River.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the demise of the unified liturgical system of the Zhengyi Heavenly Masters after the late Tang period, there appeared a new successor to the Zhang lineage of the Zhengyi Heavenly Master at Longhushan, claiming to be the seat of the very lineage of the early Heavenly Masters of the Later Han period.<sup>29</sup> Henceforth, at least from the seventh century, the new Zhengyi Heavenly Master tradition was centered on Longhushan and became vastly influential by obtaining official recognition and titles (*fenghao* 封號) from imperial dynasties after the Song.

During the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), the Zhang family of Heavenly Masters at Longhushan was granted imperial authority to administer all Daoist affairs in the Jiangnan area of southern China. Relying on this authority, ordinations of Daoist Masters originally held in the three distinct mountains were then put under the undisputed monopoly of the Zhengyi Heavenly Masters.<sup>30</sup> The Heavenly Masters issued ordination certificates to thousands of Daoist Masters and regulated their various traditions and liturgical ranks and privileges within a large region of the Jiangnan area.

In the thirty-first year of the Zhiyuan 至元 reign (1294), the thirty-eighth successor of the Heavenly Master, Zhang Yucai 張與材, was officially conferred “nominal head of the Zhengyi order” (*Zhengyi jiaozhu* 正一教主).<sup>31</sup> Henceforth, every successor of the Heavenly Master continued to inherit this religious power and official title.

When the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) emerged from the ruins of the Mongol regime, the new emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328–98), entrusted the forty-second Heavenly Master of Longhushan, Zhang Zhengcai 張正材, with the Daoist title “the Great Perfected” (*dazhenren* 大真人) and greater imperial power, by which the Heavenly Master obtained leadership over all of Daoism, not only in a large region of southern China but now throughout the country (*zhangtianxia daojiaoshi* 掌天下道教事).<sup>32</sup> As the most prominent representative of Daoism, the Heavenly Master was admitted to the Ming palace and granted his dignity as a mandarin of the second degree (*zheng'erpin* 正二品).<sup>33</sup> For centuries, the Tianshifu, the head offices of the Zhengyi Heavenly Master tradition at Longhushan, survived and served as an ordination center until the sixty-third successor of the Zhang lineage, Master Zhang Enpu 張恩溥 (1904–69), fled to Taiwan when the Republican government fell in 1949.

In the meantime, the monastic tradition of the Quanzhen order, which was founded around 1170 by Wang Zhe 王嘉 (1113–70) in Shandong and was originally held in high esteem at the Yuan court, suffered a “political eclipse” of imperial favor during the Ming dynasty.<sup>34</sup> Thus, although the Quanzhen order continued with its many monasteries situated all over the country, the Zhengyi Heavenly Masters actually took over the leading role in Daoism. Indeed, in the Ming period, Quanzhen Daoist Masters often practiced the Zhengyi liturgical methods (*Zhengyi fa* 正一法). Chen Mingguai 陳銘珪 (1824–81), in his *Changchun Daojiao yuanliu* 長春道教源流, points out: “At that time . . . those who were Quanzhen Daoist Masters could not be appointed as Daoist officials if they did not also know the Zhengyi [ritual].”<sup>35</sup>

As described above, there were other liturgical schools such as the Shangqing and Lingbao, with the coexistence of new liturgical traditions such as the Shenxiaofa, the Tianxin zhengfa, the Jingming zhongxiaodao, and the Qingweifa. In the Ming dynasty, all of these liturgical schools were assimilated into the Zhengyi order under the leadership of the Heavenly Masters of Longhushan.<sup>36</sup> This assimilation of schools and liturgical sects created a new configuration, which has been maintained until the present day. That is to say, Daoism mainly consists of the Zhengyi order, with its *huoju* (hearth-dwelling) Daoist Masters, and the Quanzhen

order, with its monastic institutions. As Schipper points out, the forty-third Heavenly Master, Zhang Yuchu 張宇初 (1361–1410), in his *Daomen Shigui* 道門十規 (Ten guidelines for Daoism), clearly presented such an historical view of Daoism, which held to the separation between the two main Daoist orders of Zhengyi and Quanzhen, and in which various kinds of *daofa* of Lingbao, Qingwei, and Jingming were assimilated under the Zhengyi order because of their same original source of revelation from Laozi, the Taishang 太上 (the Most High).<sup>37</sup> As a result of the assimilation process of all the liturgical schools and sects into one Daoist order that was endowed with imperial authority over Daoism, the Zhengyi order seemingly became the name of a unified grand liturgical tradition that aggregated all Daoist ritual traditions, with the exception of the monastic order of Quanzhen.<sup>38</sup>

As noted by Schipper, from the Song up to the Ming periods, the medieval Daoist ecclesia was replaced and Daoism became, by tying itself closely to local communities and popular temples built and run by the lay organizations (*hui*), the religion of common people in cities, market towns, and villages, and provided them with their written liturgical framework and ritual specialists.<sup>39</sup> The result of this transformation was that the Zhengyi order penetrated deeply into local society with its mainly liturgical traditions, including Lingbao and Qingwei, as well as the secular tradition of *huojū daoshi*. It was, meanwhile, because of the “popularization” and “secularization” of Zhengyi Daoism, to quote Schipper, that unorganized groups of vernacular priests, the *fashi*, emerged and officiated at local cults, but at some distance from the classical ritual tradition and ordination system stemming from the Zhengyi Daoism of Longhushan.

Of all the qualities that define the liturgical office of a Zhengyi *daoshi*, the adept must be initiated and receive his ordination (*shoulu* 授籙) within the liturgical institution of the Heavenly Master’s Office at Longhushan according to a hierarchical order. As early as the early Heavenly Master movement in third century, there had been a hierarchical organization of different “registers,” which were, in principle, “a talismanic list of divine intermediaries who [would] obey the [Master’s] commands and enable him to communicate with the different spheres of the universe.”<sup>40</sup> For instance, the present first rank of all registers is given as the “Register of All Merits of the Three and the Five of the Most High” (*Taishang sanwu dugong lu* 太上三五都功籙). By receiving a specific register, the adept’s corresponding rank of liturgical office is conferred from the Heavenly Master’s Office; the more extensive the register, the higher the Daoist Master’s rank. Pilgrimages to the Heavenly Master’s Office at Longhushan by pro-



spective ordines from local Daoist families occurred often. In addition to a nationwide ordination held at Longhushan, it often happened that the Heavenly Master or his Daoist magistrate (*faguan* 法官) visited the various provinces to hold ordination platforms and give out Zhengyi *daoshi* ordination certificates or licenses (called *zhizhao* 執照 or *buzhao* 部照) bearing the seal of the Heavenly Master. Besides subjecting him to the rank of his liturgical office in a religious sense, the Heavenly Master's conferral of an ordination certificate was important for a Daoist Master as long as he could use it to prove his quality as a pure ritual specialist of Daoist liturgy, uncontaminated by local shamanistic traditions. In this regards, Goossaert is right to point out that in imperial China, the Zhang Heavenly Masters and their *faguan* officials at Longhushan were actually "constituted as a bureaucratic superstructure over the very loosely organized Daoist Masters."<sup>41</sup> In consequence, Daoism's orthodoxy could be maintained.

In the fifteenth year of his reign (1382), Taizu, the first emperor of the Ming, took steps toward setting up a state-appointed Daoist bureaucracy to administer all Daoist Masters on all levels, namely the Daolu si 道錄司 (Bureau of Daoist Registration) in the Board of Rites (Libu 禮部), the Daoji si 道紀司 (Bureau of Daoist Institutions) at the provincial level, and the Daohui si 道會司 (Bureau of Daoist Assemblies) in counties.<sup>42</sup> As a result of this new setup, the Bureau of Daoist Registration was entrusted with the official power for the administration of all levels of Daoist affairs and Daoist Masters, and the Bureau of Daoist Institutions mainly dealt with Daoist administration in the provinces.<sup>43</sup> In so doing, it is obvious that Taizu aimed at regulating the numbers and activities of Daoist Masters in the country on all levels under the administration of Daoist ministers (*daoguan* 道官). With the exception of the Bureau of Daoist Assemblies in the counties, the Daoist officials in the Bureau of Daoist Registration and the Bureau of Daoist Institutions on the provincial level were granted dignity as mandarins ranking from the sixth to the ninth degree and were paid for their offices.<sup>44</sup>

One of the significant means of regulating the number of *daoshi* on the local level involved the system of "ordination certificates" (*dudie* 度牒). Supposedly, Daoist Masters who were eligible for granting *dudie* had to pass instituted Daoist examinations.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the question of the ordination certificates is a thorny one because in addition to secular authorities the Daoist institutions handed out their certificates of ordination to newly ordained clerics. More than that state of confusion, although some scholars may trust that the issuing of ordination certificates was a constant



practice in the Ming,<sup>46</sup> there is no evidence showing that the issue of *dudie* was only restricted to temple clerics without extension to *huoju daoshi*. As seen above, the Ming dynasty gave clear preference to the Zhengyi order. It is then possible that Zhengyi *daoshi* might also have obtained *dudie* through Daoist ministers at the local level. It is, however, true that the Zhengyi Heavenly Master of Longhushan was entrusted with the authority to nominate, promote, or demote the national Daoist ministers on all levels, even though they were supposedly under the administration of the Board of Rites.<sup>47</sup>

In Guangzhou Prefecture in the Ming dynasty, it is recorded that the Bureau of Daoist Institutions was, for the first time, established in the Xuanmiaoguan 玄妙觀<sup>48</sup> of the Zhengyi order in the fifteenth year of the Hongwu 洪武 reign (1382).<sup>49</sup> The bureau was administrated by four officials, a registrar (*duji* 都紀), a vice-registrar (*fu duji* 副都紀), and two secretaries (*zhangshu* 掌書). As the bureau was an official body that administered all Daoist affairs in each prefecture, the registrar in the Xuanmiaoguan at Guangzhou was the most prominent representative in charge of Daoism in the prefecture of Guangzhou, including the issue of *dudie* for recognized *daoshi* and their administration. The bureau was also responsible for any violation of the law committed by the *daoshi* within their jurisdiction. As a basic rule, the official and religious institution of the bureau in the Xuanmiaoguan was entrusted with the authority to supervise not only Daoist Masters who resided in temples, but also all *huoju daoshi* spread over the prefecture.

#### ZHENGYI DAOIST MASTERS IN SOUTHERN GUANGDONG IN THE QING AND REPUBLICAN PERIODS

We know surprisingly little about the historical evolution and activities of Daoist Masters of the Zhengyi Heavenly Master tradition in Chinese local society. How do the regionally based Zhengyi *daoshi* uphold the grand classical rituals of the Zhengyi tradition and claim their unity with the Zhang Heavenly Master tradition of Longhushan?

Before the reign of Kangxi 康熙 (1662–1722), we cannot find any trace of the Quanzhen order in Guangdong, but only the presence of Zhengyi *daoshi*.<sup>50</sup> Chen Minggui, in his *Changchun Daojiao yuanliu*, highlighted the very late appearance of the Quanzhen order in Guangdong and remarked that “after the Yuan and until the present [Qing] dynasty, the Quanzhen order had already been transmitted to many provinces in the region of Jiangnan, but we had not heard its existence in Yue 粵 [mod-

ern Guangdong].”<sup>51</sup> In my study of the history of the Quanzhen order in the Qing dynasty, I have pointed out that the seven “public” (*shifang conglin* 十方叢林) Quanzhen monasteries in Guangdong registered in the Baiyunguan 白雲觀 at Beijing around 1940 were all Daoist temples that had later converted to the Quanzhen order in the Qing period.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, we find a historical record registering a Daoist Master’s struggle against the conversion to a Quanzhen affiliation of the monasteries at Luofushan 羅浮山. A Daoist Master at Luofushan named Li Wuwu 李無無 argued that “in the early Yuan dynasty, the Perfected Qiu Chuji 丘處機 founded the Quanzhen order. [But] the monasteries of Luofu have long been altars of the Lingbaofa, [therefore] Daoist Masters of other orders cannot become their abbots.”<sup>53</sup>

In view of the history of the Zhengyi order in Guangdong before the period when the Quanzhen order began to establish itself in Luofushan and in Guangzhou city in the early Qing period, one could only find a few Daoist Masters residing in Daoist monasteries of the Zhengyi order (including the Lingbao and Qingwei traditions) in Guangdong, such as the Xuanmiaoguan at Guangzhou and Huizhou 惠州, and the Chongxuguan 沖虛觀 at Luofushan. Nevertheless, these masters did not live celibate lives (*chujia* 出家) in cloisters.

With regard to the majority of the *daoshi* spread over Guangdong, it is believed that almost all Zhengyi *daoshi* lived a married life at home and were hired when called to perform liturgical services. The tradition of Zhengyi Daoism is primarily a tradition of *huoju* Daoist Masters. According to this understanding, Schipper describes that “marriage remains one of the conditions of becoming a Master. Daoist monks are rare; even more than the way of life, the liturgical function, the role of ritual specialist, defines the *tao-shih*.”<sup>54</sup> The *huoju* ritual specialists usually provided liturgical services to villages, families, temples, and individuals within a large area determined by local religious traditions and the extent of their own reputations. A county gazetteer of Panyu (*Panyu xianzhi* 番禺縣志) printed in the thirty-ninth year of the Qianlong reign (1774) reported the flourishing Zhengyi *huoju daoshi* in southern Guangdong:

Without the presence of spirit-mediums in Yue (Guangdong), *huoju daoshi* prevailed. In the doorways of their homes, signboards were hung, using their surnames as the brands of their Daoist halls [*daoguan* 道館]. These Daoist halls were mostly seen in the streets in villages and towns. Especially when kids suffered from illness, [*huoju daoshi*] were immediately called on for performing rituals to dispel their illness.<sup>55</sup>

According to Vincent Goossaert's findings in the First National Historical Archive, Beijing, the 1737–39 census of all clerics in the country implemented by the Qing state between the first and fourth years of the Qianlong reign documented a total of 787 *huoju daoshi* in Guangdong. The registration was a result of two complementary censuses conducted in the years 1737–38 and 1738–39 after a thorough census already taken during 1736–37.<sup>56</sup> If one takes into account the missing number of *huoju daoshi* registered in the first thorough census of 1736–37, it is reasonable to conclude that the total registered *huoju daoshi* in Guangdong was one to two thousand people. In addition, as Goossaert points out, one should also keep in mind that the total registered *huoju daoshi* would have been far from a complete inventory of all Zhengyi ritual specialists living from liturgical services without the provision of ordination certificates (*dudie*) or licenses (*zizhao*) supposedly granted by the local Daoist Bureau.

In a lawsuit statement filed by a group of 500 *huoju daoshi* in Guangzhou city to the Republican government in Canton in 1930, these *huoju daoshi* defended themselves as “pure Daoist Masters [of the Zhengyi order],” and they, from generation to generation, were under the official supervision of the Daoji si of the Xuanmiaoguan in order to obtain licenses (*zhizhao*).<sup>57</sup> In view of this evidence, it is believed that from the Ming and to the late Qing, the *huoju daoshi* of the Zhengyi order were all administered under the control of the Daoist Bureaus at all local levels.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the historical and social development of southern Guangdong from the Song to the Ming dynasties. Nevertheless, in view of the flourishing *huoju daoshi* in Guangdong from the Ming to the early Qing periods, it is reasonable to date the origin of the liturgical tradition of Zhengyi Daoism in southern Guangdong at least no later than the early reign of Taizu in the Ming, when the Heavenly Master Zhang was conferred as the Head of the Zhengyi order and obtained the leadership of Daoism throughout the country. In contrast to its prominence in the Ming, the Zhengyi order was gradually repressed from the early Qing on. As many studies have already pointed out, the early Qianlong period actually witnessed several anti-Zhengyi measures.<sup>58</sup> Schipper summarizes this as follows:

Thus after 1740 the Heavenly Master was no longer admitted to the palace. In 1742, Daoists were dismissed from their role in the state rituals and Daoist music was barred from state ceremonials. In 1752, the Heavenly Master was demoted from his dignity as a mandarin of the second degree to the fifth. He was also barred from presenting proposals for the canonization of saints . . . Finally, in 1821, the first

year of the reign of the Daoguang emperor, the Heavenly Master was barred not only from court, but from the capital.<sup>59</sup>

Opting for a fundamentalist Confucian approach to Daoism, the Qing state's policy of keeping a distance from the orthodoxy of the Zhengyi Heavenly Master not only resulted in demoting him, but the traditional ordination system of the Zhengyi order was also undermined. As described above, this ordination system had lasted for centuries. It crucially secured the bureaucratic and liturgical link between the Heavenly Master tradition of Longhushan and Daoist Masters on all local levels in the country.

In the early years of the Qing (mid-seventeenth century), the fifty-third Heavenly Master, Zhang Hongren 張洪任, tried to rebuild the hierarchical order of ordination ranks granted to ordinees, including registers (*lu* 錄) and offices (*zhi* 職) in Heavenly departments. In 1658, the newly installed ordination document was printed and transmitted under the title *Tiantan yuge* 天壇玉格 (Jade Code of the Heavenly Altar), edited by Zhang Hongren and collated by the eminent Suzhou Daoist Shi Daoyuan 施道淵 (d. 1678). Despite this attempt, as late as 1739 the Qing state's policy to curtail the Heavenly Master's authority and orthodoxy within Daoism was seen in the Qianlong emperor's decree that prohibited the Heavenly Master or his Daoist officials from holding ordination platforms in the provinces.<sup>60</sup> Here, one should understand the extensive and significant destruction created by such anti-Zhengyi measures. Even now the orthodoxy of the ordination system of Zhengyi *huoju daoshi*, having functioned as a key link for centuries tying *huoju daoshi* on all local levels to the Daoist orthodoxy of liturgy represented by the Heavenly Master's Office, has not yet been properly restored.<sup>61</sup>

As mentioned above, the Zhengyi Daoist tradition is primarily a tradition of *huoju* (hearth-dwelling) Daoist Masters. The vocational identity of a Zhengyi *daoshi* is more defined by his liturgical service than his way of life or residence affiliated with a Daoist temple. Nevertheless, the category of *huoju* that was discursively used to apply to all local Zhengyi *daoshi*, who had no normal religious life residing in a temple, was, for the first time, adopted in the official registration during the early Qing period.<sup>62</sup> By ignoring it as a kind of religious and official recognition of Daoism, the category of "Zhengyi" was not found in the registration of all clerics in the country in the census that was carried out during 1736–39. The administrative decision to replace the old title of "Zhengyi" with *huoju* actually indicated the Qing state's bureaucratic step to deprive "Zhengyi" *daoshi* of their "recognized" identity formerly built by their connection with

the orthodoxy of the liturgical tradition of the Heavenly Master. Besides the approved category of Quanzhen Daoists, *daoshi* were classified into two divisions, namely “Qingwei Lingbao *daoshi* 清微靈寶道士” or *huoju daoshi*. In view of this classification of Daoist Masters, Goossaert observes that “we can consider that the state chose to ignore the name Zhengyi in order to avoid recognition of the ordination system of the Heavenly Master that it tried to curtail.”<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Qingwei and Lingbao were only different liturgical traditions within the unified Zhengyi order from the Ming period on. Most of the Qingwei Lingbao *daoshi* were actually *huoju daoshi* of the Zhengyi order.<sup>64</sup> Disconnected from the liturgical orthodoxy of the Heavenly Master, the term *huoju* has no meaning whatsoever as far as ordinations are concerned. It only refers to the non-monastic life of a majority of *daoshi*, who contrasted with monastic Quanzhen Daoists by living a married life outside of temples. As a general rule, because *huoju daoshi* did not reside in temples, they had to be restricted, supervised, and controlled by local authorities. Such an official measure in demoting the traditional status of Zhengyi *huoju daoshi* can be further observed in the Qing’s discriminatory policy for issuing ordination certificates. According to Goossaert, in the 1736–39 census the state only granted *dudie* (ordination certificates) to the Quanzhen Daoists, and granted *buzhao* (licenses) to the *huoju daoshi*, thus discriminating between these two different kinds of Daoist Masters.<sup>65</sup> Undoubtedly, the decision by the Qing state to issue *huoju daoshi* licenses seems to indicate an extension of bureaucratic control rather than a religious recognition of their liturgical qualifications.

In the case of *huoju daoshi* in Guangdong in the late imperial period, there is no clear evidence showing that their liturgical careers were much hindered by the local authorities, despite the state’s severe control over them. Nevertheless, the consequence of disconnecting them from the ordination system and the orthodoxy of the liturgical tradition of the Heavenly Masters at Longhushan caused *huoju daoshi* in local districts to gradually become a group of vernacular priests, always identified as lay exorcists or shamanists.

In southern Guangdong, it is a common practice for the literati and ordinary people to call *huoju daoshi* “*nahm mouh lao* 喃嚙佬.” This term was popularized as early as the late nineteenth century and has continued until the present. Although the colloquial Cantonese of *nahm mouh* is of uncertain origin, one can easily assimilate this term with *nanwu* 南巫, namely “southern shamans.”<sup>66</sup> As far as I know, almost all Zhengyi *huoju daoshi* are not comfortable with this colloquial term.<sup>67</sup> It indicates that *huoju daoshi* have to face a constant problem of being assimilated with

geomancers, coffin makers, corpse handlers, funeral musicians, producers of ritual paraphernalia, and exhumers.<sup>68</sup> David Faure, in his interviews with a number of *nahm mouh lao* (*hujuo daoshi*) in a rural village in the New Territories, Hong Kong, in the 1980s, had the following impression: "In several interviews I had with the priests (26 March, 16 April and 20 October), they defended their professionalism against the charge that they might be 'cheating the deities and the ghosts' (aak-shan p'in-kwai) without my prompting, the charge being made quite commonly by villagers in conversation."<sup>69</sup>

The Panyu County gazetteer (*Panyu xianzhi*) of the Qianlong reign described that the Daoist Halls (*daoguan*) opened by *huoju daoshi* for providing liturgical services were still flourishing in cities and villages in the southern Guangdong area. To add another piece of evidence, I have analyzed one exceptional document from the City Library of Zhongshan 中山 in Guangzhou city, namely the "Guangzhoushi bushi xingxiang wuxi kanyu diaozhabiao" 廣州市卜筮星相巫覡堪輿調查表 (Survey document for all occupations of divination, astrology, physiognomy and palmistry, sorcery and geomancy) prepared by the Republican government in Canton in 1933 summarizing the census of all the 276 Daoist halls of *huoju daoshi* spread across the city at that time.<sup>70</sup> Besides the spread of these Daoist halls, a chief representative of all *huoju daoshi* in Guangzhou named Deng Xianglin 鄧香林 claimed that around 500 people pursued Daoist liturgical careers in the city of Guangzhou.<sup>71</sup> According to Master Deng, most of their liturgical offices were inherited from generation to generation.<sup>72</sup> Also, in an interview I had with an elderly *huoju daoshi* who migrated from Guangzhou to Hong Kong in 1945, he reported that his ancestors were also Zhengyi *daoshi*, and, more important, were paid by the Qing government for their liturgical services.<sup>73</sup> In view of this evidence, we can assume a certain extent of development of Zhengyi *daoshi* in the late Qing period.

As stated, due to the Qing state's anti-Zhengyi policy from the early Qianlong reign, all Zhengyi *daoshi* in local districts were disconnected from the traditional ordination system of the Heavenly Masters at Longhushan. Because this disconnection has lasted for more than three centuries up to the present, it should not be surprising that in 1930 the 500 *huoju daoshi* in Guangzhou made no reference to the Zhang family of the Heavenly Masters or the ordination system of the Zhengyi order when they filed an appeal with the Republican government to explain their historical tradition of being Zhengyi *daoshi*. They highlighted that their Zhengyi liturgical tradition had the following characteristics: (1) they

inherited it from the Zhengyi order; (2) Laozi and Zhang Daoling 張道陵 were their main deities; (3) for generations, they were hired to perform liturgical services at homes; and (4) their careers were not the same as shaman-mediums (*Zhengyi daoye yu wuxi butong* 正一道業與巫覡不同), due to the Qing rule that Zhengyi *daoshi* were officially governed by the Daohui si at the district level and, more importantly, they had obtained official “Edicts for Disciplinary Rules” (*jieyu* 戒諭) from the Daohui si to be permitted to legally perform Daoist liturgy.<sup>74</sup>

In the City Archives of Guangzhou, there are three such edicts that were issued by the Daohui si of the county of Nanhai 南海 in the twenty-third and thirtieth years of the Guangxu reign 光緒 (1897, 1904) and the third year of the Xuantong reign 宣統 (1911).<sup>75</sup> In classical administrative style, the contents of these three edicts are much the same. Without any reference to the Zhengyi order or the Heavenly Masters, the edicts are simply official documents that consist of a set of eleven disciplinary rules for the Zhengyi *huoju daoshi*. Without doubt, the edicts were used to control and manage married *huoju daoshi* with special attention to the “correctness” of their liturgical performance and moral behavior. For instance, the edict stresses that Daoist Masters, when performing liturgical services and ceremonies outside of Daoist temples, must abide by standardized ritual vestments, manuscripts, and instruments, and should not create any disorder. Here, one can notice that by being subjected to the state’s administrative control, Daoist Masters as ritual specialists outside of temples had become more reliant on the state’s specific recognition than their religious quality as practitioners of Daoist liturgy.

Despite recurring political constraints upon clerics under the imperial dynasties, *huoju daoshi* in local districts still had legal status and a means of obtaining support from the state’s local administration in performing liturgical services. Nevertheless, after the fall of the last imperial dynasty, the Nationalist government in Guangdong ushered in a reformist campaign to eradicate superstitions and popular cults, known as the Reforms of Customs (*fengsu gaige* 風俗改革). Like many religious traditions condemned as superstition in a host of sociopolitical changes during the Republican period, non-monastic Daoism was outlawed as superstitious or deviant belief (*mixin* 迷信). Listed as sorcerers, Zhengyi *huoju daoshi* were condemned and banned from performing liturgical services; all Daoist halls of Zhengyi *daoshi* had to be closed. Even before the complete destruction of Daoism in the Cultural Revolution, the Daoist halls of the *huoju daoshi* could not survive intact in Guangzhou as well as in other counties of Guangdong before 1949 and the advent of communist rule.



CONTEMPORARY ZHENGYI DAOIST MASTERS  
IN HONG KONG AND MACAU

Most Daoist temples or Daoist altars in Hong Kong are predominantly devoted to the worship of Patriarch Lü (Lüzü 呂祖).<sup>76</sup> In Hong Kong, organized monasticism has never been practiced in Daoist temples (*guan*) or Daoist halls (*tang*), although many devotees of these Daoist temples or altars, who worship Wang Chongyang 王重陽 and Qiu Chuji (1148–1227), claim that they belong to the Longmen 龍門 lineage of the Quanzhen order.<sup>77</sup> These Daoist temples or halls of Lüzü dominate the Hong Kong Daoist Association, which was formed in 1961.

In contrast to the Daoist communities of Lüzü, there are an estimated 500 *Nahm-mouh* Daoist Masters in Hong Kong, who belong to the Zhengyi liturgical tradition.<sup>78</sup> Zhengyi Daoist Masters do not unite as a community of the faithful to conduct group worship. They are ritual specialists, who are hired to provide Daoist liturgies when rituals for the dead (*gongde* 功德), Hungry Ghost festivals (also called Middle Origin Festivals, *zhongyuan fahui* 中元法會), or communal offerings for great peace (*Taiping qingjiao* 太平清醮) take place. Therefore, as in Taiwan, where many scholars have worked extensively on Zhengyi Daoist rites since their discovery by Schipper in the 1960s, the Zhengyi Daoist ritual tradition is still preserved and widely practiced in the Cantonese communities in Hong Kong and Macau. For instance, every day and night, more than 100 funeral rituals are conducted in the Daoist liturgical manner by *Nahm-mouh* Masters in funeral halls or other *Nahm-mouh* halls throughout Hong Kong Island, Kowloon city, and the New Territories.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the need for more extensive comparative studies, we can assume that the ritual traditions of Zhengyi Daoism that have been passed down in Taiwan (including its origin in Fujian) and in southern Guangdong evolved and varied significantly over time, becoming distinct localized ritual traditions.<sup>80</sup> Of many variations, one can notice that the two-tiered topology of Daoist Masters and vernacular priests (also called “Barefoot Masters”) is not relevant to understanding Zhengyi Daoism in Hong Kong and Macau. Vernacular priests performing rituals with spirit-mediums are not much in evidence in Hong Kong and Macau. In most contemporary rites in these two communities, Zhengyi *daoshi* are more like the “black headed masters” in Taiwan described by Schipper, in that they can perform both classical and vernacular rituals.<sup>81</sup>

For instance, in the classical *jiao* (communal offerings) ritual, which lasts several days and is conducted in village communities of the New



Territories, Hong Kong, on behalf of the people of the villages, one can often see a Master of High Merit (*gaogong* 高功) winding a red turban around his own headdress like the Barefoot Masters of Taiwan to perform vernacular rites such as the rites of “Military Training of the Heavenly Soldiers” (*dawu* 打武), the “Invocation of the Five Spirits Armies” (*zhao wuyingbin* 召五營兵), and the “Guarding the Five Cardinal Points [of the Altars]” (*jiejie* 結界). Especially during the “Ritual to Send Off Epidemics” (*songwen* 送瘟), one can see a *gaogong* holding in his left hand fanions of the Commander of the Heavenly Soldiers of the Five Cardinal Directions, and in his right hand a buffalo horn on which he blows to call on the gods.

Another example was observed in a Zhengyi ritual in Macau that involved performing the exorcistic rite of *shouxie* 收邪 during the classical ritual of the “Offerings to the Dipper” (*lidou* 禮斗). A classical Zhengyi *daoshi*'s head was covered with a red turban and he blew a buffalo horn. In short, these observations are good examples of Zhengyi *daoshi* performing both classical and vernacular rites, depending upon the actual functions and aims of each rite concerned. Indeed, on many ritual occasions, classical and vernacular rituals are performed in succession. In this regard, Schipper is certainly right to point out the “complementarity” of the classical and vernacular rituals in the tradition of Zhengyi Daoism. To quote Schipper, “many classical rituals are supplemented or duplicated by vernacular ones.”<sup>82</sup>

Since the early Qing period, the Zhang Heavenly Master at Longhushan had lost his direct transmission of the ordination system and liturgical rank to local Zhengyi Daoist Masters at the provincial and district levels. Pilgrimage to the holy place of Zhengyi Daoism for “receiving registers” (*shoulu*) was rare. Nevertheless, as in many parts of southern China, the classical Zhengyi ritual tradition has been passed on to the present day in Hong Kong and Macau through hereditary transmission, primarily from father to son, within individual families or through master-disciple networks. Knowledge of the details of Daoist rituals is the most valuable preserve of Daoist Masters, who need this knowledge to be able to give a proper performance. Besides, ritual knowledge is embedded in the ritual expertise that is transmitted from father to son (or from master to disciple), especially in the “ritual manuscripts” (*keyishu* 科儀書) and other written “ritual documents” (*wenjian* 文檢) possessed by the Daoist family of the chief Master, the Master of High Merit. A Master of High Merit transmits the totality of his ritual tradition only to his oldest or most gifted son. This hereditary transmission of ritual knowledge and classical written manuscripts and documents has served as the main vehicle for

the uninterrupted transmission of the Zhengyi ritual tradition in China for centuries.

In my fieldwork in the New Territories, Hong Kong, I traveled with a forty-year-old Zhengyi Daoist Master of High Merit named Chen Jun 陳鈞, whose ritual altar is called Guangsheng tang 廣生堂. Master Chen Jun is now a prominent chief Master, conducting many great communal *jiao* ceremonies for many villages in the New Territories, which are exceptional events in the life of village people. As is usual in the Zhengyi tradition in Guangdong, Master Chen Jun has not obtained ordination from the Zhengyi headquarters at Longhushan, and neither has he visited the mountain. He simply inherited the role of the Master of High Merit and the corpus of ritual manuscripts and documents from his father, Chen Jiu 陳九. Without any ordination rite, Master Chen Jun was bestowed the Daoist name (*daohao* 道號, also called *faming* 法名) of Hongde 弘德 from his father, who had the Daoist name of Xingdao 興道. According to Master Chen Jun, there has been a lineage (*fapai* 法派) of Daoist names transmitted in his family for generations, including the five characters of *dao* 道, *de* 德, *xuan* 玄, *xin* 心, and *jing* 靜. Following his succession Master Chen Jun represents at least the sixth generation of *huoju daoshi* in his family.

Master Chen Jun is the youngest of four sons in the family, but perhaps the most gifted in performing Daoist rituals. Master Chen Jun migrated with his father to the northern part of the New Territories in 1979 from his native village in the province of Bao'an 寶安, called *Shajing* 沙井 village, which is close to the Shenzhen 深圳 airport in Guangdong. Like other contemporary *huoju daoshi* in the mainland, Chen Jiu had been banned from performing Daoist rituals since the 1950s. Almost all of the ritual manuscripts that Master Chen Jiu possessed were taken from him and burned or lost during the Cultural Revolution. Master Chen Jiu passed away at the age of seventy-seven in 1999. At present, Master Chen Jun is assisted by his three elder brothers and three disciples, serving as acolytes, and is one of the busiest Masters of High Merit in conducting Zhengyi Daoist rituals on many occasions in the New Territories and in Shenzhen.

Following the practice of Zhengyi *huoju daoshi* in southern Guangdong that has lasted for centuries, Master Chen Jun works out of his home and is hired to provide ritual services to individuals, families, village communities, and temples within a large area determined by local customs and traditions. In the course of my fieldwork, I observed Master Chen Jun performing ritual services such as pure *jiao* ceremonies, consecrating (*kai-guang* 開光) newly carved god statues for the inauguration of rebuilt tem-

ples, ancestral halls or fishing boats, sending off epidemics (*songwen*), the birthday festival of the Heavenly Empress (Tianhou 天后) or God of the South Sea (Hongsheng 洪聖), marriage rites (*tuohu* 脫禍), feeding hungry ghosts (*shishi* 施食), the universal deliverance of orphan souls (*pudu* 普度), and funeral services (*gongde* 功德). In view of all these ritual services performed by Master Chen Jun, the liturgical tradition of Zhengyi Daoism remains profoundly rooted in the communities of the Chinese people in his area, despite the gradual persecution and destruction of the Zhengyi order headquartered in the hereditary home of the descendants of Zhang Heavenly Masters at Longhushan from the early Qing up to the Cultural Revolution.

Besides the example of Master Chen Jun, many localized ritual traditions of Zhengyi Daoism have also developed significant variations over time in southern Guangdong. Another instance is a hereditary Daoist family in Macau. The Daoist Master Wu Tianshen 吳天燊 has lived in Macau since he was born in 1928. His grandfather, Wu Guomian 吳國綿, migrated from the county of Shunde 順德 in the Pearl River Delta in the last years of the Qing period and founded a Daoist Zhengyi hall, called the Daoist Hall of Qingyun. The Qingyun daoyuan 慶雲道院 has lasted up to the present and has become the most prestigious altar for performing Daoist liturgical services in Macau.<sup>83</sup> The collection of classical ritual manuscripts assembled by the Wu family is vast and comprehensive, and most texts are dated between the reigns of Kangxi and Tongzhi 同治.<sup>84</sup> The classical ritual manuscripts that Master Wu usually uses in rites contain scriptures (*jing* 經), litanies (*chan* 懺), rituals for *jiao*, *zhai*, and *pudu* (*keyi*), documents (*wenjian*), secret instructions (*mijue* 密訣), and talismans (*fu* 符).

Master Wu Tianshen is now the eldest but the most prominent *huoju daoshi* in Macau. By his own account, he served as an acolyte at the age of fourteen and became the Master of High Merit for the Qingyun daoyuan when he turned twenty-one. As is usual for most *huoju daoshi*, Master Wu Tianshen has never made a pilgrimage to the Longhushan to obtain ordination from the Heavenly Master Zhang. Rather, his father, Master Wu Jinwen 吳錦文, transmitted the totality of the family's ritual tradition to him. Like other localized ritual traditions of the Zhengyi order in southern Guangdong, the Qingyun daoyuan does not base itself on the orthodox lineage poem of the Zhang Heavenly Master at Longhushan. Instead, its transmitted lineage of religious names includes five characters in succession, namely *fei* 飛, *sheng* 昇, *ye* 謁, *yu* 玉, and *jing* 京. Master Wu Tianshen received the religious name of *jingyi* 京意, and his grand-

father and father received the religious names of *yeyuan* 謁元 and *yusheng* 玉生 respectively. According to Master Wu Tianshen, his ancestors were Zhengyi *daoshi* and practiced Daoist ritual in their native county of Shunde before moving to Macau. In my fieldwork in another city of Zhongshan in the Pearl River Delta, I found that a hereditary Daoist family adopted a similar lineage poem as the one practiced by *huoju daoshi* in Macau, namely *fei, sheng, ye, [di], jin*. This similarity seems to show that the Zhengyi ritual traditions in the areas of Shunde, Zhongshan, and Macau bear the same source.

Equally significant is the unexpected occurrence that helped to restore the contact between the Heavenly Master's Office and local *huoju daoshi* of Macau in 1949. Master Wu Tianshen told me that many elderly *huoju daoshi* of Macau in his generation adopted the same lineage poem that his Daoist ancestors have transmitted over many generations. Certainly, they have been disconnected from the tradition of the Heavenly Masters for centuries. On April 28, 1949, the sixty-third Heavenly Master, Zhang Enpu, left China and fled to Taiwan when the communist government took over.<sup>85</sup> On his way, the Heavenly Master traveled through Canton, Macau, and Hong Kong in the company of two Daoist magistrates of Longhushan named Zeng Weiyi 曾惟一 and Zhen Xiqin 曾習勤.<sup>86</sup> When the Heavenly Master reached Macau, he met a group of eleven Zhengyi *daoshi*, including Master Wu Tianshen and his father Master Wu Jinwen.<sup>87</sup> Due to a sense of allegiance to the Zhengyi order as well as the Heavenly Master's Office, the eleven *huoju daoshi* expressed to the Heavenly Master that they wished to obtain ordination. On September 15, 1949, the Heavenly Master conferred on them diplomas or licenses (*tie* 帖) in the name of the principal altar (*Wanfa zongtan* 萬法宗壇) of Longhushan that bore his seal in the name of Zhang Daoling's diocese (*Yangping zhi dugong yin* 陽平治都功印).<sup>88</sup> With this ordination, the Masters received the first rank of registers, namely the "Register of all Merit of Three and the Five of the Most High," with each affiliation to particular Heavenly Office. Nevertheless, the Heavenly Master reserved the lineage poem practiced by Zhengyi *daoshi* in Macau and, thus, did not force them to change back to the orthodoxy of the lineage poem of the Zhengyi order at Longhushan.

Despite its historical significance, the special encounter of the sixty-third Heavenly Master with the *huoju daoshi* in Macau is exceptional in regard to the modern development of the Zhengyi tradition in southern Guangdong. Instead of building their liturgical tradition upon the orthodoxy of the ordination system of the Heavenly Masters at Longhushan, the transmission of Zhengyi liturgical tradition in southern Guangdong

is more realistically embedded in the hereditary Daoist families of *huoju daoshi*. It is important to point out that the professional knowledge of the details and meanings of Daoist ritual is the preserve of Daoist Masters who have families and live like others, passing on the tradition to their oldest or most gifted sons. Despite changes in the political system in modern China, the same Zhengyi liturgical tradition has survived—almost miraculously, it seems—in many variations in several parts of Guangdong like Hong Kong, Macau, and other local Cantonese communities in the Pearl River Delta.

When they perform Zhengyi liturgy, almost all Masters of High Merit who practice in the New Territories of Hong Kong title themselves “the Servant Who is the Chief Officiant in Charge of Zhengyi Rituals” (*Zhengyi fengxing zhuke shichen* 正一奉行主科事臣). With the exception of the group of *huoju daoshi* in Macau, many contemporary *huoju daoshi* in southern Guangdong do not have a clear sense of allegiance to the traditional ordination system headed by the Heavenly Master Zhang. Nevertheless, when petitioning memorials in rites, they uniformly write down their Daoist title with a total of twenty-eight characters, namely *Taishang sanwu dugong [xiuzhen 修真] jinglu shenxiao yufu qingwei yanjiao xianguan zhangpan leiting sanjie bianyi* 太上三五都功修真經錄神霄玉府清微演教仙官掌判雷霆三界便宜. This Daoist title mainly consists of register, rank, and office according to the hierarchical order defined by the traditional ordination system of the Heavenly Master’s Office. According to the ordination liturgical manual of the *Tiantan yuge* of the Heavenly Master’s Office at Longhushan, the first part of this Daoist title comprises the title of Register *lu*, the “*Taishang sanwu dugong [xiuzhen] jinglu*” (Register of all Merit of Three and the Five of the Most High). The second part of the title refers to a heavenly office in a department to which a Daoist Master is conferred, namely, *shenxiao yufu qingwei yanjiao xianguan* (the Divine Officer for the Propagation of the Teaching of Qingwei in the Jade Office of Divine Empyrean), who is in charge of the Boards of the Three Worlds [of Heaven, Earth and Underworld], Fate and Thunder (*zhangpan leiting sanjie bianyi*).<sup>89</sup> Without any prior knowledge of the ordination system of Heavenly Masters at Longhushan, these local Daoist Masters unintentionally build their Daoist identity with the Zhengyi title, including specific heavenly rank and office, which miraculously corresponds to the traditional ordination system of Heavenly Master’s Office.

The final piece of evidence showing the continuity of the Zhengyi liturgical tradition in southern Guangdong is the extraordinary lines of descent within its liturgical manuscripts, which links contemporary ritual tradi-

tion to the great tradition of the Zhengyi order of the Song period or even earlier. Schipper's discovery of Taiwanese Daoist rites in the 1960s demonstrated that contemporary Daoist ritual preserves many elements of traditional liturgy as found in the Daoist Canon of the Ming Dynasty.<sup>90</sup> In his study of Daoist ritual in Fujian today, Kenneth Dean shows that "Tang versions of many rites composed by Zhang Wanfu 張萬福 (fl. 711–713) and Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933) show remarkable structural similarities with contemporary Daoist rituals practiced in many parts of China."<sup>91</sup> Although much remains to be further investigated, the Zhengyi Daoist ritual traditions within southern Guangdong can be likewise linked to the great traditions of the medieval and late imperial Daoist ritual of the Zhengyi order.<sup>92</sup> In this respect, studies have shown that the Daoist liturgy on the universal salvation of orphan souls that is widely performed in Hong Kong and Macau is indebted to the codified ritual texts that were compiled during the Song.<sup>93</sup>

There is one more obvious instance in which one can observe the present-day rite of the Division of Lamps (*fendeng* 分燈) on the first night of the communal *jiao* ritual that is performed in the New Territories. During the rite, the Nine Emperors (*jiudi* 九帝) are invited. To begin with, all of the lamps in the altar area are put out, and a new fire is brought in from outside. After the "Request for Light" (*qingguang* 請光), the Master of High Merits in turn lights the three lamps to be put before the Three Pure Ones (*sansheng* 三清). Fire represents the entry of the light of grace into our world of darkness and sin. With the light of the Three Pure Ones flooding the altar, it is then the rite of "striking the golden bell and the jade stone" (*ming jinzhong jia yuqing* 鳴金鐘戛玉磬). The *qing* 磬 (stone) represents the yin element, the Earth, the bell, yang and Heaven. First the bell is struck twenty-five times, then the stone thirty times. Then they are struck in union thirty-six times. Then the bell is struck nine times and the stone six.<sup>94</sup> Heaven and Earth are in their places. In Taiwan, there is a third rite of the "Rolling of the Screen" (*juanlian* 捲簾),<sup>95</sup> but this is not practiced in Hong Kong Zhengyi Daoism. Despite that difference, the liturgical texts of the rites of the "Division of Lamps" and the "Strike the Golden Bell and the Jade Stone" that are used by the Zhengyi *daoshi* in the New Territories are, amazingly, almost the same as the Qing's version of the ritual manuscript of *Jinlu fendeng juanlian yi zhuanji* 金錄分燈卷簾儀全集 (Ritual for the Division of Lamps and Rolling of the Screen of the Golden Register [Retreat]), discovered by Schipper in Taiwan, or the anthology of the Yellow Register protocols titled *Wushang huan-glu dazhai licheng yi* 無上黃錄大齋立成儀 (Standardized Rituals of the

Supreme Yellow Register Retreat) compiled by Jiang Shuyu 蔣叔輿 (1162–1223) in the Song period.<sup>96</sup>

Daoism is a Chinese religious tradition founded on complex liturgical functions and practices that address the everyday worries of local communities in China. The centrality of elaborate Daoist liturgies remained firm in the early medieval ecclesia of the Heavenly Masters as well as in the later form of Zhengyi Daoism. Despite the later transformation of Daoism in early modern China, the hereditary transmission of ritual expertise, manuscripts, and knowledge remains central to the identity of Daoist Masters. With them, the Masters obtain recognition during their public practice of liturgies for people of local communities in China. With this understanding, one can account for the important fact that the liturgical texts “take up not less than 3,000 juan 卷, out of 4,551, of the Ming Canon.”<sup>97</sup>

The origin of the Daoist liturgical tradition can be more or less traced back to the liturgy of early Heavenly Master Daoism, especially the ritual presentation of petitions, called *shangzhang* 上章. The liturgical transmission of Daoist Masters’ registers can also be directly associated with the liturgical organization for ordination that was first unified in Tang Daoism and later elaborated by the Zhengyi order of the Song period residing at Longhushan. As the Heavenly Master Zhang was the nominal head of the Zhengyi order from the Yuan and throughout the Ming periods, the Zhengyi tradition served as the liturgical center for all Daoist Masters in a large region of southern China.

Nevertheless, the liturgical association between Daoist Masters of the Zhengyi tradition and the traditional liturgical organization of Heavenly Masters has been disconnected in present-day southern Guangdong. The traditional ordination and institutional basis upon which the *huoju daoshi* of the southern Zhengyi order had relied on for centuries was destroyed at the end of the nineteenth century, and the process was completed after the fall of imperial China at the beginning of the twentieth century. During the Republican period, new Chinese elites strived to create a new and modernized society. In the wake of this modernization, the religious status of Heavenly Master Zhang was completely denigrated. The so called “feudalistic” Daoist bureaucracy that granted local Masters the legitimacy to perform liturgical services was abolished in twentieth-century China. The anti-superstition campaign in Republican China in the 1930s barred all *huoju daoshi* from performing Daoist liturgical services and ordered them to change to other jobs.

*Huoju daoshi* in Hong Kong and Macau (and in Taiwan), however, con-



tinued their liturgical services seemingly unhindered by colonial governance throughout the twentieth century. Despite a seemingly better situation, their liturgical profession faced a great challenge in the inevitable shift from a traditional society to a modern one in which the traditional liturgical organization, foundation, and support that were associated with the imperial system were discarded.

Local *huoju daoshi* today do not receive their ordination from the Heavenly Masters, and neither do they obtain licenses from the Daoist officers of the imperial bureaucracy. Without liturgical or official affiliation, they only belong to their own Daoist altars (*daotan* 道壇), which are characterized by their religious lineages. Although they perform liturgies to serve the larger communities in Hong Kong and Macau, they can no longer belong to the literati class. Instead, they always have to defend their professionalism against charges that they might be cheating the deities and ghosts. In southern Guangdong, they are denigrated by being called *nahm mouh lo* instead of Mr. Daoist Master (*daoshi xiansheng* 道士先生). They are acutely aware that their ambiguous position in society stems, in part, from the nature of their work. James L. Watson's observation of *huoju daoshi* in the New Territories in the 1970s helps to highlight the tough social situation of ritual specialists in the modern context:

The social position of the funeral priest is somewhat akin to that of undertaker in American small towns. They may reside in the community but they are not really of the community. Like the American mortician, Cantonese funeral priests are set apart by the nature of their work, and their neighbors—essentially a captive clientele—are never completely comfortable in their presence. Most of the priests I encountered during my research were married and had raised families in the communities they served.<sup>98</sup>

This description of *huoju daoshi* may only be a particular case, but it certainly reflects the social dilemma that they face in the modern context, even though one can find in them the continuity of a liturgical tradition that has been connected with Heavenly Master Daoism since the second century CE.



## 2. Revolution of Temporality

### *The Modern Schooling of Daoist Priests in Shanghai at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*

Yang Der-Ruey

However much it may appease the nostalgia of local Chinese or satisfy the exotic cravings of foreign tourists, the newly emerging temple Daoism in today's mainland China often amazes visitors from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, or Southeast Asian Chinese communities, who have long been used to the "old-fashioned" temple Daoism in their home communities. The admission fees for temple visits, the temples' short and rigid opening hours, and the sharp contrast between the somber, antiquated attire the Daoist priests wear in temples during their "office hours" and the urbane outfits they put on when they are off work—these new customs are a piercing noise that instantly wakes many old-timers from their nostalgic dream into modern reality.

For moderates and reformists such as government officials and the leaders of Daoist associations who have for decades propagated the motto "Daoism should adapt itself to the modern socialist society," these novel practices are just harmless and marginal twists on Daoist tradition that can help the adaptation of the latter to rapidly modernizing Chinese society, regardless of how irritating they may be for old-timers. In contrast, many traditionalists hold in serious contempt the legitimacy of contemporary temple Daoism in mainland China because of those "inauthentic" practices. The traditionalists' stance, however, can hardly sustain the test of empirical scrutiny. The fast expanding historical and ethnographic literature on Daoism has proven a simple truth: the practices of Daoism vary enormously across space and throughout time. Therefore, it makes little sense to reject a newly invented set of practices simply because it differs from the customs of the past. However, to repudiate the extreme stance of the traditionalists does not confer legitimacy to the reformist rationale. A host of questions is raised by the newly invented practices: are they really

as insignificant and harmless as those reformists presume? Do they not imply a profound change to the core ideas or values of Daoism? Do those new practices “revive” Daoist tradition—if it does exist—or create a brand new Daoism?

Motivated by such questions, I conducted fourteen months of fieldwork between 1998 to 2000 in a dozen or so Daoist temples in Shanghai—especially the *Baiyunguan* 白雲觀 where the Shanghai Daoist College is located<sup>1</sup>. Based upon the ethnography thus produced, I argue in this chapter that, instead of being marginal and harmless to Daoist tradition, these new practices actually symbolize a revolutionary change. This revolution can be best understood as a fundamental shift from the *vitalistic* temporality that characterizes Daoist tradition to the *alienated/alienating* temporality that is part and parcel of Chinese-style modernity. This revolution is primarily a consequence of the introduction of modern schooling since the mid-1980s, with all the attendant practices such as curricula, pedagogy, scheduling, and especially the integration of Daoist priestly schooling into the state-managed general schooling system. Therefore, although the intention of the Daoist Association in introducing “priestly schooling” was to revitalize traditional Daoism within a modern context, what it actually achieved was to modernize the very inner core of Daoism.

#### A ROW OVER A DAOIST HAT

Before getting into the ethnography, let’s first briefly review the historical and institutional context of our case.

Before 1949, Daoism and related folk religions collectively constituted the mainstream religious practices in Shanghai city and its adjoining area. However, beginning in the early 1950s, in the name of “anti-superstition,” the local Communist authority started to persecute Daoists and practitioners of related folk religions. Consequently, before the government declared its religious liberalization policy at the end of 1978, Daoism seemed to have been completely extinguished. Soon after the liberalization, however, Daoist practices rapidly resumed in Shanghai’s suburban areas. Responding to this trend, the Shanghai Daoist Association (*Shanghai shi Daojiao xiehui* 上海市道教協會, or SDA) was founded in April 1985.

Owing to three decades of persecution, the lack of qualified younger Daoist priests became the newly established SDA’s most urgent problem. In fact, in 1985 even the youngest of the qualified Daoist priests in Shanghai had already passed their mid-50s. Therefore, in late March 1986

the SDA quickly established a novice training school. A group of thirty-three young men between eighteen and the early twenties became the first class of this *Daoxueban* 道學班 (Daoist Studies School). Later, in 1992, this school was further formalized and renamed *Daojiao xueyuan* 道教學院 (Daoist College). As of this writing, the Shanghai Daoist College has trained four cohorts of students during the periods 1986–89, 1992–95, 1995–98, and 2003–6, respectively. Currently, except for a few dropouts, almost all graduates are working in temples affiliated with the SDA.

The college's curriculum is based not on any local Daoist transmission tradition, whether monastic fellowship or family apprenticeship, but on the "Standard for Class-Hour Distribution among Subjects" (*Leike shi-shu bili biao zhuen* 類科時數比例標準) for junior colleges instituted by the Ministry of Education. Accordingly, the occupational training given by the Daoist College takes three years. Every school year is divided into two semesters, with a two-month-long summer vacation and a one month (or so) winter vacation. Students spend most of their time in the first two years attending "congregative classroom pedagogy" (*jizhong ketang jiaoxue* 集中課堂教學), that is, lectures.<sup>2</sup> In the third year they are required to complete a one-year internship in the two largest temples in Shanghai. A graduation ceremony—just as in any secular school—concludes their training period. Graduates are soon thereafter deployed separately to the one dozen or so affiliate temples. Somewhat like soldiers, they travel to the assigned "base" with their humble belongings on their back and end up settling down in the temple's shabby dormitory. Thence they start their careers as professional Daoist priests.

Just at the time when the first cohort of Daoist College graduates began to serve as temple staff, the "black cap incident" broke out. No matter how trivial it may sound, a fiery dispute between the senior and junior Daoist priests was triggered by the one-slope black cap that local Daoist priests are supposed to wear all the time. Although the row had been swept under the rug for years by the time I started my fieldwork in autumn 1998, many lively accounts and sizzling comments about the controversy were nevertheless poured into my ears by the college's dean and many other Daoist priests, senior as well as junior. The story can be summarized as follows:

Since it began its program in 1986, the Daoist College has regarded the student uniform as one of its most important responsibilities. Every year, each student is given a uniform: a one-slope black cap, two dark-blue gowns, and a pair of black linen shoes. Students are required to wear the uniform all the time except when sleeping, taking a shower, or going to the toilet. In practice, the one-slope black cap attracts a lot

more attention than the gown and the shoes. This is probably because of the uniqueness of its style—it has been worn exclusively by Daoist priests for centuries, and so has become the most noticeable sign of priesthood. Whenever visitors mistake lay members of the temple staff for priests, they would normally be told that the simplest way to identify a priest is by the one-slope black cap they wear.

The special attention given to the cap makes it a suitable wire for setting off a blast. During the SDA General Assembly held in early 1990, a group of senior priests set forth to criticize young priests who had graduated from the training program just a few months earlier. They started their lengthy denunciation by accusing young graduates of always disrespecting the dress code and, for example, removing their black caps while they were in the temple. After this prologue, they condemned the young graduates for laziness, lacking basic training, neglecting discipline, and for lack of respect as evidenced by their impoliteness to seniors. Finally, they attributed all this misconduct to one factor: that these young men had neither faith in Daoism nor a real commitment to a divine calling. In the end, they concluded their scornful attack with the exclamation: “They don’t even wear the black cap ! How can they be qualified as Daoist priests? What kind of Daoist priest do they want to be?”

Regardless of the “true” reasons for this event,<sup>3</sup> the beginning and end of the senior priests’ criticism reveals two fundamental presumptions: first, that failure to wear the black cap at all times is an indisputable transgression; and second, that this transgression is so serious that it proves one’s disrespect for both Daoism and the Daoist priesthood.

In defending themselves, the young priests argued that, first, there is no logical connection between wearing a black cap and one’s “faith” or “earnest commitment,” since faith and commitment cannot be judged from appearance, and, second, that what really matters for being a priest is the thing within the skull but not what sits upon it. Unfortunately, their defense failed to persuade almost any of the senior priests. In fact, some younger priests didn’t buy it themselves. Consequently, under great pressure from the SDA’s leading senior priests, the younger priests and students agreed to compromise. They apologized for their improper demeanor and promised always to wear their black caps—but only on three occasions: attending classes, participating in rituals, and during temple festivals. Surely those senior priests could not be satisfied by such a small concession, so the issue continued to spark sporadic conflicts over the next several years. At the time of writing, younger priests and students would compliantly put their caps on for these occasions. But, in what appears to

be a tacit protest against the authority of the seniors, they usually take their caps off immediately after being dismissed from those occasions.

On hearing this incident passionately recounted by the priests, I was bewildered by how an ordinary cap could be at the centre of such a big row. Therefore, I set off to clarify why the senior priests and SDA consider the one-slope black cap to be such an important marker of one's commitment to Daoism and Daoist priesthood. After consulting relevant archives and some senior priests, I concluded that the answer lies in the key symbolic role the *guan* 冠 (hat) traditionally played in the career of Daoist priests—both in their daily routine and in the elaborate initiation rites that punctuate their progression in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. And, as it will be shown below, this explanation will guide us to recognize the peculiar temporality of Daoism and the mechanism that destroys it.

#### THE MEANING OF THE *GUAN* IN DAOIST PRIESTS' EVERYDAY LIFE AND INITIATION RITES

The significant role of the Daoist hat in priests' careers can be most clearly pinned down by observing its relationship with the typical daily, monthly, yearly, and lifelong schedule of local Daoist priests.

Let's begin with Daoist priests' lifelong schedule. According to the apprenticeship tradition prevailing among the Daoist families in the Yangtze River Delta, novices begin to wear the black cap from the age of twelve to fourteen when they finish the rudimentary training in their family and go out for junior apprenticeship. The black cap is presented to them by their initiation masters during the primary initiation rite—*bai xiaoshi* 拜小師. From then on, black caps become a necessary component of their everyday costume until retirement. And, as I learned from some senior priests, it is quite common for retired priests to continue wearing black cap until they die.

As for those outstanding apprentices who managed to upgrade to study the crafts of *fashi* 法師 (ritual master), they will be awarded an elegant *fashiguan* 法師冠—a black, round (or octagonal) hat made of fine, shiny crepe silk with a golden flower on it—during the *shoulu dadian* 授籙大典 (the ordination ceremony for ritual master). The majority of *fashi* from this region were ordained in their early twenties. From then on, apart from wearing a simple black cap as their daily costume, they are supposed to wear *fashiguan* in formal ritual occasions.

The hat therefore functions as an index of the progression of Daoist priests in their professional training—the simple black cap stands for pri-

mary initiation while the elegant *fashiguan* represents the completion of advanced learning and the inauguration into a higher profession. However, this simple system had a deep symbolism, as it was linked to conventional ideas concerning men's social maturation. The age for Daoist novices to be initiated and thus start wearing the black cap—twelve to fourteen years—is comparable to the age for teenagers to be initiated as *tongsheng* 童生 (literally, “child student”) in formal mainstream “Confucian” education and thus to begin wearing the *ruguan* 儒冠 (Confucians’ kerchief). Then, the normal age for advanced Daoist apprentices to earn the right to wear the *fashiguan*—the early twenties—is roughly equivalent to the ideal age for Confucian literati to end their learning period by passing official exams and receiving higher degrees such as *juren* 舉人 or *jinshi* 進士. This is also considered by locals as the proper age for a man to consider marriage and to decide on his lifelong career, whether he is a student or not. Therefore, the newly consecrated *fashi* would normally get married and build up a new household or take over his father’s or grandfather’s status as household head soon after the *shoulu dadian*. In other words, these young men achieve full priesthood and adulthood roughly at the same time. This very synchronicity enriched the symbolic import of Daoist hats by making them go beyond their role as an index for one’s rank in professional learning to become insignia for one’s life history and social status.

Now, let’s consider the relationship between the Daoist hat and priests’ yearly, monthly, and daily routines. We will see how the Daoist hat functions to punctuate the rhythm of Daoist priests’ lives so as to make it consonant with various natural and social rhythms.

The annual schedule for Daoist priests traditionally corresponded to the rhythm of seasonal vegetation and agricultural activity. During the cultivating season (from the later half of the third lunar month to the middle of the ninth lunar month), priests had to devote most of their daytime to farming. In Shanghai, the farming season is marked by two main festivals—the birthday of the *Dongyue Dadi* 東岳大帝 on the twenty-eighth day of the third lunar month and the Elevation Day of the *Guanyin* 觀音 Bodhisattva on the nineteenth day of the ninth lunar month. During these six lunar months, there are normally fewer requests from clients except for a few weeks around the dates of three main festivals: the *Qingming* Festival 清明節 on the fifth day of the fourth lunar month, the Departing Date of *Guanyin* Bodhisattva on the nineteenth day of the sixth lunar month, and the *Zhongyuan* Festival 中元節 (vernacularly the “ghost festival”) on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month. During these six months, Daoist priests normally do not wear their black caps during day-

time except when observing daily morning and evening service. Instead, they wear a large round helmet made of bamboo leaves in the fields when farming, just like their lay neighbors.

Priests' monthly schedule corresponds to the lunar cycle—the transfiguration of *Taiyin* 太陰 (literally “the Great Yin,” i.e., the moon)—and the related fluctuation of tides. All Daoist priests perform extended morning/evening services on the *shuo* 朔 (no-moon day) and *wang* 望 (full-moon day), and they present sacrifices to all the deities in their temple or at their household altar, especially the *Huye* 虎爺 (the Lord Tiger) and *Wuying bingjiang* 五營兵將 (the soldiers of the five camps). The Lord Tiger is alleged to be the realization of the moon's soul (*yuepo* 月魄) and is the general commander of the yin power of Daoist priests, which is realized as the Five Camps of Soldiers stored in their five organs—heart, liver, spleen, lung, and kidney. In other words, the Five Camps of Soldiers are the exalted energy of the five elements (*wuxing qi* 五行氣) of Daoist priests—fire (camped in the heart), wood (liver), earth (spleen), metal (lung), and water (kidney)—who control all the yin forces (e.g., wandering ghosts, devils) within the temple's province. Theoretically, on these days Daoist priests should stop providing any service to clients or getting involved in any secular affair, and should retreat into a meditation room and perform exclusive rituals and meditation to nourish and purify their yin energy. Certainly, during these days, they should wear their hats most of the time.

Finally, the daily schedule, which is also dotted by wearing the Daoist hat, corresponds to the interchanging movement of *Taiyang* 太陽 (literally “the Great Yang,” the sun) and *Taiyin*. The four hours—*mao* 卯 (5–7 A.M.), *wu* 午 (11 A.M. to 1 P.M.), *you* 酉 (5–7 P.M.), and *zi* 子 (11 P.M. to 1 A.M.)—underpin the frame of the Daoist daily schedule and mark the four critical moments of the circulation of *qi* (energy) in the macrocosm as well as in the microcosm. The complicated corresponding movements of the macrocosm and microcosm can be glossed as follows:

The hour *zi* is alleged to be the best timing for inner alchemy practice because it is the time when the old yin energy is setting while the fresh yang energy is rising, so Daoist priests remove their hats and practice meditation. Opposing it, the hour *wu* is the worst time for inner alchemy practice because the old yang energy has reached its peak and is going to ebb from the surface of the body while the yin energy starts to flood from inside. To practice meditation at this time tends to be ineffective and even dangerous as the yang energy is too unruly to be controlled and it is quite easy to cause “slipping fire” (*zouhuo* 走火, the flow of inner energy slipping astray). Similarly, to conduct heavy physical exercise is not healthy



during this hour because the yang energy can easily slide away so the yin energy can easily slip inside the body. Therefore, Daoist priests would take their hats off and sit quietly for a lunchtime break.

Contrary to the two climaxes, the hours *mao* and *you* are the “switching time” of the yin/yang balance. Daoist priests must put their hats on and observe morning/evening services to facilitate this exchange. The hour *mao* is the time when the fresh yang energy begins to surpass the old yin energy, which inaugurates the half-day reign of yang energy. So, Daoist priests try their best to welcome and absorb the pure yang energy—the cosmic *shengqi* 生氣 (vitality)—coming from the east. Thus, they wash themselves, clean their environment, practice martial arts or other physical exercises, and then observe the routine morning service for praying for gods and ancestral masters to descend the cosmic vitality and divine blessing from the eastern Heaven to the human world. The hour *you* is the time when the fresh yin energy begins to exceed the old yang energy. In such a threshold for the half-day reign of yin energy—cosmic fecundity, the timeliest endeavor is to pacify, to reconcile, to penance, and to nourish. Therefore, Daoist priests observe the evening services to pacify wandering ghosts and entrapped souls, helping them to be released from gangland, elevated to Heaven, and then to reincarnate in the human world so that the vitality locked in the deadly sediments can be recycled. The procedure is basically the same as the morning service, even though the scriptures recited here focus exclusively on penance and praying for salvation.

The Daoist hat, when viewed from its presence in Daoist priests’ life course, thus can well be said to function like the hand of a clock—something tangible for pinning down the extremely abstract concept of “time” or “temporal order” so that people can easily punctuate their lives and activities by referring to it. However, in contrast to the clock-hand that is propelled solely by machinery designed to represent sidereal time, the motion of the Daoist hat corresponds simultaneously to three ranges of rhythm: the natural (e.g., seasonal change, transmutation of the moon, day and night, the circulation of cosmic *qi*), the social (e.g., agricultural activity and religious festivals), and the individual (bio-social life cycle and the circulation of inner *qi*). Therefore, the “time” represented by the Daoist hat is arguably the result of the orchestration of different moving rhythms of different animate beings on different ontological levels rather than some absolute scale transcending all worldly beings.

Apart from being an indicator of time, or more precisely a register of the chord of a variety of tunings, the Daoist hat also functions as the symbol of Daoist priests’ religious and professional identity, i.e., their priest-



hood. A quick review of Daoist initiation rites would suffice to reveal this point.

Let's start from the primary initiation—*baixiaoshi*—in which the black cap is first introduced to a Daoist novice. The standard structure of this rite consists of six main elements:

1. The master presents the pupil with a black cap as one of his initiation gifts.
2. The pupil is given a school name according to the naming rule fixed by the master for all of his pupils.
3. The master tells the pupil his own *faming* 法名 (the religious name he received from his master) and *fahao* 法號 (the name he takes for himself).
4. The master declares the precepts and some special restrictions of his order.
5. The novice is introduced to his fellow apprentices and the master's family members by order of seniority.
6. The master leads all the apprentices, including the novice, in worshipping gods and ancestral masters in front of the master's private altar.

The splendid consecration ceremony in which *fashi* candidates are crowned with *fashiguan* is actually just an elaborated version of the same rite described above.<sup>4</sup> It is distinguished from primary initiation as follows:

1. The new name given to a *fashi* candidate is not a simple school name decided by the master himself but a formal *faming* named after the master's own *faming* according to a long-standing genealogical order.
2. Candidates are given *fazhixian* 法職銜 (the title of an ecclesiastical post).
3. Linking to the bestowal of *faming* is a serious registration process. The initiators have to register the new priest's identity on the celestial name-list kept in relevant Heavenly Bureaus such as the *Beidou* 北斗 (the Northern Dipper) and *Nandou* 南斗 (the Southern Dipper) Ministries.
4. Upon granting a new priest with a *fazhixian*, the initiators need also to register the new *fashi* to the altar of ancestral masters in the Heaven, such as *Wanfa zongtan* 萬法宗壇 (the Ancestral

Altar of All Schools), *Lingbao xuantan* 靈寶玄壇 (the Ancestral Altar of the Supreme Oneness), *Taiyi zongtan* 太乙宗壇 (the Altar of the Numinous Treasure), and so on.

5. *Fashi* candidates are given *dudie* 度牒 (the formal identity certificate of Daoist priest) and *lu* 籙 (the degree certificate of ordained Daoist master).
6. The ceremony is concluded by a ritual focusing on *fashiguan*, especially the section in which the *fashiguan* is stabbed with a pin shaped like a golden flower.

From the summary above, we can identify a common theme in both initiation rites—the presentation of a different type of hat is always accompanied by the bestowal of a new religious name. In practice, whenever a priest wears his hat, either a simple one-slope black cap or a *fashiguan*, he should be addressed by the new name he received at his initiation. This practice suggests a symbolic parallelism between the Daoist hat and the religious name—the hat can be seen as the embodiment of one’s religious name while the latter is the linguistic expression of the former, both conferring on the newly initiated a new identity.

If we take an outsider’s view, the new identity conferred upon the Daoist hat and the religious name can well be seen as a mark of distinction, which functions to differentiate Daoist priests from laypersons and to stratify fellow Daoist priests into different classes. However, when viewed from inside, the new identity means more in building up connection than in drawing forth distinction. The naming rule of Daoist orders and the esoteric account of the usage of the Daoist hat in rituals can prove this point.

The religious name of a Daoist priest is created by replacing one’s middle name or adding a middle name (if his or her natal name has only two characters) according to one’s generational position in the order’s genealogical nomenclature.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the middle name of a religious name functions to locate the name-taker in the transmission line of a body of sacred knowledge. Moreover, given that the practice of giving a prefixed middle name to newborn boys according to the genealogical nomenclature of a lineage is so widespread in China, the bestowal of a religious name following the same practice cannot help but bear the connotation that the newly initiated or consecrated is “adopted” into a sacred lineage of a Daoist order descended from deified ancestral masters up in Heaven. Nevertheless, it should be noticed that the family name (the first character) and the personal name (the last character) have not been affected by

this naming practice.<sup>6</sup> The respect for lineages and individuals in Daoist naming practice reflects the characteristic Daoist conception about subjectivity, which sees each Daoist priest as an integration of one's biological inheritance (lineage/family name), cultural inheritance (sacred genealogy/middle name), and individuality (personal body-soul/personal name). Again, this conception is clearly expressed in the "usage" of the Daoist hat in rituals.

In the "stabbing golden flower" rite that concludes the *shoulu dadian*, the initiation master would solemnly stab a hairpin shaped like a golden flower on the front top of the *fashiguan* given to the ordinand. This rite symbolizes that the initiation master passes the magic and magical power descended from the ancestral masters to the ordinand through him. From then on, the golden flower will be kept with great care by the ordinand. In fact, a priest can change the linen part of the *fashiguan* whenever he likes but the golden flower should always be the same one he obtained in the *shoulu dadian*, as the golden flower is considered as the *shen* 神 (spirit) of a *fashiguan*. The *xing* 形 (shape)—the linen part—can always be replaced or renewed as soon as the spirit preserves its identity.

Later, in many important rituals, this golden flower invariably functions as the *jinqiao* 金橋 (golden bridge) through which the sublime spirits of the *fashi*, *yuanning zhenren* 元命真人 or *benming yuanshen* 本命元神, leave their physical body and ascend to Heaven.<sup>7</sup> This procedure is the ultimate ground for the efficacy of those rituals because it is only through this that the Daoist priest can put forward his petition to the celestial authorities via the introduction of his ancestral masters in Heaven. Thus, the golden flower symbolizes the communication and association between the sublimed self of a Daoist priest and his deified ancestral masters and the celestial authorities.

Conversely, the golden flower also symbolizes the association between the personal body/soul of a Daoist priest and his biological ancestry. Both the *yuanning zhenren* ("the true humanity in its primal destiny") and the *benming yuanshen* ("the essential spirit in its original destiny") refer to the quintessential self animated by one's *xiantian zuqi* 先天祖氣 (the ancestral vitality descended from prior heaven). The *xiantian zuqi*, in turn, is painstakingly exalted and purified from one's earthly body/soul, that is, one's *houtian* 後天 (the temporal or "posterior heaven") existence—through practicing inner alchemy vigilantly. The critical switch from *posterior* body/soul to *a priori* vitality is marked by envisioning a mystical phenomenon during meditation—*sanhua juding* 三花聚頂 (three flowers gathering on the top). In this state, the three aspects of human vitality,

*jing* 精 (essence), *qi* 氣 (energy), and *shen* 神 (spirit), are gathered and rise to the upper cinnabar field 上丹田 (a spot in the upper middle part of one's forehead). Whether out of mistake or true belief, the golden flower stabbed on the *fashiguan* is often related to *sanhua juding* as its reified manifestation. As a result, the golden flower becomes also a symbol for the transition of a Daoist priest from the earthly body/soul he received from his biological parents to the primal vitality acquired from the cosmos, that is, a mystical linkage between himself, his ancestry, and Primal Heaven. Most important, this transition/linkage also constitutes the ultimate ground for a Daoist priest to communicate with the divine realm.

Now, it is obvious that the golden flower stabbed on the *fashiguan*, just like the religious name of a specific Daoist priest, symbolizes a threefold connection between the genealogy of sacred knowledge transmission, biological ancestry, and the body/soul of the individual Daoist priest. Since this threefold connection anchors the identity of a Daoist priest in his religious universe, it is simply logical to view the Daoist hat, especially the one with a golden flower stabbed on it, as a key symbol of a priest's self-identity. However, it would be an oversimplification to define the Daoist hat, and to a lesser extent the religious name as well, simply as a symbol that passively represents something else, in this case the Daoist priest's self-identity, in a condensed, reified form. In fact, the Daoist hat serves more as a dynamic device for cultivating and even mobilizing the threefold connection. Why? To understand this point, we need to go back to the motion of the Daoist hat within the life course.

Again, the Daoist hat functions like a clock-hand for Daoist priests to punctuate their life course and their yearly, monthly, and daily routine in accordance with different rhythms of different living beings on different ontological levels—cosmic, social, and individual. The central concern behind this way of deploying the Daoist hat, that is, to observe a timetable corresponding to numerous rhythms, is apparently to harness and transform the yin energy while strengthening and exalting the yang energy inside the priest's body/soul as well as in the surrounding community, by conforming one's conduct to the ebb-and-flow cyclical movement of the cosmic yin and yang energies. Obviously, *catching the best timing* is the name of the game, to which the Daoist hat serves as a key register. Bearing this in mind, we can then proceed to integrate the function of the Daoist hat in its ritual context with its function in daily context on such a common ground—the keen concern with how to exalt the Daoist priest's body/soul. Viewed from this angle, the Daoist hat in ritual context represents a linkage between the three principal elements of Daoist inner-

alchemic practices—the material/*xiantian zuqi*, that is, the ancestral vitality descended from the Prior Heaven through one's parents, the method/sacred revelation passed down by generations of ancestral masters, and the tool/*posterior* body/soul, which the Daoist priest cultivates himself within his specific cultural and natural environment—and then bridges the thus sublimed spirit of the accomplished Daoist priest to summon the divine vitality or efficacy to endorse the magic he performed—by juxtaposing and aligning them. The linkage would be nothing but an abstract formula devoid of any substance if we limit our sight within the boundary of ritual context. However, if we bring in the function of the Daoist hat as a key timing register in daily context into the scene, the abstract linkage is substantiated and actually animated. The message emerging from the conflation of contexts is clear: “to seize the best timing” is the very secret to activating the tripartite relationship so as to enable one to access divine efficacy. Put more clearly, it is through meticulously synchronizing the act of one's *posterior* body/soul in consonance with a variety of cosmic rhythms following the sacred teachings of ancestral masters that a Daoist priest can exalt the “ancestral vitality from the prior heaven” that was transmitted to him through his biological ancestry. Moreover, it is only thereby that a Daoist priest can summon divine efficacy to endorse his magic, which is not just the core of any Daoist rituals but also the ultimate ground upon which Daoism's entire claim to legitimacy relies. Hence, it would not be an exaggeration to see this as the defining task for every Daoist priest and so the very basis of Daoist priesthood. The Daoist hat represents not only the whole scheme but also functions as the leverage to steer it.

Having expounded its emic meanings above, let's now take a step back and consider the etic meaning of the entire Daoist *guan* symbolism.

In my reading, the core message revealed by *guan* symbolism is ultimately a peculiar set of cognitive dispositions for making sense of time, which I term *vitalistic temporality*. There are four principal features of this peculiar kind of temporality. First, as has been said, this kind of temporality tends to perceive time as something that comes from the rhythmic motions of all sorts of animate beings on various ontological levels, be they celestial bodies, animals and plants, or human beings, instead of something transcendental that stands alone as the ultimate measure of everything. In other words, time is seen as something not external to but directly derived from vitality (*qi*, in Daoist terminology) in its broadest sense, which is by definition dynamic. Second, as a direct derivation from the first principle, the perception of the progression of time tends to be

articulated in biological metaphors, such as birth, growth, aging, procreation, and regeneration, instead of the mechanical/geometric metaphors such as an arrow or projection line that are widespread all over today's world. Correspondingly, the history of a long period of time tends to be reckoned or remembered in the form of genealogy rather than of chronology. Third, as a dialectical unity of the previous two principles, the temporariness of all sorts of worldly beings tends to be emphasized with extraordinary intensity, since time is seen as the intrinsic nature of everything. This ontological presumption directly leads to the exaltation of embodied skills in spotting and catching the best timing for doing things in accordance with their natural rhythms. Finally, the biological metaphors of time and the emphasis on the ephemerality of worldly beings conjoined to enthrone the *genesis* and the *past* of worldly beings as the principle, truth, and essence while despising their current existence as impotent, dying, fallacious illusions. As a result, historical or archaeological knowledge, in rivalry with embodied timing-catching techniques, also tends to be enthroned as the highest form of knowledge in identifying, knowing, and even controlling things.

Despite the hidden schism of "timing versus history" in intellectual pursuit, this vitalistic temporality as a whole nevertheless informs the professional identity of Daoist priests, symbolized by the Daoist hat. Accordingly, the Daoist priest tends to perceive himself as basically a transient, partial instance of the infinite descending/depletion process of the omnipotent cosmic vitality. Hence, a Daoist priest should be fundamentally identified by the relative position where he or she stands in relation to the descending/depletion process of the omnipotent cosmic vitality, which in practice refers to his/her biological ancestry (from where he/she obtained the "ancestral vitality from the Prior Heaven") and the astrological configuration of the time when he or she was born (which decides the nature of the cosmic forces being imposed upon him/her by the Posterior Heaven throughout his/her lifetime). Therefore, one's position in the genealogy of his/her patrilineal family and his/her personal *bazi* 八字 ("eight-characters"; the date of birth registered with *tian gan* 天干 [heavenly boughs] and *di zhi* 地支 [earthly branches]) constitute the basic anchor for pinning down one's identity, whether one is a Daoist priest or not. Beyond that, Daoist priests are distinctive mainly in the sense that, instead of relegating themselves to procreation along the descending/depleting stream of the cosmic vitality, that is, the normal direction of time-progression, as common people do, they strive to reverse the direction of time, return to

the genesis, and achieve immortality by unifying themselves with the primordial cosmic vitality.<sup>8</sup> This extraordinary feat can only be accomplished through synchronizing oneself to a diversity of cosmic rhythms by following the teachings of ancestral masters religiously. Therefore, a Daoist priest also identifies himself with his position in the transmission chain of sacred knowledge. As a result, history, represented mainly in the form of biological and intellectual genealogy as well as the memory of a date of birth, becomes the decisive content of a Daoist priest's identity, whose contour is arguably far different from that of the vast majority of modern individuals.

To conclude, the vitalistic temporality of the past in Daoism is neither so exotic as to perceive time as something "static," as Lévi-Strauss suggested for people in "cold societies" such as Australian aboriginals,<sup>9</sup> or "cyclical," as Clifford Geertz argued for the Balinese,<sup>10</sup> nor incompatible with any other time-reckoning systems, whether the traditional Chinese one of "heavenly boughs and earthly branches" or the modern/Western system. Its distinctiveness lays in its vitalism, and its conception of the relation between past and present defies the dichotomy between the "genealogical model" (based on modern/Western temporality) and the "relational model" (based on hunter-gatherers' animistic temporality) proposed by Ingold.<sup>11</sup> Like the former, it emphasizes the religious as well as biological genealogies through which revelation and physical life are passed down to the existing priest. Meanwhile, it resembles the latter as it equally emphasizes the endeavor to "regenerate" oneself through exalting one's legacy in the contemporary ecology, that is, the Posterior Heaven, so as to return to the Genesis—the Prior Heaven. In addition, like the "relational model," it invigorates the generational order to be an ongoing exchanging relationship instead of a rigid, impotent framework, just as it enlivens ecology (or "land" or "landscape" in Ingold's term) from something inanimate that passively "contain[s] or support[s] living things" to something that is "imbued with the vitality that animates its inhabitants."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, it also defies the dichotomy between the "sidereal time" or "clock time" and "social time" proposed first by Sorokin and Merton (1937) and then reiterated by E. P. Thompson (1967), as it is neither objective, external to social life, nor defined solely by the rhythm of human social activities. Since both the rhythm of the human body/soul and that of the ecology surrounding it are conceived as the reincarnations of the same cosmic vitality, albeit in different forms, it is pointless to discuss time, as a function of the motion of cosmic vitality, as either external or internal to human beings.



## HOW MODERN SCHOOLING WRECKS TRADITIONAL TEMPORALITY

Having explained why the black cap or Daoist hats in general were and actually are still considered as something of importance by Daoist priests, let's now start to investigate why such a crucial symbol has degenerated into an ambivalent object in contemporary Daoist priests' life.

As the traditional symbolism of the *guan* is grounded upon the institutional system that embodied traditional Daoist temporality, the reason for the erosion of the *guan*'s status can only be sought in the wreckage of its institutional base. In this section, I analyze how the modern Daoist educational system devastated the traditional training system and has thus nullified traditional temporality. My analysis will center on four claims: (1) the collectivized school has eliminated the family tradition and the role of biological genealogy; (2) classroom pedagogy has replaced apprenticeship, and has thus exterminated the relevance of intellectual genealogy; (3) the new temporal order of schooling has alienated the humanity of the Daoist priest from his or her learning process, and has consequently estranged Daoist practices from the descending of *lingqi* 靈氣; and (4) the discipline of authoritative institutions omits the relevance of genealogy and encourages attention toward general, quantitative qualifications. The discussion below is arranged accordingly.

### *Collectivization: Eliminating Family Tradition*

In contrast to the dominant apprenticeship tradition in Shanghai's Daoist circle, the most impressive feature of the contemporary Daoist priest training system is collectivization—the replacement of long-established Daoist families with a unified, public-funded Daoist college. This feature naturally implies an inclination to depreciate the role of family tradition in the Daoist priest's training process. Moreover, this intrinsic inclination was reinforced by certain historical and environmental factors.

Ever since the SDA was founded in 1986, controversies regarding the ideology, constitution, and pedagogy of the school for training Daoist priests have disrupted Shanghai's entire Daoist circle. The networking and fundraising practices for this project triggered a sequence of factional struggles that lasted until the end of 1989. The direct result of this turmoil has been a comprehensive switch in personnel and widespread disaffection toward the SDA among Shanghai's Daoist circle. Many seniors of long-established local Daoist families have discouraged their grandsons from attending the Daoist College in order to avoid pointless political conflict



and to express their resentment toward the leading SDA politicians. Due to their boycott, the SDA tried to attract students from neighboring Jiangsu Province. Consequently, among the students in the first class, about one-third came from Jurong County and the other two-thirds from Haiyan County. Later, almost all of the seventy students that made up the second (1992–95) and third class (1995–98) came from these two counties. There are only three students who came from a Shanghai suburb or neighboring county and only one student who came from Jiangxi Province. All of the 100 or so students from Jiangsu Province were born in local “part-time Daoist priest” families, that is, families whose main economic resource is farming rather than ritual service.

The refusal of long-established local Daoist families to become involved with the Daoist College and the resultant composition of students has strongly reinforced the intrinsic institutional bias. The students’ families are largely excluded from their training process. Although they all have senior relatives or intimate family friends who are practicing Daoist priests, students are segregated from their families simply by being in Shanghai. According to current PRC law, while in Shanghai they are *wailai laodong renkou* 外來勞動人口 (immigrant labourers) instead of citizens. As such, they are not allowed to move members of their families to Shanghai except for their spouse and child. Along with this separation from their families, they also are separated from their family traditions. This is so because of the difference between the local ritual-style in their home province and in Shanghai. They cannot apply what they learn in Shanghai to their home province, nor can they directly use their own family’s tradition that they might have inherited from their senior relatives while they reside in Shanghai. This uprooted life hinders them from being cross-fertilized through comparing their own family tradition with what they learn in Shanghai, thus making their own family tradition irrelevant.

Second, the family traditions of local masters are also excluded from the training process presented by the college. Because no graduates bear consanguinity or affinity with any senior Daoist priest teaching at the college, ritual skill training obviously has been depleted of any transference through family inheritance of ritual skill or property. A few graduates have senior relatives who were friends with some teachers at the college or were colleagues during the 1940s and early 1950s. However, it is implausible that those senior masters have been especially devoted to teaching these few students any special skills, as might have occurred under the old style of “reciprocity” between two Daoist families, since the foundation for that kind of reciprocity has long since disappeared. Consequently,

there is almost no possibility for these senior masters' sons or grandsons to *xiaxiang* 下鄉 ("go down to the countryside," a stigmatized phrase that connotes poverty, suffering, and wasted life) and learn the kind of local ritual skills that can't be used in Shanghai.

Finally, except for the advanced training of a few *fashi* candidates, the elementary ritual skill training for the vast majority of minor Daoist priests has been relocated from private household compounds to public spaces—spaces owned and directly controlled by a public authority, the SDA and the Daoist College. This relocation, especially the change in property relationships it implies, has effectively eliminated the applicability of pseudo-kinship ethics in the context of learning. There is an intrinsic lesson for both teachers and pupils: their relationship is organized and funded by an authoritative third party and is not built on affective or family ties. They are all equal employees of the SDA, albeit with different occupations. They have rights and duties in relation to the authoritative agent but no equivalent, inherent moral obligations to each other. So, the idealized father-son relationship that used to direct the master-pupil relationship has lost its referential value. On the one hand, teachers are deprived of all quasi-parental authority and are exempted from the burden of concern about students' well-being or career development, which was matched with and supported by their status as the household head of their family school in the past. On the other, students have no obligation to support their teacher's life and no right to claim any inheritance from their teachers, be it material or intellectual property. Traditional family ethics become completely obsolete—teachers do not have to be *ci* 慈 (benevolent) to students, while students do not have to be *xiao* 孝 (filial) to teachers.

Consequently, as the role of family, family tradition, and family ethics has become so greatly depreciated, blood genealogy—one of the critical anchors of traditional Daoist temporality—loses its significance for modern students. I witnessed none keeping an ancestral altar in their abode, nor anyone observing the convention to worship ancestry in the *Qingming* Festival.

### *Replacing Apprenticeship with Assembled Classroom Pedagogy*

Institutional collectivization does not necessarily collapse the traditional master-apprentice relationship; as is well exemplified by monastic training, teachers and students can cohabit whether family ties are involved or not. However, the adoption of assembled classroom pedagogy in the Daoist College eliminates this possibility. Assembled classroom pedagogy abolishes the constant one-to-one relationship between teacher and student,

thus largely reducing the secrecy of Daoist crafts and skill development and, instead, fostering the standardization of teaching texts. As a result, both teachers and students do not recognize their relationship as a master-apprentice relationship despite the apprenticeship ceremony (*baishili* 拜師禮) purposefully invented by the Daoist College.

Assembled classroom pedagogy demolishes the one-to-one relationship between teacher and student mainly through the school's timetable. Procedural scheduling has effectively generalized the teacher-student relationship by circumscribing the reach of the teachers' influence and homogenizing the encounters between teachers and students.

The division between working hours and non-working hours conditions the teacher's influence. Following modern habits, the Daoist College's timetable sets working hours of 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. (excluding a one hour lunch break from noon to 1 P.M.), Monday to Friday. Students are given a five-to ten-minute break after every fifty to fifty-five minutes of class. Except in unusual situations when a Saturday morning class is unavoidable, the school is closed on weekends. All the other times are non-working hours. Non-working hours are perceived as students' "right" to enjoy some private life, although they have no private areas and are strictly constrained by the discipline of communal life. College leaders sincerely respect this right and defend it against what they perceive as arbitrary interventions by teachers.

Being prohibited from involvement with students during "non-working hours," teachers are further constrained by the partition principle of working hours. In conformity with a sort of "common rule" for of all types of education, the Daoist College normally allots two successive school hours to each subject per working day. Therefore, on regular days, four different teachers come to the college; each gives a sequential two-hour lecture. To avoid creating any inconvenience for their colleagues (and possible negative repercussions), teachers follow the timetable meticulously. Consequently, the space for their autonomous judgment is limited to the five- or ten-minute break in the middle of their two-hour slot.

These constraints strictly circumscribe or even completely conceal the individuality of each teacher during their engagements with students. Their homogenized presence has been further consolidated by the invariable spatial layout for classroom pedagogy. Students always sit in same classroom (indeed, the college has only one) with the same seat distribution (every student has a fixed seat) and listen to the invariably partitioned two-hour lecture per subject. The ultimate effect of this arrangement is that the teacher-student relationship in every class is not even "one to

a multitude," but is actually reduced to a "multitude to multitude" relationship by the temporal-spatial conditions of classroom pedagogy. Every teacher is acutely aware that he is but one among many teachers, a view the students share. There is no space for a special relationship or a special mutual commitment between a specific teacher and his students.

For most of the senior Daoist priests who were trained before the early 1950s, the division between working and non-working hours and apprentices' right to enjoy privacy are simply unthinkable and unacceptable. Their opinion is that students should follow the conduct of apprentices of the past: always keeping company with their master unless their master asks them to leave. No matter whether the master wants to teach them something or not, apprentices have to be ready at all times for their master's command. As a seventy-four-year-old priest affirmed to me:

It's a joke! How could an apprentice have his own time? How could they expect to learn Daoist crafts simply by spending only eight hours a day in classroom and then fool around everywhere away from masters' supervision? Only a master can enjoy a private life. Apprentices, by definition, are not qualified for it! Honestly speaking, even masters don't have the kind of private life as what they say today. Apprentices are always beside you until you go to bed. Masters see apprentices as their own children, not outsiders. So, there is no such thing as "private life" in the master-apprentice relationship.

For senior priests like this man, the school timetable and relevant rules are not just an unjustifiable deviation from tradition but also unfair to the master and the student. They argue that the master-apprentice relationship is an exchange of life for crafts, or life for life—the master's life crystallized as Daoist skills and the pupil's life as labor and affective devotion. On the one hand, priests have devoted many years of their life—labor and time—to obtain Daoist skills from their masters and it is unfair to ask them to give their skills to students when the latter do not repay them with their time and labor. On the other hand, learning Daoist skills amounts to acquiring a new life. If the pupil wants to obtain this new life, he must first devote his old life to his master. Thus conceived, there is no space for a "private life" between master and apprentice because the master-apprentice relationship is by definition a comprehensive devotion and involvement between two lives, just like that between father and son.

Hence, as a response to this unacceptable temporal order, senior masters simply refuse to transmit anything "secret" to the students they recognize as "unfilial" and thus unqualified to access the precious secrets they acquired by devoting their lives to their own masters. Being thus condi-

tioned, the aura of “secrecy” that used to characterize Daoist knowledge transmission has been completely extinguished. Now in the Daoist College, except for the *neimi* 內秘 (inner secrets) reserved exclusively for *fashi*—namely, *fu* 符 (talisman), *zhou* 咒 (spell), *jue* 訣 (mudra), *bu* 步 (magical steps), *cunxiang* 存想 (meditation), and *chushen* 出神 (out-of-body travel)—knowledge that was conventionally concealed within individual Daoist families is now largely publicized and shared by all students.<sup>13</sup> Teachers no longer need to acknowledge the secrecy of their teaching, since they simply drop the secret parts. Meanwhile, students no longer recognize that what they are learning has ever been secret. For them, Daoist ritual skills are not family inheritance or private property anymore, but are now “public assets” for the fellow priests employed by the SDA to use to procure shared income.

Due partly to the elimination of the aura of secrecy and partly to the need to cooperate, a unification and standardization of Daoist knowledge has begun to set in. The diversified parochial ritual traditions preserved by scattered Daoist families as ancestral inheritances have been gradually merged into a consistent, widely compatible, and simplified liturgy. This process was first initiated by the embryonic SDA in the early 1980s for the purpose of forming a Daoist solidarity by breaking up the long-established boundaries between parochial traditions.<sup>14</sup> Gradually, a small collection of standardized liturgy that includes only the often-used ritual packages in Shanghai, such as *zaoke* 早科, *wanke* 晚科, *kaiguang* 開光 (“Opening the Eyes” of a god’s statue), *wang wu* 亡五 (the set of five death rituals), and *qing wu* 清五 (the set of five “pure” rituals), was compiled.<sup>15</sup> Later, as it is much more suitable for classroom pedagogy than any other parochial tradition, this simpler written collection became the teaching standard of the Daoist College since it was found in 1986. What the students learn in the Daoist College is a newly invented tradition instead of the parochial traditions inherited by those senior masters themselves. The features of parochial ritual traditions—those rather difficult, infrequently used, and characteristic local rituals and those that are claimed to be rather close to *fengjian mixian* 封建迷信 (feudal superstition)—has become something unheard of by the younger generation.

The final result of the factors mentioned above is the demise of the master-apprentice relationship itself. Senior masters refuse to recognize themselves as the “masters” of Daoist College students. They do not see any justifiable reason to recognize these students as their apprentices because (1) they do not cultivate a special intimate relationship with them, (2) the students are not qualified to share the secret knowledge the masters have

obtained through years of service to their own masters through time and labor, and (3) there is no deep linkage between the liturgical style and the parochial traditions that they inherited.<sup>16</sup> Master Xue, the seventy-two-year-old chair *gaogong fashi* 高功法師 of the *Qinci yangdian* 欽賜仰殿, vividly articulates their reasoning: “Basically, I am an heir of the northern Pudong tradition. Among my senior colleagues, there are some [who] come from the southern tradition, some from the western tradition, and also some from my northern Pudong tradition. Anyway, all these divisions are only meaningful for my generation. As for those students, they are all the first generation of the emerging Shanghai tradition. They are irrelevant to us.” I was often told by senior priests, “No, I have no apprentice.” If I pushed them to clarify and expand their answer, they usually said, “Yes, I do have to teach them something, but I am not their master.”

Likewise, and probably for similar reasons, students do not recognize themselves as apprentices of the senior priests. When I asked them, “Who is your master?” the most common reply I would get is, “*zhe bu hao shuo*” 這不好說 (It’s difficult to say). If I pushed a bit further, some of them might tell me who their “master” is in the nominal sense (those renowned *fashi* who are formally nominated as their masters in the *bashili*); others would reply with a bit of embarrassment, “No, I have no master. As minor Daoist priests, we are just the students of the College. We are not qualified to have a master. Only those who are qualified to learn *fashi*’s art can have a master.” Later, some students informed me that the ones they considered to have taught them the most are usually their assistant tutors, namely, the earlier graduates of the college.

In the Daoist College, students normally address the teachers as *laoshi* 老師 (teacher) but not *shifu* 師父 (master), whether or not they are priests. Similarly, senior priests always address the students as *xuesheng* 學生 (students)—the ordinary term for pupils of mainstream schools—but never *xuetu* 學徒, *tudi* 徒弟, or *dizi* 弟子—the traditional greetings for apprentices. The vocabulary clearly reflects the reality that the assembled classroom pedagogy has already successfully replaced the old-fashioned master-apprentice relationship with the modernized teacher-student relationship adopted from mainstream schools. Hence, the traditional intellectual genealogy with all its relevant symbols has lost its ground.

### *Estranging Learning from Humanity*

The way in which the modern priest training system disconnects the traditional integrity of the novices’ humanity from the learning process can be observed in three dimensions. First, there is the inconsistency between

the learning progression and the socially defined life cycle. Second, there is the inherent disrespect that curriculum arrangement accords to the reality of the human condition. Third, school routine is dissociative in nature from the concerns for Daoist physical/spiritual cultivation. Since this destruction is collectively executed by a group of intertwined mechanisms, the following analysis cannot be partitioned and thus addresses all three dimensions as a whole.

The first decisive mechanism is the age limit for Daoist College students. The government prohibits anyone under eighteen from enrolling as a student. This rule has seriously postponed the starting age for learning Daoist skills. If we use the first beginners during the past as our reference point, the discrepancy is eight to twelve years. If we use the average starting age for intermediary training during the past as a reference point, under the presumption that these students have experienced some primary training before joining the Daoist College, the discrepancy is still often as large as four to six years. Actually, with very few exceptions, most students are rank beginners when they come to Shanghai.

This postponement causes serious learning difficulties. The most obvious disadvantage is older students' comparatively poor memorization ability. It has always been acknowledged by senior priests that Daoist skill learning requires a very good memory and that the rudimentary ritual skill learning is the most demanding part of all. That is why novices who came from traditional Daoist families in the past tended to start their rudimentary training from six to eight years of age. For contemporary students who have missed many years of memorization practice, the beginners' training is tortuous and frustrating.

Meanwhile, the situation is worsened by the age of their teachers. Apart from the demands on the learners' memories, rudimentary ritual skill training also places demands on the teachers, who must be in very good physical condition to demonstrate rituals repeatedly. Owing to the thirty years of political oppression discussed earlier, in 1986, when the college was founded, there were no qualified teachers of ritual skills younger than fifty-five. For the third class of students who entered in 1995, the youngest senior teacher was already sixty-four. Unfortunately, the situation then becomes one in which aged teachers who are no longer capable of physically demanding basic training are met by students who are years beyond the optimum beginning age and are insufficiently skilled at memorization. As a result, the senior priests are always exhausted while students fail to internalize the training.

The detrimental force of the age limit was further enforced by the stan-



ard curriculum arrangement and required timetable. In contrast to the traditional curriculum that sets ritual skill learning as the first principle, the Daoist College gives the highest priority to literary learning.<sup>17</sup> Following the state-established standards for junior college curricula, the Daoist College devotes 77.25 percent of total school hours during the first two years to literary learning. Ritual skill learning, which desperately needs to be set forth earlier, nevertheless is allotted only 22.75 percent of total time.<sup>18</sup> Even if we add on time for observing the routine morning and evening services (altogether up to one hour per day), it is still much less than the total time an initial apprentice of the past would have devoted to learning ritual skills, as they may have done nothing else but learn ritual skills during the seasons of non-cultivation. When students are allowed to concentrate on learning ritual skill during the third year, they are already a minimum of twenty years old. By this time, memorization of the complicated ritual knowledge turns out to be exceedingly difficult.

Moreover, the school timetable has partitioned the scarce time for learning ritual skills in an extremely ineffective way. It is common knowledge that beginning music students must practice technical skills—including fine motor control, breathing, and so forth—for one or more hours every day until they have finely tuned themselves to reach the correct position automatically. From this point they “stabilize” these delicate touches as bodily memory and they become instinctual. Without this level of development, it is highly probable that they will be trapped on a beginner’s level for a much longer time. The school timetable does not consider this requirement at all. All three courses in ritual skills (all of which are a type of music)—Daoist Music, Chanting, and Scripture Recitation—occur only once per week. Apart from that, there is no fixed time for practice. With such uneven distribution and fragmentation of time, steady progress becomes unattainable, although the total time spent on practicing instruments (adding the class hours and individual practice during off hours) may be sufficient for some. During hectic times, they might be unable to touch their instruments for several days. On normal days, they can hardly devote themselves to instrument practice for more than half an hour due to the absence of instructive surveillance by masters, socializing with fellow students, and the excess of subjects they must learn simultaneously. As a result, the precious time they spend practicing is largely wasted on repeating warm-ups, without producing any tangible progress.

According to graduates’ self-confessions and Dean Zhang’s reporting, average achievement by the end of the second year is rather poor. Basically, they can do nothing but play some simple musical pieces with elementary



instrumental skills and recite or chant the scriptures, penitential texts, and hymns needed for routine services with the texts in hand. This is alleged to be much less than was attained by average novices in the past at the same point in their training. As a result, both students and teachers take the final year of internship as the only hope to repair unresolved deficits and to learn all of the untaught and as yet unmastered skills prior to graduation. Sadly, one year is far too short a time to accomplish all of these things. The result is that when they graduate at about twenty-one years old, their skill levels are far behind that required for a competent junior priest (*xiao daoshi* 小道士) according to the traditional standard. This is clearly shown by the frequently mentioned concern that in 2000, there was still no one among the one hundred or so graduates who could handle five out of the eight skills of *xiao daoshi*—*xie, pu, pai, zha, zhuo*. How could it be otherwise, when students starting at age eighteen are being required to learn in three years what their predecessors learned over a minimum period of ten years of almost nonstop instruction beginning as young as six?

Therefore, for present Daoist College students, graduation has nothing to do with genuine maturity in the profession or knowledge of any skill. What it really implies is the transition of the social role from a full-time student to that of a full-time wage earner, that is, from someone who cannot marry to someone who can. To a large extent, graduation is much more meaningful for parents and the SDA than for the students themselves. On the one hand, most of their parents (largely peasants who have grown up in the country) expect or demand that their sons marry before their early twenties. Almost every student's story shows the great pressure exerted by parental expectations. In some cases, students are forced to forgo study at the Daoist College because of an arranged marriage. Many others see the Daoist College as their refuge from an unwanted arranged marriage. Nevertheless, some students are forced by their parents to become engaged to a young woman they do not know while they are still in school. Graduation is important for their parents as a sign that their son no longer has an excuse to shun filial duty—to marry and produce a grandchild. Simultaneously, there is an urgent need for temple staff and there are only limited training funds available. These circumstances cause the SDA to be eager to complete its investment in as-yet "unproductive" human resources that will turn into productive laborers. Each graduation is significant for the SDA as it is the end of a large net financial outflow and the beginning of a substantial inflow to the pool of available workers.

Thus the students' education ceases long before they are mature in their profession due to the demands of marriage and work. Their profession has

not yet stabilized but will be quickly diluted by the urgent concerns of the temple and/or household economy, personal relationships, and child-rearing responsibilities. What these graduates—who by this time have already become young husbands and/or fathers—have acquired from the contemporary articulation between Daoist learning progression and the conventional sociobiological maturation process is, by and large, frustration. The sense that they are trapped in such a paradox is widely shared. They have no confidence in their proficiency as young priests and hope to improve. Yet they are pressed to take up responsibility for their family as quickly as possible, which urgently requires them to seek more income instead of skill advancement. Some blame themselves for their decision to go into such a career, which they now recognize as something they will never be able to handle adequately. Others blame themselves as “cowards” who dared not insist to their parents that they should postpone marriage for further learning. The following comment by Mr. Gong illustrates the loss of morale and orientation of graduates confronting this paradox:<sup>19</sup>

I am not strong. Even worse, I am not good at studying. I am not a smart guy at all. To earn enough rice to fill my stomach as a trivial *dagongzai* 打工仔 (“worker,” especially connoting immigrant labor) is what I can afford to do. . . . This job is attractive to me just because it enables me to stay in Shanghai. If I can stay in Shanghai, my child can receive education in Shanghai. It will give her some possibility to change her identity in household registration from “peasant” to “Shanghai citizen.” No matter how it will be, I am sure it’s much better than staying in the countryside, like my hometown, Haian. To be honest, except for the future of my child, what else can a trivial guy like me expect to and struggle for? Since my daughter was born, I lay all my expectation on her future. All my effort is for her.

The discussion above clearly shows how insensitive the curriculum arrangement of the Daoist College is to the “human conditions” of teachers and students—their age, physical capability, memory, quantity of material to be learned in too short a time, and so on. All of these factors have a critical relevance if they can ever hope to fulfill their professional tasks. To a large extent, the incompatibility of the current learning progression with the socially defined “proper” life cycle, as well as the practically needed professional maturation process, is just another representation of the disregard for human conditions and their relationship to the intended tasks. Unsurprisingly, this disrespect also manifests in the Daoist College’s routine schedule.

Unlike the routine in a traditional monastery, the schedule in the Dao-

ist College doesn't consider the temporal order framed by *zi*, *wu*, *mao*, and *you*. Conforming to the regulations about noise pollution control published by the Shanghai municipal government, the Daoist College postpones the starting time for morning service to 7:00–7:15 A.M., which is the *chen* 辰 hour according to the traditional Chinese time-reckoning system. Meanwhile, the evening service is moved forward to 4:30 P.M.—*shen* 申 hour in the traditional system. The reason, as students explained, is to keep the temple staff's working hours close to the conventional eight hours per day. If they follow the tradition of observing evening service at 6 P.M., then staff would be working more than ten hours (from 7:00 A.M. to 6:30 P.M., with a one hour lunch break). "It will cause a lot of complaints and troubles. So why bother?" they said.

These changes in the timing of ritual performance clearly point out that although the morning and evening services still exist and the timing for rest—*zi* and *wu* hours—are more or less the same, the reasons for temporal order have been completely changed. The "ingredients" of Daoist daily routine—morning and evening services, lunch break, night sleep, and so on—are still there, but they are no longer part of the skill and art of self-cultivation of past Daoist practitioners. These routine activities are not seen as the "tasks" or "moral duties" that embody priesthood—the correspondence of priests' self-body-soul and the descending of cosmic *lingqi*. Instead, they are viewed as "work" or "leisure"—categories that presume the existence of alienated laborer. They have become fixed to clock time and the peculiarities of secular order represented by the state and market. The reasoning for the temporal order is aligned with abstract secular values (sanitary, right, law, etc.) for an abstract "general public" and not the tangible self of the Daoist priests.

### *Replace Genealogy with General, Quantitative Qualification*

Corresponding to the demise of the family tradition and the master-apprentice relationship, as well as the dehumanization of the learning process, authoritative agents controlling personnel affairs within the Daoist circle—including Daoist institutions such as the SDA, CDA (China Daoist Association), and a group of governmental bodies represented by the BRA (Bureau of Religious Affairs)—use their power to direct novices' attention to *zige* 資格 (literally, "qualification") instead of *rencai* 人才 (literally, "personal quality" or "person of quality").

*Zige* usually refers to the result one gets from public exams that use impersonality and anonymity as conditions for evaluation, and it often alludes to objective, quantitative criteria—for example, the year in which

one received his or her highest degree, how many years one has served in the same position, or how many merits one has accumulated. *Rencai*, by contrast, often denotes the positive reputation of a specific person credited by revered figures through personal judgment. Objective, quantitative criteria may well be included in these authoritative judgments, but they are usually addressed as side facts supporting central comments that always focus on moral attributes—virtue, intellectual proficiency, and, especially, *yuanyuan* 淵源 (literally, “origin,” but connoting “genealogy” in this context). Although the antagonism of *zige* and *rencai* was invented to criticize the classical *kejuzhi* 科舉制 (the imperial examination system) more than 900 years ago,<sup>20</sup> it is still a powerful tool for evaluating the current trend in Daoist circles.

Compared with the traditional Daoist system for regulating practice, the current system in Shanghai is noteworthy for its internal rigidity. This rigidity is most clearly represented in its exclusion of anyone who is not a graduate of the Daoist College from its jurisdiction.<sup>21</sup> Since the system refuses to recognize the existence of *sanju daoshi* 散居道士 (nonmonastic householder priests unaffiliated to a temple), it doesn’t take any measures to include the latter under its sway. Meanwhile, it also eliminates the possibility for outstanding *sanju daoshi* to have access to the offices and institutional resources inside formal Daoist institutions. By doing so, the current system in effect sets itself up as internal regulations for formal Daoist institutions instead of an inclusive law that should be observed by every Daoist priest. Therefore, those traditional personnel rules mentioned above, such as checking priests’ identity by testing their memory of personal genealogy and confirming priests’ ecclesiastical statuses by examining their genealogical documents or seniors’ testimonies, have become irrelevant. The identity and status of each priest is now recognized through his student registration kept at the Daoist College—which year in, which year out, which courses completed, what mark received, and what degree granted. All these data are objectively defined, fixed to clock time, anonymously given, and subject to numerical calculation. There is no longer the need to consult the memory of senior masters for authoritative judgments. In other words, *zige* has become the predominant basis of priesthood while *yuanyuan* is completely discarded.

The most significant implication of the predominance of *zige* in priesthood identification is that the entire personnel institution is gradually shaped to rely solely on *zige* while neglecting *rencai*. Although it may be too categorical to argue that the current system does not consider the virtue or intellectual proficiency of specific priests anymore, the moral attri-

butes of a specific person has already become much less important than *zige* in the current system. Consequently, as Chen Liang 陳亮 insightfully pointed out in the fifteenth century, when the entire personnel institution is based upon conformity with the predominant emphasis laid on *zige*, students are persuaded to collect empty certificates and vain merits while neglecting moral cultivation and deserting the real scholarship descended down from ancient sages.<sup>22</sup> This truth is evidently proved by the recent obsession in Daoist circles with degrees granted by mainstream institutes.

Unsurprisingly, this mania is collectively cultivated by authoritative agents, intentionally or unintentionally. It begins with the invention of a new social sphere—the so-called *zongjiaojie* 宗教界 (religious sector), which consists in the *wuda zongjiao* 五大宗教 (five main religions): Daoism, Buddhism, Islam, Protestant Christianity, and Catholicism—by the United Front Department (*Tongzhanbu* 統戰部) of the CCP and the BRA. The obsession for degrees among young Daoist priests is fostered by the disciplinary forces instituted in and around this newly invented social sphere, in which the better-educated Christian theologians and Buddhist monks belittle the Daoists' credentials, and in which holding an academic degree is a requirement to be appointed as a religious leader to political bodies such as the Peoples' Consultative Congress. By mobilizing these incentives through biased mechanisms, that is, the rules for allocating these incentives, the SDA and the whole Daoist community are at once pressed and encouraged to hunt for higher degrees from the mainstream educational system. The effectiveness of this mechanism is indisputable, as Professor Chen's testimony illustrates:

Now, among the younger generation, the interest in religion in general is decreasing speedily. If you don't have a reasonably good educational system and a set of well-organized career-development institutions to manage your human resources, it's not just that you would fail to attract talented youth to join your church but also that you may lose the talented youth already on your side. Certainly, if there are no clever youth to come to join us, Daoism cannot but be replaced by other religions. The Chinese Buddhist Association is also keenly aware of this inevitable trend. So they have done a great job during these few years. Not only have they built up quite a few Buddhist colleges, I even heard from somebody that they have already sorted out a confidential program for human-resource development: to cultivate talented graduates of the Buddhist colleges intensively in order to produce a large troupe of elite monks and nuns who have Ph.D., M.A., or B.A. degrees within ten years' time. Then, they hope to gradually replace the senior leaders of the Buddhist circle with these elite monks and nuns. The

implications of this case cannot be clearer: modern schooling and the generalized, modern hierarchy of degrees are an inevitable tendency; if you don't catch up to its pace, you will be put out sooner or later.

Responding to the ambitious plan of the Chinese Buddhist Association, the top-ranking graduates of the Daoist College—who undoubtedly have the largest exposure to the *zongjiaojie* and local politics—enthusiastically initiated the idea of instituting a *Jinxiu ban* 進修班 (Advanced Course) at the college. The graduation certificate for this course was expected to be the equivalent to the average *dazhuan* 大專 (higher college) degree—one step higher than the junior college degree already obtained. Later, when this proposal was approved by the relevant governmental bodies and the Chinese Daoist College in Beijing, a vehement rivalry for enrollment emerged among all the young leaders and lasted until March 1998, when the school formally began. As most were incumbent temple leaders or responsible SDA staff, they could not concentrate on studying at all. However, their enthusiasm for attending the course is indeed very impressive because, according to the widely shared tactical understanding, this *zige* will decide who can stay on in leading positions and also climb to higher ones in the future.

Predictably, as almost none of them can still handle even the eight skills of *xiao daoshi*, their obsession for *zige*—the *dazhuan* degree—could not but incur sarcastic condemnation from senior priests. They have been denounced as opportunists who *sheben zhumo* 捨本逐末 (crave the marginal while abandoning the essential). Yet, the derision seems to have had no impact. After all, since the basis for the current system has been switched from the reputation of *rencai* to the calculation of *zige*, how could they put their attention upon *ben* 本 (root) or *yuanyuan* (genealogy), or even understand their importance?

#### CONCLUSION: BLACK CAP AND THE NEW TEMPORALITY

When family tradition, master-apprentice relationships, genealogical knowledge, and the humanity of priests themselves are marginalized or completely omitted from the training process, traditional Daoist temporality centered on omnipotent and omnipresent cosmic vitality has become completely lost. Being cultivated by the school timetable in the first place and then further disciplined by the common temple routine set by the SDA (according to the regulations of the Bureau for Religious Affairs), the graduates of the Daoist College are now deeply imbued with the conscious-

ness to demarcate “working hours” from “non-working hours” according to clock time. They are trained to keep two selves—a public self that works in the Daoist College or a temple and a private self that lives among his family and friends. Meanwhile, they know that the work ethic they should observe is to assume the first self during working hours and switch to the second self when they are off.

If we stop at this point, we may well imagine that modern industrial temporality, complete with features such as a “genealogical model,” “colonial perspective,” “B-series time, and “clock time,”<sup>23</sup> has successfully colonized the Daoist College or even the entirety of temple Daoism. However, if we take a closer look at everyday life in contemporary Shanghai’s temples, one cannot help but be amazed by the laxness of labor discipline. In fact, young Daoist priests normally *do not* observe any sort of industrial work ethic. A typical workday in a temple can be exemplified by the dreary narrative excerpted from my diary of October 16, 1998:

*Qinci yangdian*. Nobody booked any ritual for today.

Many trainees<sup>24</sup> had gotten up when I arrived (6:40 A.M.). Nobody showed up in the courtyard to do any cleaning job or exercise, but their jolly chatting voices could be overheard outside of the dormitory. Senior masters have all awakened. Some were drinking morning tea, some practicing *taijiquan* 太極拳 in the backyard.

Since 6:50 A.M., young priests living outside of the temple started to rush in, some on foot, some riding bikes, and two of them riding a motorbike. Their costume is similar to any other white-collar worker in Shanghai: shirt, jacket, leather shoes or sports shoes, with keys, beeper (some of them have mobile phones) affixed on their trousers.

At about 7:00 A.M., a second class graduate (maybe one of the *guanweihui weiyuan* 管委會委員; deputy member of the temple managing committee) goes to the dormitory and shouts out his command: all the juniors convene in the main hall immediately!

Around 10 minutes later, the ritual crew finally assembled in the main hall with their dark-blue gown or embroidered gown—they don’t have to bring up their own black cap since their black caps are always left on the altars after the evening service from the previous day. When everybody has shown up, the *gaogong fashi*, a first class graduate, showed his wristwatch to the crew and scorned the juniors: “Are you all blind? Don’t you know it’s already one-quarter past 7? You are getting lazier day by day! The cooks complain to me everyday. You guys always retard their schedule. How can I say? I will start to yell at you bastards to come down at 6:55 A.M. tomorrow.”

Then, the *gaogong* 高功 put on his *fashi guan*. The others followed his sign to wear their black cap. At this time, someone found that the



cap he left on the table last night had disappeared. So, another two minutes was spent on searching, asking, blaming some others, and borrowing another one from the musicians sitting to the side. Finally, the morning service began.

When the drummer beat the last sound, the ritual crew stood up, took off their caps and gowns, and resumed the jokes they had not finished before the morning service. While still making jokes to each other, they rushed to the canteen for breakfast.

After breakfast, people soon disappeared from the courtyard. Senior graduates go to their offices to do clerical jobs, while the junior ones are supposed to *zhidian* 值殿 (be shrine attendants). As a custom, most of the juniors devoted their time to playing instruments, chatting, playing card games or chess, writing love letters to girlfriends, and reading entertaining books such as martial-arts romances, historical novels, or newspapers. Only a few of them did serious study on fortune-telling skills, Daoist philosophy, and the course-texts for preparing *zige kao*.

They don't need to be urged to perform evening service. Everybody was in the main hall at 4:25 P.M. already when I arrive there together with the *gaogong*.

The evening service begins at exactly 4:30—extremely punctual! It's apparent that the drummer and all the chanters want to rush through the procedure as quickly as possible. The *gaogong* cannot but conform to the drumbeats to hasten his speed. Consequently, the tempo of the evening service was changed from the standard *andante* to *allegretto*. It sounds weirdly amusing.

The evening service was finished at about 4:50 P.M.—10 minutes faster than usual. When the concluding sound marked by drums and *suona* 嗩呐 (shawm) fell, the chanters stood up and threw their caps on the worshipping altar. Someone among them exaggeratedly dashed his cap on the table while screaming out *gaoding* 搞定! ("done!"). Then, as usual, they joyously rushed to the canteen for dinner.

About fifteen minutes later, young priests living outside the temple started to leave. The noise of chatting, bikes, and motorbikes filled the whole courtyard. Then, trainees started to leave for a night out in the city in their leisure wear. The whole temple returned to its lifeless quiet before 5: 45 P.M.

On the one hand, it seems obvious that the temporality upheld by these modern priests is similar to that of capitalist industrial workers in some crucial aspects—the reliance on “sidereal” or “clock” time, the demarcation between work and private life, and the alienation of the person from their work.<sup>25</sup> So they tend to shorten the workday as much as they can. On the other, it is different from genuine industrial capitalist temporality in two crucial aspects: first, it contains no “time-thrift,” namely, the urge



to husband time as if managing money;<sup>26</sup> and second, the priests have not been “alienated” during their working hours if we understand the “alienation of labor” simply as the situation in which personal labor is subjugated to an alien will, homogenized, quantified, and “the time inherent in personal experience and social life . . . disembedded from the time of work or production.”<sup>27</sup> They have plenty of time that can be “killed” without doing any productive task. They use “working hours” to deal with personal affairs, for socializing, entertaining themselves, or exploring personal interests. Except for some senior graduates in leadership positions, nobody seems to be bothered by this situation. As a result, when young leaders try to husband their “working time” to become a bit more industrial, their “juniors” rise up to revolt against the proposal without hesitation.<sup>28</sup>

Tim Ingold explains this phenomenon in terms of a dialectical relation between what he calls “dwelling perspective”—the social time embedded in social life and the everyday round of tasks—and the “commodity perspective”—the clock time for regulating and measuring alienated labor. By implication, he asserts, this kind of phenomenon spurs the resistance of people toward the alienating force of capitalism.<sup>29</sup> I find this assertion not quite plausible in the face of the situation I witnessed at Shanghai’s temples.

It is true that there is confrontation between the “workers’” and “managers’” perspectives among Daoist priests, but I would argue that both are alienated perspectives in the sense that none could concretely relate priesthood to their career, humanity to ecology, and the present situation to the past (that is, apply an historical perspective). Both perspectives are based on an objective, externalized temporality that deleted the central axis of Daoist temporality—cosmic vitality—that legitimizes Daoism and Daoist priests. So their jobs—to maintain the temple and perform rituals—become meaningless except as means to generate income, their persons are meaningless except for fulfilling the duties of procreation, the past is nonsense unless it can provide some resource for present use, and the present is almost nonsense except as being a moment in which to have some fun and transition toward a hopefully better future. The only difference between the “managers’ perspective” and that of the “workers” is that the former tends to use time to produce more income for future enjoyment while the latter tends to use up time for entertainment. Neither group can justify the Daoist priest’s career for these young men themselves.

Obviously, they are alienated from their careers by the modernizing state much more than they are alienated from their labor by industrial-technological capitalism. The modernity of their temporality corresponds

more to the materialist barbarism and socialist bureaucratism of the PRC than to the capitalist world economy.

It then comes to pass that as the symbol of “working hours” and/or “work,” the black cap for these young priests is still important as it connotes salary, welfare, working conditions, task performance, and so on. However, it doesn’t symbolize their “vocation” or “life” anymore since they have no “vocation” as such and their life has already been alienated from work. The bitter comment about their situation made by “Little Huang”, a second class graduate who serves as a minor chanter, is the best annotation:

What’s the point of being so fussy about those old rules? We are not authentic anyway [“we are not doing the real thing”]. Those senior masters are oddly naïve. Don’t they know the real reasons those superiors [i.e., government bureaucrats and CCP cadres] want us to be here? I tell you: they set Daoism as an affiliate branch of the tourist industry. This is nothing but a showcase and we are the ones for substantiating the showcase, just like a zoo and the animals in it. We are here to illustrate the religious liberalization policy to foreigners and fellow citizens from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao and, hopefully, to attract them to spend more money in Shanghai. They just want us to be “half-dead.” If we really want to do it seriously and energetically, they will impose some new constraints on us. We are not Christians, Muslims, or Buddhists who have foreigners to back them up. We have nothing. They can easily “close the door and punch the dog.” So, why not just come later, mess the things up, and then leave earlier everyday and take the deadly fixed salary every month? Reserve your energy for something else interesting, mate! Everybody—both the superiors and us—can save a lot of hassles.

APPENDIX: THE CURRICULUM OF THE DAOIST COLLEGE,  
FIRST TWO YEARS

<i>Cardinal Field</i>	<i>Subject</i>
Political courses (5%)	Marxist philosophy Current situation and policy Cultivating patriotism Common legal knowledge
Cultural courses (30%)	Chinese English History Calligraphy
Professional courses (65%)	
Xue ke 學科 (literary learning) (ca. 65%)	Brief history of Daoism Basic principles of Daoism Explanations of the <i>Daodejing</i> 道德經 (Laozi) Regulations and decorum for Daoist monks ( <i>Daojiao yifan</i> 道教儀範)
Shu ke 術科 (technical courses) (ca. 35%)	Scriptures and repentance ( <i>jingchan</i> 經懺) Hymn and verse chanting ( <i>changzan</i> 唱贊) Daoist music ( <i>daoyue</i> 道樂)

### 3. Daoist Monasticism at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century

#### *An Ethnography of a Quanzhen Community in Shaanxi Province*

Adeline Herrou

At the end of the twentieth century, men and women continued to cross the threshold of the Daoist monastery (*daoguan* 道觀) to become monks and nuns, *chujia ren* 出家人 (those who left their family/home). Among them we find young people born during or after the Cultural Revolution, in other words people who were educated in a period when all religions were either prohibited or just reemerging in a Chinese society itself undergoing massive changes. How might we understand these vocations?

From the lay point of view, Quanzhen 全真 monks stand out as uncommon people. In this time of formidable Chinese economic expansion, these monks appear at first to be vestiges of the past. Their everyday clothing makes them look like people of the imperial epoch before the coming of the Manchus: they keep their hair long and tied in a bun under a black silk headdress; they wear dark blue robes, white leggings, and cloth shoes. They perpetuate Daoism, which they present as the main ancestral Chinese religion, whose representations and practices have long contributed to the culture of this society. Hardly immutable, these traditions have gone through a certain number of re-creations.

At the same time, monks and nuns play a ritual role at the core of today's social life. They perform funerary, therapeutic, and communal rituals, and they are specialists in numerous techniques of divination and astrology. However, these monks make a difficult choice. On the one hand, they are subject to endless requests from laypeople, who consult them for all sorts of ailments and other problems, regarding them as wise or "perfected" men (*zhenren* 真人). On the other, they embrace a career that few parents would wish for their own children.

Indeed, entering the monastery means literally "leaving one's family/home" (*chujia* 出家). Not all the Daoist masters (*daoshi* 道士) observe

the *chujia*. On the contrary, many *daoshi* lead a secular life “inside the family/home” (*zaijia* 在家; or as “married Daoist priests,” or *huoju daoshi* 火居道士), for they are permitted to marry and sometimes, when their office is hereditary, even obliged to do so. The purpose of this article is not to determine if, in religious Daoism, the *zaijia* is truly more ancient than the *chujia* as an established form, or whether or not one may affirm that the *zaijia* is more Daoist and more Chinese, since filial piety is a duty and the family is predominant.<sup>1</sup> I originally took an interest in *chujia ren* because, to my knowledge and according to their own accounts, today they are (much) more numerous than *zaijia daoshi* in South Shaanxi, where I conducted my fieldwork. In what follows, I adopt an anthropological perspective to explore how those who choose this religious lifestyle in modern China view the Daoist meaning of retreating from one’s family into *chujia*. In other words, this chapter focuses on the very nature of the group of men and women who have withdrawn from worldly life in order to practice the Dao as they have adapted to modern society.

In the Sinological tradition, *chujia* has most often been translated as “monasticism,” with a few exceptions (such as Ozaki Masaharu, who broadly speaks of a “specific priesthood”).<sup>2</sup> It seems to me that this convention is appropriate, as this term serves to designate religious communities composed of celibate adepts. But one might question whether this has also led to misunderstandings. Because, as Gregory Schopen says regarding Buddhist *bhikṣus*, the longstanding issue of whether or not they can be called monks “is here far more than an issue of translation.”<sup>3</sup> Personally, I favor continuing to call *chujia ren* monks—particularly given that they themselves make a distinction between themselves and their married Daoist colleagues while at the same time linking themselves to Buddhist colleagues who share the appellation *chujia ren*—but specifying what, in this context, is the meaning of the idea of monasticism, which on many points differs markedly from what is understood by this term in the West; in other words, making the term *monk* into an anthropological category.<sup>4</sup> Beyond trying to find out if monasticism and Daoism can really go hand in hand—as Kristofer Schipper did (arriving at a negative conclusion)<sup>5</sup>—I consider which very specific form of monasticism was able to develop in Daoism and become one of its central organizational elements. What are the political and societal implications of this religious lifestyle, which today concerns a large segment of the Daoist clergy? For example, fieldwork has shown that *chujia* ideally involves a certain kind of celibacy, ultimately chastity, without this becoming a strict, uncompromising imperative. At the very least, we can say that these terms (*chujia*, celibacy, and

chastity) are perhaps not synonymous in the sense (and this is what we are attempting to examine) of a very singular asceticism and way of thinking about the body. This chapter aims more broadly to explain how the Daoist clergy, after being banned for almost twenty years, is reorganizing and adapting to the modern world, and what place it grants monasteries (*daoguan*) in contemporary China, since *Quanzhen pai* 全真派 (“the Complete Perfection school”), based on *chujia*, has been promoted to the level of Daoist orthodoxy by the official China Daoist Association, Zhongguo Daojiao xiehui 中國道教協會, and pervades the present-day clerical landscape, particularly in central and northern China.

The term *chujia* was formerly used in Daoism. However, it has taken on a meaning all the more singular since the configuration of the “family,” *jia* 家, that is left behind by the monks, has changed considerably under the government’s one-child policy. This is what I argue on the grounds of my ethnographic study of the Wengong temple (Wengong ci daoguan 文公祠道觀) of Hanzhong 漢中 in Shaanxi, carried out between 1993 and 2009.

#### GENERAL PRESENTATION AND HISTORY OF THE WENGGONG TEMPLE

The Wengong temple of Hanzhong is quite an ordinary monastery belonging to the Longmen branch 龍門派 of the Quanzhen order. An urban temple located in the county seat, it is closely connected to Mount Tiantai 天台山, thirty kilometers north of town, which counts the greatest number of Daoist monks in the area. According to the vernacular taxonomy, it is a small “hereditary” monastery (*zisun miao* 子孫廟) (as are most Daoist monasteries in China), under the influence of the large “public” monastic centers, or *conglin miao* 叢林廟. These include, in the region, the Baxiangong 八仙宮 (temple of the Eight Immortals), the Louguantai 樓觀台 (where it is said that Laozi taught the *Daodejing* 道德經), and, to a lesser extent, the Longmendong 龍門洞 and the Chongyanggong 重陽宮 (these two considered only “semiheditary and semipublic” temples [*ban zisun ban conglin miao* 半子孫半叢林廟] erected near the grotto where Qiu Chuji 邱處機 meditated, and near Wang Chongyang’s 王重陽 tomb, respectively), and the Zhang Liang miao 張良廟 (a former large-scale *conglin miao* converted into a museum, recently inhabited anew by a few monks). In this region, which experienced the beginnings of Daoism, the temples are highly visible and closely linked with one another. The monks

of the Wengong temple are in constant contact with their colleagues from the other temples, taking part in the passing down of an ancient knowledge.

Unlike *conglin* monasteries, which, in accordance with the rules, do not host novices before their ordination, this small temple affords us an opportunity to view the whole of the monastic career. Therefore, it could very well be representative of the small temples that make up the majority of Daoist temples in China. The Wengong temple is inhabited by about fifteen permanent monks and nuns, a not insignificant monastic community considering that many small temples count only two or three monks. Furthermore, it is visited by numerous monks passing by. Those from the large temples appreciate the quietness and the “family” scale of this kind of monastery.

Considering the history of Daoism in Hanzhong, this temple is relatively recent: it dates back to the Qing dynasty, when it became a Quanzhen monastery dedicated to Wengong 文公, that is, to Han Yu 韓愈, the famous poet and politician of the Tang, who was raised to the position of a Daoist god and whose cult is fairly widespread in Shaanxi.<sup>6</sup> Yet this holy place may have been erected on the site of a small temple, much more ancient, dedicated to the local Earth God (*Tudi miao* 土地廟). There, supposedly, Zhang Lu 張魯 himself—grandson of Zhang Daoling 張道陵, the first Heavenly Master, who lived in the second century CE—delivered teachings during the epoch of the early “Yellow Turbans” and “Five Pecks of Rice” Daoist movements.

At the beginning of the 1950s, three spiritual generations of monks lived there. They were fewer in number than today.<sup>7</sup> Right from the start of the new socialist regime in 1949, they were criticized by the political rulers, and ordinations were officially prohibited. In 1958, summoned to stop their religious activities, monks were ordered to leave the monastery. They had to resume a lay life and take up other professions. Zhu Chengxin and Li Chengyang became peasants, Huang Xindi a carpenter; Xing Zongxing and He Xinde worked as doctors; and Yuan Xinyi left the town and spent a few years in Baxian gong 八仙宮 Temple in Xi’an, and later became an acupuncturist. As for Fu Chongzhen, said to be gifted with exceptional magical powers, he supposedly succeeded in fleeing the country: he left for Hong Kong as early as 1955. The monks thus scattered little by little. So far none has come back to the Wengong temple of Hanzhong. The oldest are deceased and did not witness the revival of monasticism.

To my knowledge, at the time of writing only two of the youngest are still alive, and they lead an altogether different existence. These monks of

the past belonged to a spiritual lineage from Mount Taibai 太白山, near Baoji in Shaanxi, whose heights were home to two Wengong temples, a small one and a large one, accessible only during the summer months. These temples, which are probably the source of the worship developed in Hanzhong Wengong temple, were not reconstructed after the Cultural Revolution. Consequently, the character of the Wengong temple has changed: monks of today are mostly disciples of the centenarian Zhang Mingshan, who has perpetuated a different spiritual lineage originating in Sichuan.<sup>8</sup>

The abbot of the temple during the time of my field research was a disciple of Zhang Mingshan, himself abbot of Mount Tiantai until his death in 2004, who was seen as a living immortal with regard to his merits, particularly because of the crucial role he played in the resurgence of religious practices in the region. Zhang Mingshan embraced religious life in one of the few Daoist temples on Mount Emei 峨眉山 in Sichuan (the Jinding guan 金頂觀). After having traveled broadly, he settled on Mount Tiantai of Hanzhong. During the Cultural Revolution, he remained alone in his mountain temple. He did not renounce his monastic life, although he had to conceal it for a few years. He did come down every day and devote himself to work in the fields, to comply with government rulings that required him to embrace another career. But afterward he did not go back to a secular life, nor did he marry.

At the end of the 1970s, when liberalization permitted it, a few people came up to him and expressed their wish to become his disciples. He trained them and later sent them to the different temples to assist in their reconstruction. Thus he sent the monk He Zhifa to take direction of the Wengong temple, assisted by four other disciples. Zhang Mingshan helped finance the reconstruction of the region's various temples by distributing to them the considerable donations he received. He thus played a major role in the resurgence of Daoism in Hanzhong. He initiated the reopening of numerous sanctuaries, including the Wengong temple. Shortly afterward the local Daoist community, the National Daoist Association, and even the overseas Chinese joined him in his enterprise.

This centenarian inhabited a very remote temple on top of the mountain, one that could be accessed only by walking five kilometers on a narrow, winding path (which is now a road suitable for motor vehicles, the municipality having financed its construction as part of an effort to make Mount Tiantai into a tourist site). He lived in extremely precarious conditions in this sanctuary, which, unlike the temples located on the lower part of the mountain or in the valley, had no water or electricity. In spite of his modest living conditions he was one of the richest men in the area.<sup>9</sup> The



monk used to tuck away in the folds of his robe the bundles of banknotes given to him by laymen who visited him by the thousands every month, filled with veneration for this man whose future divinization was almost assured, given his accumulation of merits.

The reconstruction of the Wengong temple, which began in the early 1990s, turned it into a temple on a much grander scale than in the past. It retains the architectural style of temples organized around three courtyards (*sanyuan* 三院) in a row, with a pavilion of several floors (*louge* 樓閣), but of much larger dimensions. Each courtyard is double the original size, and the *louge* has been transformed into a majestic four-story pavilion with a large exterior staircase and a smaller spiral staircase inside. The monastic community has grown, as has the pantheon.

Nowadays the temple abbot reports having accepted more than a thousand disciples (monks and laypeople). Only some of them stayed by his side; the others went to administer other monasteries. The composition of the monks' community changes year after year because monks are encouraged to travel and look for other masters to learn from, or other landscapes that are favorable to meditation.

In the monastery, monks are in charge of the temple service, known as the "recitation of the canonical texts" (*nianjing* 念經); they perform rituals for the dead such as the Progressing of the Soul towards Salvation (*chaodu wanghun* 超度亡魂), or healing rituals such as the Request for Happiness and the Conjunction of Misfortune (*qifu rangzai* 祈福禳災), the Request for Good Omens (*qiqiu jixiang* 祈求吉祥), and the Request for Peace (*qiqiu ping'an* 祈求平安). They are furthermore specialists in subsidiary rituals such as the astrological Fate Calculation (*suanming* 算命), geomancy (*fengshui* 風水), glyphomancy (*cezi* 測字), and divination (*zhanbu* 占卜). They are also solicited by the faithful (*jushi* 居士, i.e., laypeople involved in the life of a particular temple where they often come to help, and who are considered adepts) of other temples looking for priests to preside over liturgies in their local holy places.

#### JOINING THE CELIBATE MONKHOOD: *CHUJIA* AS INSTITUTION AND PERSONAL DESTINY

In their dealings with the public and with lay believers, the Quanzhen Daoists thus primarily play the role of providers of ritual services. In the eyes of the people, one of the sources of their authority, authenticity, and efficacy in this role, as well as the core of their own religious identity, is their status as *chujia ren* who have purposely renounced the ties of kin-

ship to devote themselves exclusively to the spiritual path of asceticism, or “cultivation through refinement” (*xiulian* 修煉).

As Ozaki explains, “we begin to see the term *chujia* in writings appearing toward the end of the Six Dynasties . . . There were, however, Daoists who were practically leading a *chujia* life even before the term actually appears in the texts.”<sup>10</sup> Beginning in the Tang dynasty, *chujia* became an organizational key for some communities (Ozaki even speaks of the “dominance of *chujia* during the Tang”).<sup>11</sup> However, the reality it covers is not entirely clear. It is known to have at least two distinct meanings: “in the broad sense it means non-secular, *chujia* in contrast to *zaijia* or lay; a man has left his family to seek the way, leaving away from the lay world; in the narrow sense it means a specific category of Daoists”;<sup>12</sup> and in a text, the context does not always enable one to know which of these meanings should be attached to it. Many consider this an appropriate designation for Daoist masters who lived in the state-sponsored institutions that were the *guan*, under the patronage of the emperor or of kings, knowing that these *guan* oscillated between being priest seminaries and centers where celibate masters permanently resided.<sup>13</sup> It appears that a certain amount of isolation was required: “recluses lived in cells rather than dormitories, by themselves and ‘one per bed’ as the *Fengdao kejie* specifies.”<sup>14</sup> But, as we also know, the requirements of disciplinary codes and other normative texts were not necessarily reflected in practice, which obviously remains less well documented, to the extent that we do not always have very good knowledge of what *chujia* really meant in terms of lifestyle, nor how this lifestyle changed with time. Regarding the *chujia ren* of the fifth and sixth centuries, Kristofer Schipper goes as far as to state that “nowhere does it appear that these people who had ‘left their families’ had also renounced the joys of the Union of the Breaths with their Terrestrial Lovers.”<sup>15</sup> And other influences were subsequently added. According to Livia Kohn, “the medieval monastic institution was a continuation of the tradition of the Heavenly Masters in a Buddhist-inspired framework, whereas Quanzhen adopted not only its outer trappings but also its internal organization and goal from the Chan tradition.”<sup>16</sup> It seems that this combination of influences shaped the conception of *chujia* conveyed by present-day Daoist monks.

Today, according to the monastic rule, *chujia* means leaving one’s family to come and inhabit the monastery, and receiving the robe, the canonical books of the *nianjing* 念經, and a ritual appellation (*fahao* 法號) given by the master to the disciple. The master gives to his disciple a name necessarily composed of a Chinese character extracted from the founding poem of his “religious lineage,” called the “lineage poem” (*paishi* 派詩). The

first character of the disciple's first name follows, in the text, the character that his master has in his first name. Thus, the monks themselves become inscribed in a text.<sup>17</sup>

Within Daoism, *chujia* is required by the Quanzhen monastic order. Its rules of discipline and morality are mainly transmitted orally from master to disciple. However, ascetic life in celibacy, implying the renouncement of family, is neither chronologically nor structurally limited to the Quanzhen monastic school. The broader history of Daoism is populated with immortals withdrawn from the world and separated from family in order to practice their asceticism. As Pierre Marsone points out, celibacy in religious life was not exclusive to Quanzhen at the time of its emergence.<sup>18</sup> *Chujia* is at the core of the Buddhist monastic structure, the *sangha*.<sup>19</sup> Besides the Buddhist monks, Daoist masters of other schools have long observed and ritualized celibacy. The novelty of Quanzhen lay in the force of the call to leave the world. Wang Chongyang affirmed that "those who leave their children and repudiate their wife are superior masters."<sup>20</sup>

How is it that one day a person comes up and knocks on the door of the Wengong temple in order to effect such a profound rupture with the kinship and family ties that define the person in Chinese society? This is probably one of the most delicate questions that I had to ask the monks of Hanzhong, since, in the Daoist monastery, the premonastic life is an intimate subject that one keeps private. Moreover, it obviously cannot admit of a simple answer, and it implies that one takes into account a number of parameters. Monks of Wengong, because of their difference in age and education level, form a truly heterogeneous group. Similarly clothed, young people in their twenties, old people over seventy, the well-read and the illiterate all live side by side. Furthermore, the personal stories of these Daoist masters may be very different depending on whether they were born in a town or come from the rural world. They may have *chujia* during adolescence or later, "halfway" (*banluchujia* 半路出家), after having been married and having practiced a profession among laypeople.

Very diverse reasons bring people to the monastic life, and each one lives it in his own way. Daoist monks in the Hanzhong region do not all expect the same things from monastic life. Some long for solitude while others, on the contrary, are looking for company and social links different from those they encountered "in the world."

Their motivations are all the more difficult to understand given that their life stories (as told by themselves or by others) mix different registers ranging across the religious, economic, social, and sometimes political. There are, moreover, other implicit reasons, known by all or kept secret,

told in a confidential mode or just not formulable, that sometimes weigh more than the rest in the decision-making process. Since individuals are not always completely conscious of what determined their choice, one can wonder if the issue of their monastic vocation might not just be an a posteriori reconstitution. In fact, it is neither wholly intentional nor purely improvised.

When monks speak of their vocation, they often refer to the *luanfen* 緣分 register, a polysemic notion that literally means the “shared link” but is generally translated as “predestined affinities.” There is the *luanfen* for a day, or for a moment—a sort of sensitivity or favorable disposition that one has towards someone else, something, or even a place—and there is the *luanfen* for an epoch or a whole life.<sup>21</sup>

With regard to their destiny, monks share the inclination towards both *chujia* and Daoism. Those of the Wengong temple speak of severing family ties; of being attracted to the therapeutic, educational, or eschatological perspectives offered by the Daoist religion; of seeking the Dao; or else of finding a freedom in monastic life that they would not have found in the outside world. The triggering factor is the prediction, the dream, or the meeting with the master. Yet it would seem that these aspirations often echo painful events and all sorts of troubles experienced before their entry into religion.

My hypothesis is that the arrival at the monastery is often due, among other things, to a life accident, a wrong start, or a difficult time in life. Although this is not sufficient in itself to explain monastic vocations (there is no strict determinism involved in becoming a monk), having gone through painful experiences is one of the few common features. But one has to understand it in the light of the something more (or less) that explains the fact that they made this choice, when others who met comparable difficulties did not.

Classified in decreasing order of frequency, these reasons can be summarized as follows:

- being in a problematic family situation: an orphan, youngest child, abandoned child, widow, divorced, or an individual who has a destiny (*ming* 命) incompatible with his relatives
- having chronic physical or mental health problems
- not receiving the desired education or being intended for an unwanted profession
- having difficulties with, or disagreeing with, local state authorities<sup>22</sup>

Such adversity would reveal authentic persons capable of committing themselves to a spiritual quest. The question is whether they leave home to enter the monastery or enter the monastery to leave home.

For monks, a vocation expressed in terms of affinities (*yuanfen*) for the *chujia* is a proof of a charisma closely connected to Virtue (*de* 德). It is an act that is simultaneously voluntary and predestined. According to the monk Wei Zongyi, “*yuanfen* means freeing oneself from the constraints of social duty and being able to choose for oneself.” It is a concept all the more important given that the teaching lineages have been interrupted. New vocations must present themselves so that transmission can be resumed. Daoist monks do not have recourse (or very rarely) to cooption, which is contrary to the concept of merit *gong* 功. It is up to the disciple to find a master (and not the contrary): his quest and his perseverance are essential. The meeting with the master is then fundamental.

As a matter of fact, it is physically, socially, and even economically speaking that these men and women have “left their family/home.” According to the Daoist monks I met, *chujia* often remains for them a painful step in their lives, presented as a necessary preliminary to community life as well as to asceticism.

#### CHUJIAAS FOUNDATION FOR ASCETICISM

Indeed, *chujia* is considered in Quanzhen orthodoxy to be an essential preliminary for the “self-perfecting through refining” (*xiulian*), of inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹), leading toward immortality. The aim is to return to the “Anterior Heaven” (*xiantian* 先天), which corresponds to the primeval Chaos preceding the formation of Heaven and Earth and the separation of the breaths. Also, in the register of human life reflected in the mirror of the universe, ascetics aim to return to a state close to infancy before birth. In asceticism, the backward walk (*nixing* 逆行) is a way of getting to this state of undifferentiation, to rediscover the supreme unity prior to the separation of yin and yang. To search for immortality, or literally for “the long life without death,” consists in “accomplishing the movement of return” as advocated by Laozi.<sup>23</sup> Therefore it is blasphemy to say that these monks die. The Daoist masters never pass away; they “transform into birds” (*yuhua* 羽化), because they are destined to ascend to the celestial world. Obviously, only the most worthy will arrive. In the meantime, they all call themselves “bird-men” (*yuren* 羽人).

Through their ascetic practices, monks tend to transform themselves physically. They try to metamorphose their body in order to make it

become either immortal or a receptacle for the primordial breaths. They try to modify the three main components of their body, that is the essences (*jing* 精), the vital breath (*qi* 氣), and the spirit (*shen* 神). To do this, monks and nuns make use of their respective morphologies.

They refer to the Daoist myth of origins, according to which “the Dao generates the One, the One generates the Two, the Two generate the Three, the Three generate the Ten Thousand Beings” (*Daodejing*, chapter 42). The point is therefore to attempt to put the Two (yin and yang) back into the One, and to accomplish that, they choose the way of the pure-yang *chunyang* 純陽 (i.e., not mixed with the yin), the way of heaven and immortality.

This does not mean that monks do not consider the way of yin. On the contrary; as they say, they cultivate qualities traditionally considered feminine: calm, peacefulness, and reserve. For instance, an able monk cannot be quick-tempered, because such a yang attitude does not agree with the doctrine of “tranquility and non-action” (*qingjing wuwei* 清淨無為). And through asceticism, they try to “give birth” to what they call the “embryo” of immortality. To explain the way of yin, the monk Bi Lizhong quotes the *Daodejing*: Dao is comparable to a “mother” and practicing it consists of performing a “maternity” and in “playing the feminine role” (*Daodejing*, chapter 10).

In order to accomplish this, each strives to modify his composition of yin and yang energies through a metamorphosis of the essences: stopping the menstrual cycle for women (or to behead the cinnabar red dragon [*zhan chilong* 斬赤龍]), and stopping sperm essences for men (or to behead the white dragon [*zhan baihu* 斬白虎]). Practitioners stress that not having menstruation or sperm anymore is often accompanied by a shrinking of the breasts or penis. It’s not clear which of these transformations generates the other. For instance, if some nuns say that they manage to stop their menstruation by a circular breast massage, others speak of a rerouting of their menstrual blood by meditation, which has as a consequence the reduction, even the disappearance, of their breasts. In the same way, according to some monks, it is by making their semen return by the medullary canal along the spinal chord to the brain, and not letting it run, that their penis retracts, whereas for others it is a simple consequence of the ascetic practice.<sup>24</sup> If some indicate that the shrinking of the penis can sometimes happen in conjunction with a small eruption of the breasts, they immediately point out that it is only a biological consequence of their practices, a corollary of the modification of the hormonal system. All assert that they are not seeking an inversion in the morphology of sex. Such a transmutation allows them to feed the vital principle (*yangsheng* 養生).

Their self-perfecting practices result in a transformation of the physical body, and of the principles that shape the human being, in order to transmute themselves into "True beings" (*zhenren* 真人). Monks and nuns do not really aim to produce a gender inversion, but rather to lessen their sexual characteristics by applying themselves to overcoming the fundamental duality that Daoists call the Two, or yin and yang (south-facing slope and north-facing side, earth and heaven, the feminine and the masculine) with the intention of returning to the undifferentiated, the One, or the primordial breath. In other words, monks and nuns try to rediscover the original unity between man and the world before the separation into yin and yang. It comes down to discarding fertility in order to make room for another way of generating. Whatever their gender, all attempt to become "high-meritant" (*gaogong* 高功) in order to unite within the self the complementary sexual forces.

Neither androgynes nor asexuals, they aim to be "One." The question for them consists in making light of the opposite poles yin and yang that exist in each of us in order to better combine them. And yet, a singular fact remains: although there are both nuns and monks residing in the temple, from the point of view of their appellations, the group makes up an exclusively masculine world, one that does not contain any sister or mother, although the terms do exist in the Chinese language: *shijie* 师姐 (sister in apprenticeship) and *shimu* 师母 (mother in apprenticeship) are never used.<sup>25</sup> Nuns are referred to, and refer to themselves, using the same terms as monks, so that a nun introducing me to two other nuns said of one of them, "she is my brother in apprenticeship" (*shixiong* 师兄), and of the other, "she is my father in apprenticeship" (*shifu* 师父).

On the face of it, the explanation given for this maleness concerns equality and a shared quest: "We are all the same; that is why we call each other by the same names." Monks and nuns think of themselves as equal and perhaps, above all, as principles: monks are "masculine-Dao," *qiandao* 乾道, and nuns are "feminine-Dao," *kundao* 坤道.<sup>26</sup> Nuns can play all of the ritual roles: some abbots are nuns; so are some masters of ceremony (*gaogong* 高功). Another explanation given is that the state to which the cultivator-ascetic aspires to is, as stated above, the heavenly state of pure yang.

#### CHUJIA AS RITUAL KINSHIP: THE MONASTIC ORDER AS FAMILY AND LINEAGE

From a sociological point of view, we cannot help noticing that these quite masculine appellations are those of the patrilineage that grants legitimacy



to the reappropriation of ancestor worship. Indeed, while *chujia* signifies the renunciation of family, it also implies joining a new family, that of the monastic order: a family in which the order of arrival at the monastery counts more than real age, in which the disciple may be older than his master, a family of yang beings in their appellations, yin in their behavior, a family of persons in search of the One, as a preliminary to the Dao. The true parents, *zhenzhen de fumu* 真真的父母, are the divinities and the primordial breaths. To a lesser degree, the monks and nuns are kin in apprenticeship. Indeed, even if each has his own life path and has received monastic robes in particular circumstances, monks have in common their identity as *chujia ren*. And paradoxically it is this link between them that allows them to lead a life not totally without kinship, since they re-form a ritual family of beings that seek to transform the course of their existence.

The term *chujia* 出家 is graphically and phonetically very close to that used for women who, when they marry, leave their patrilineage (*chujia* 出嫁 written with the radical for woman) in order to join their husband's family. Like women who, to a certain point, sever ties with their own ancestors in order to adopt those of their husband's family, monks (we mean here the generic category, including nuns) cut ties with their patrilineage and with their ancestors. In other words, men for once share the same fate as women. If, unlike a woman who marries, a monk does not join a new lineage in the usual sense of the term, he nevertheless enters the spiritual lineage constituted by his peers. He relinquishes his family (parents and other relations) and consequently his ancestors as well. But at the same time, he forges links of ritual kinship with his new monastic family.

The *chujia* 出家, for the monastery, is distinct from the *chujia* 出嫁 of marriage in the sense that it tends to erase any "classical" kinship. Leaving his patrilineage, the monk should forget, even deny, its very existence. The religious institution is exclusive to the point of substituting itself for the "original families" (*laojia* 老家). As required by the Daoist monastic tradition, the monk Bai Lixuan on the one hand may assert that he has no "family of origin," although his parents are still alive. He speaks on the other hand of his "temple of origin" (*laomiao* 老廟), which is Wengongci, where he entered religion. In other words, not only does the Daoist monk disengage from ties formed at birth, but his entry into religion is considered a (re)birth. In that sense, while marriage involves a system of exchange between lineages, the departure for the monastery purely and simply takes individuals away from their family.

The parallel between entry into the monastery and marriage does not cease with the notion of *chujia* and with the consequences of such a depar-



ture: these two types of commitment take place ideally at the same age, at the juncture between adolescence and adult life. It is necessary to have passed the threshold of adult age (sixteen years old) to enter the monastery. In principle, although the monastic rule allows children to start their probation period as early as seven years old for the boys, and ten for girls;<sup>27</sup> this does not involve an initiation into asceticism or the rituals, but a simple adaptation to monastic life. Before donning the robe, the Daoist adept, of whatever gender, must be at least sixteen years old. Yet monks in Hanzhong today indicate that, in conformity with the policy of the Daoist Association, they prefer not to accept children as novices in their temple, whether young adepts or simple lay children, before they are old enough to receive the robe. The rare children tolerated in the temples are there for exceptional reasons.

Although the monastic rule does not explicitly gloss these ages, seven-to-ten and sixteen traditionally mark the middle and the end of childhood in China. By not having started their destiny, their life at that time is not yet sexualized.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, they can only begin asceticism after their store of "essence" has matured, given the fact that sperm and menstruation appear at puberty. It is also because children cannot by themselves make the choice to enter religion that they are not admitted into the monastery. Life in the temple precinct being reserved for Daoist masters, a child previously conceived by a monk or a nun could not theoretically inhabit the monastery as a simple layperson. But the main reason is probably that the monastery is organized around an alternative kinship that already counts those in apprenticeship as its "children." The master is considered to be a "father in apprenticeship" (*shifu*) of his disciples; novices are called "Dao-child" (*tongdao* 童道). In order to perpetuate the symbolic lineage, only disciples, adopted by their masters, are admitted. Nevertheless, with regard to the age of monks and nuns, the monastery is supposed to be an adult world.

Monks and nuns say that they form a united family, "One-Truly-Accomplished" (*yizhijia* 一致家). If some monks explain that the family is above all an image in this context, it is more than mere words: the use they make of the semantic field of kinship, and of their way of life as a group organized in the mirror of kinship, go beyond simple metaphor. Indeed, the monks consider themselves to be a "family" in the Chinese sense of the character *jia* 家: formed graphically by a pig under a roof and representing the unity of the farm, the term means both the house (the hearth) and the household (the descent group, the lineage or clan). The Wengong temple is the monks' shared residence. They settle there from the beginning of their probation period. They are officially housed there from the

day they take the robe. Thus the monastery becomes their abode, and they will say of an absent colleague, "He is not at home; he is out."

Like a household, the monastic community functions as a domestic group. Monks hold in common the money received from the faithful (donations, offerings to divinities, and the gifts in exchange for the performing of rites and rituals) as well as contributions from the Daoist Association (sums allocated for rebuilding the sanctuaries). They do not receive a salary but an allowance, *danfei* 單費, for their personal needs and medical expenses. Each abbot fixes the amount of the *danfei* in his monastery and generally manages the accounts. In the Wengong temple, he decides how the money is spent, sometimes on his own, sometimes in consultation with the monk in charge of the supplies, and sometimes, most often when the finances are not good, asking also the advice and the help of the committee formed by some of the closest laypeople (*jushi*) to "give a hand" (*bangmang* 幫忙) to the monks and to participate in the life of the temple.

More precisely, the Wengong temple is in many respects similar to a lineage. According to the vernacular taxonomy, it is a hereditary or "from-son-to-grandson-monastery" (*zisun miao*). Like the majority of the Daoist temples in China, it is of a modest scale compared to the large public or "forest monasteries" (*conglin miao* 叢林廟) inhabited by a greater number of monks. It welcomes novices, and control of the temple is monopolized from generation to generation by the same lineage of monks, from master to disciple. The use of the expression "from-son-to-grandson" in this context is far from insignificant, for in this type of monastery not only is the "family patrimony" (*jiachan* 家產) transmitted within the lineage, but also its members consider themselves as descendants, spiritual sons and grandsons, of common "ancestors."

It is important to understand that such an organization is exclusive. In accordance with *chujia*, a monk has to cut himself off from his original family. Receiving his new "ritual appellation" from his master, the disciple at the same time registers in his master's genealogy and has the duty to worship his new "ancestors." The monks of the Wengong temple claim to be the twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-second, and twenty-third generations starting from Qiu Chuji 邱處機, the patriarch of their school. They also venerate Qiu's master, Wang Chongyang 王重陽, and more generally Laozi, the founding father of Daoism, the mythical ancestor of the "pseudo-clan," and Zhang Daoling 張道陵, the first Heavenly Master, the real ancestor of the "pseudo-lineage." The disciple calls his master "father in apprenticeship" (*shifu*), and if this one is abbot of the temple, he will also call him "head of family" (*dangjia* 當家) and has to obey him.

Monks also speak about the “filial piety of those who have left home” (*chujia ren de xiao* 出家人的孝). This oxymoronic expression refers in fact to what is held to be the “great filial piety,” that displayed to celestial powers on the one hand, and to the nation on the other, as opposed to the “little filial piety” for one’s own parents. Hanzhong monks present this as a specificity of Daoist *chujia*. Not only it is not contrary to filial piety, whether great or little, but it contributes to it. It is only a matter of time before the merits obtained through asceticism (in which *chujia* takes part) will fall upon the original birth families. According to the monk He Zhixuan, “in Daoist filial piety, it is important to display fidelity and loyalty (*zhongcheng* 忠誠) to one’s fathers in apprenticeship and also, in another way, in the long run, to one’s original kin. Those practicing asceticism are above all the first who must speak of filial piety.”

The monk’s fellow disciples are his “brothers in apprenticeship” (*shixiong/di*), those of his master are his “uncles in apprenticeship” (*shishu* 師叔), and the master of his master is his “grandfather in apprenticeship” (*shiye* 師爺). At the death of his *shifu*, he will take care of the funeral and carry out the ancestor worship; the ritual of progression of the soul toward salvation (*chaodu* 超度) will be a specific one, because a monk is also supposed to have transformed his souls into “durable souls” (*xialing* 遐靈, which in Hanzhong can be confused with “dawn souls” [*xialing* 霞靈]).<sup>29</sup> He will inherit his *shifu*’s possessions, which are split between the codisciples during the rite of the Escorting to Highest Enrollment (*song dadan* 送大單). If he is the first disciple, he will probably succeed him in his functions. Thus the monastery will have substituted itself for his original family. If the expression *chujia* emphasizes breaking away from the original family, it is not simply words for effect, because monks themselves declare that, even at their death, they will not be returned to their original family. It is those who are brothers and fathers of apprenticeship who will take care of the funerals and ancestor worship of their deceased.

In contemporary China, where the traditional ties and obligations of kinship have been weakened by the emergence of the nuclear family in modern urban life and by the one-child policy, which could ultimately, if carried out over many generations, cause the disappearance of uncle/aunt–nephew/niece and cousin relations, the monastery appears as a sort of survival of a family that no longer exists in the secular society. It perpetuates the model of the extended family, with its large set of precisely ordered siblings and its multiple branches over a vast territory. In this society, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, and so on are on the one hand an increasingly rare occurrence. On the other, within the monastery, all of

the monk's master's codisciples are his uncles in apprenticeship while his own codisciples are his brothers in apprenticeship, elder brothers if they entered the religious life before him and younger if they entered after him. These appellations also apply to corresponding reverential behaviors. And in fact, young people of the same generation live together as brothers. This sort of familial solidarity could very well attract new disciples. Nevertheless, looking more closely, we are dealing with a family noticeably different from the classical one, a family that monks will not fail to redefine in their own way.

The group must be united in order to facilitate transmission and community life, to comply with state prerogatives, and also because its members share a quest that they alone pursue. "They" practice "perfecting through refining" and seek the Dao, unlike the "others" who do not devote themselves to it, or at least not totally. The paths taken by Daoist monks not only override those they followed with their parents before their ordination but it supplants them, rewriting histories and genealogies.

However, this is a case of genealogies based on teaching links and not literal kinship; and if members of "monastic generations" do not always match up with the age group of each monk (a master can be younger than his disciple), the very fact of thinking and acting as kin contributes to the cohesion of the locally established group. It roots the link between master and disciple in an ancient pattern reproduced from generation to generation. Thus it takes on a legitimacy, beyond blood links, that enables it to confer rights and duties normally reserved for kinship. Vincent Goossaert mentions the expression "Daoist bones," which is used by monks to refer to the rare qualities that a worthy disciple must have in order to perpetuate the transmission.<sup>30</sup>

Living in "a world of their own," monks enjoy a common identity. Bai Lixuan evokes the secrets "that those who have not gone through asceticism will not be able to grasp: those who have *chujia* are often those who rise up against fakery." Beyond ethics, the fact of considering themselves as kin implies the existence of a substance, spiritual and mystical, shared by Daoist monks. One may wonder whether this substance would not be found in the body of texts that are transmitted at the time of the clothing rite that goes along with *chujia*. The consubstantiality between gods and Daoist texts that incorporate incantatory forces gives these texts a crucial place in Daoist transmission. Notably, the role of the canonical texts (*jing* 經) that monks chant every day, but also of the poem of their religious school (*paishi*) (in which each monk has a part written in his name) may explain the ritual consubstantiality between Daoist monks.<sup>31</sup> While

monks are of heterogeneous origin, field research shows that their differences tend to blur with time. Even if they are not all well read, monks become, for the most part, erudite persons. They transmit texts, sometimes very long ones, principally orally, memorized in their entirety. Thus the Wengong temple abbot recites canonical texts (*nianjing*), even though he barely knows how to read or write. These texts, beyond the written page, form a link, as though flesh and blood, a link that gathers together Daoist monks today.

#### INFRINGEMENTS TO THE RULE OF CELIBACY: *CHUJIA* AS RITUAL IDENTITY

In principle, respecting the rule of celibacy is of great importance. From the moment one enters the monastery one must not begin a family/home (*buchengjia* 不成家). The only alternative to this rule is the return to lay life, *huansu* 還俗: one leaves the monastery, restituting the robe and losing one's ritual appellation. Then one is able to resume a lay life, particularly to start a family, *chengjia* 成家.

In the field, however, I observed in Hanzhong and elsewhere a certain number of cases that could be considered exceptions, or else could represent a broadening of the rule of *chujia*. Some live in the monastery while they start a family outside (*chujia*, then *chengjia* without *huansu*). We might use the example of a monk from the Louguantai monastery who fell in love with the bookseller. He left the temple and married his beloved, who gave him a son; nonetheless, he did not want to give up his life as a monk. He assumed the direction of a monastery in Ankang and now lives far from his wife and son while contributing to their material life and continuing to visit them from time to time. He still has the respect of his colleagues, by virtue of his experience and knowledge. A different case concerns monks living outside the monastery (*chujia* but without *zhumiao* 住廟 nor *huansu*). A monk very well known in the region for his ability as a healer lives by himself at home. He remains a Quanzhen monk, and the abbot of the Wengong temple himself travels for kilometers on a bicycle to be treated by him. These exceptions are not specific to this region or to this small temple. For instance, I met a monk from the Louguantai temple who was living outside the monastery but was still considered a monk, and I was introduced to another one, from the Chenghuang miao 城隍廟 (City God Temple) of Xi'an, who was known for having a wife outside his monastery. To be sure, they do not gain prestige for these situations. But their way of life, whatever it may be, is not the important thing. What

matters above all is their ability to be a good Daoist priest. Every adept is only responsible for the way he pursues the quest for the Dao; his progression on the scale of merits concerns only himself. One does not judge his brother in apprenticeship.

These exceptions can be taken to represent an implicit adjustment of the rules to the modern world by a community that may lack vocations. Indeed, for the first only-children of China's one-child law reaching adulthood today, *chujia* becomes even more difficult. That is why monasteries are obliged to adapt to the evolution of contemporary society (as they would have done in all epochs). They try to make life conditions within their walls more attractive: monks live in more modern comfort, investing in some domestic electrical appliances. They are more flexible toward *chujia*, which for young people is the principal disincentive to adopting the monastic life.

These exceptions can also be understood as a way of adapting *chujia* to Daoism. Let us not forget that sexual relations are not deprecated within this religion. On the contrary, ritualized as an ascetic technique, they can be counted among the arts of longevity in other schools, though not in Quanzhen, which prefers an individual asceticism. Celibacy is not in itself a virtue but a preliminary to a certain form of self-perfecting and above all an essential requirement for the stability of community life in the monastery. And in any case, *chujia* or not, in the Quanzhen order or Heavenly Masters School, the Daoist quest aims at "nondessire" (*wuyu* 無慾), although we do not know if, in the monks' case, one must force nondessire upon oneself to reach the state of detachment and emptiness one seeks, or if, as the monk Wu Shizhen suggests, "the more one approaches this state, the less one experiences desires and feelings of this kind."

Monks will not, however, compromise on everything. What is important is the exclusion of marital life from the monastery's precinct. Moreover, in Hanzhong it is not possible to renew ties with one's original family. This was the reason why a monk and his past wife who had herself become a nun were excluded from the monastery, simultaneous vows of several persons from the same family being tolerated only if they enter different monasteries. In that instance the previously married couple managed to end up in the same monastery, and this coming together proved intolerable for the rest of the community. The abbot required them to leave the monastery. They then chose to change religious affiliations (*huanpai* 換派) and claimed to have joined the Maoshan school 茅山派 in which marital life (*zaijia*) is possible.<sup>32</sup> They did not formally join the Maoshan

school and, besides, had never been to Mount Maoshan, but they claimed to belong to this school probably in order to live a married life, even if this affiliation should actually be entirely invented. Since they have moved from the Wengong temple to an ordinary lay flat, they are not affiliated with a temple anymore and thus no longer receive their *danfei* allowance, nor are they linked to the Daoist Association. They still practice fate calculation (*suanming* 算命) but at home and on their own account.

It is also impossible to live with one's own children within the temple. In the region, a certain monk was acknowledged neither by the monks of the main spiritual lineage nor the Daoist Association (and was called a "false" or "black" monk by some of them), because he had accepted his natural children as his disciples. (He himself admitted his apprenticeship children were also his biological ones.)

According to the monks I met, *chujia* is only one form of religious life among others. It is mainly a distinctive feature of the Quanzhen, which is only a relatively recent expression of this religion, particularly in comparison with the school of the Heavenly Masters. Arrangements with *chujia* should not be understood as a sign of lax discipline (even if it may be so for some) but rather as tolerance of alternative modes of life according to merits accumulated. Such merits are reflected by progress in the perfecting of the self and mastering ritual and ascetic techniques.

If *chujia* is today a model of religious life reaffirmed by the State Daoist Association, it is also, and above all, conceived of as a high (extreme?) form of asceticism and as a link between the Daoist monks and nuns who practice and teach it. The exceptions to *chujia* tolerated by the community leave one to suggest that *chujia* might be interpreted as an essential component of self-perfecting and in this domain, as we have said, one makes one's way. *Chujia* is also a passage required to enter the ritual kinship formed by Daoist monks and nuns. With the freedom that surrounds it (to a certain extent), it contributes to an ethic and an asceticism that are truly integral to Daoist Quanzhen life.

#### WANDERINGS OF THE IMMORTALS: *CHUJIA* AND NATIONWIDE QUANZHEN NETWORKS AND IDENTITY

Monks of the Wengong temple are, as we have seen, simultaneously registered in a much wider genealogy than that of their monastery, one that links them to all of the monks in the country. They function also as a group of relatives in a broad sense. As a matter of fact, the Daoist



moral regulation holds that monks are free to travel, that travel is greatly encouraged, and that monasteries are supposed to welcome any Daoist master who presents himself, to the extent that he is able to demonstrate his belonging to the “Daoist family” (with the recitation of the opening of the *Daode jing*, the lineage poem, and, especially, the genealogy of his lineage of masters).

Monks travel the roads of China at will. Thus they perform what is called the “wanderings of the immortals” (*xianyou* 仙游). They stop at the monasteries of their choice, where they stay anywhere from a few days to several months. The principle of “monastic enrollment” (*guan* 掛單) is a real invitation to travel. For if it is the abbots’ decision whether or not to allow monks long stays in their temples, they have the obligation to offer board and lodging for three days to every Daoist master worthy of that name. A monastery usually has guest rooms. This tradition, transmitted orally for generations, is specified today in the *Daojiao Yifan* 道教儀範.<sup>33</sup> Thus the Wengong temple often welcomes passing monks, and its permanent residents frequently leave for varying periods of time. The abbot behaves with his visitors as he would with his disciples. Thus monks are at home in every Daoist monastery.

In Hanzhong, I observed that solidarity among *chujia ren* goes beyond religious borders and that it notably extends to the Buddhist monks who are invited to feasts and to whom one provides hospitality if need be. (The same rule of *guan* applies to these monks, who will be taken care of for three days). This solidarity is equally valid for the *zaijia* Daoists, transcending the diversity of the lifestyles and forms of asceticism that may separate them. In fact, monks under the Daoist relationship system function as true kindreds. The apprenticeship link between monks brings them into contact with one another and causes them to think of themselves beyond the temple in which they live, to the vast network connecting them throughout the expanse of China and even beyond.

This network itself adds to, and at times superimposes itself on, other Daoist networks, such as the ancient cult network known in some regions with a similar way of functioning as the “Sharing of the incense” (*fenxiang* 分香), but referred to differently in other regions such as Hanzhong. Another network is the traditional association of large and small monasteries (*conglin/zisun*). Yet another is the new political network of the Daoist Association, whose hierarchy duplicates the administrative divisions of the country. Men and material, as well as immaterial goods, are transiting through these networks, encouraged by the hospitable rule of the *guan*.



MANAGING THE MONKS: *CHUJIA*, THE DAOIST  
ASSOCIATION, AND STATE-SPONSORED ORTHODOXY

In Chinese society, Daoist monks possess a definite aura that accounts for the traditional interference of local authorities, who, perhaps fearing their influence, attempt to control them from the inside, however difficult that may be. Today, it is the Daoist Association (Daojiao xiehui) that has taken on the role of controlling Daoism on behalf of the state. The Wengong temple has become the local office of the Daojiao xiehui. It represents the regional level, *Hanzhong diqu*, under the authority of the Baxian gong of Xi'an, in order to serve as a liaison between the government and the monastic community. It is therefore in charge of all the Daoist temples in the region except those of Mianxian 勉縣 that have their own office (because of the historical importance of Daoism in this district, where among others the city established by Zhang Lu 張魯 during the Han dynasty was located, playing an important role in the beginning of the organized Daoist religion).

The two other main Daoist temples that were in Hanzhong before the Cultural Revolution no longer exist. The Heavenly Masters Temple (Tianshi miao 天師廟) and the City God Temple (Chenghuang miao 城隍廟) could not be rebuilt because the *Hanzhong ribao* newspaper building and an apartment building had been constructed on their original sites, respectively. As it is admitted in Hanzhong, before the Cultural Revolution, the Wengong temple was the only Daoist temple within the town boundaries inhabited by Daoist masters, and at the time they were already monks of the Quanzhen school, which is today favored by the Daoist Association. That is why the Daoist Association was logically led to make the Wengong temple its headquarters. It was consequently to receive new responsibilities and a higher status.

Very likely this promotion of the Wengong temple in the official hierarchy has markedly contributed to the changes in its configuration. Monks, for example, may emphasize the Daoist identity of their temple. As a matter of fact, Wengong (i.e., Han Yu) is well known for his diatribe in 812 opposing the transfer of the Buddha's relics to Chang'an,<sup>34</sup> and for his defense of the Antique Style (*Guwen* 古文), which earned him his funeral tablet in the Confucius temple of Qufu. In popular religion, he is the patron of the Earth Gods, and is himself Earth God of the city of Chongqing, previously in Sichuan.<sup>35</sup> Experts know that he also occupies a high rank in the Daoist pantheon. Held to be the uncle of the immortal Han Xiangzi 韓湘子 (of the Eight Immortals, or Baxian), he is also the god

of the Southern Door of Heaven (*Nantian men* 南天門). His Daoist cult has spread to the south of Shaanxi. However, Han Yu remains less famous at the national level, and less emblematic of the Daoist religion, than the Jade Emperor Yuhuang dadi 玉皇大帝 and the Eight Immortals. Thus, the insertion of the “Supreme Lord of the Dark Heaven,” *Xuantian Shangdi* 玄天上帝, in the local pantheon is explained by the monks’ desire (and the necessity for the Daojiao xiehui) to clearly affirm the Daoist identity of the temple, but also, and perhaps mainly, because of the saving virtues attributed to this exorcist divinity. He drives away the ghosts (*gui* 鬼)<sup>36</sup> who could very well become essential in the present context, after the long revolutionary period. Locally, the Daojiao xiehui shapes the Daoist religion and is in turn shaped by it. That is why, until recently, the president of the Daoist Association in Hanzhong was the centenarian Zhang Mingshan, while the vice-president (current president) was another famous monk of Mount Tiantai; the secretary was the abbot of the Wengong temple, and the vice-secretary was his heir apparent disciple. This composition of well-known monks guarantees the local legitimacy of the Daoist Association.

The Daoist temple itself is not a “work unit” (*danwei* 單位), notably because it is not concerned with family planning. However, the Daoist Association serves as a *danwei* by answering for its members and permitting state involvement in monastic affairs. Nevertheless, the Daoist Association might not have the hold it expects to have over individual monks and nuns, because of the freedom they have to travel and to move with relative ease from one temple to another. Their way of wandering about is a prerogative of their position as *chujia ren*. The Daoist religion also permits some monks to choose to live outside of the monastery without returning to the lay life, as we have seen above with regard to the accommodations to the *chujia* rule.

The local Daoist Association is part of a national hierarchy of Daoist Associations, under the Shaanxi Provincial Daoist Association and the national China Daoist Association (CDA). These associations are technically in charge of managing all Daoist affairs, own the major Daoist temples, employ all registered Daoist priests, and are charged with ensuring that Daoist temples and communities comply with state regulations on religious affairs.

The CDA has also attempted to promote a re-invented Quanzhen orthodoxy, notably by means of the book *Daojiao yifan* (Observances of the Daoist religion), written by the monk and former chairman of the CDA, Min Zhiting, and distributed internally to temples nationwide. All the same, monks and nuns interpret it in their own way. Indeed, reading and

knowing this text are not mandatory, and few monks possess a copy of it. Unlike official texts that regulate places of worship, the *Daojiao yifan* is not posted on temple walls.<sup>37</sup> The Wengong temple abbot and several of his disciples use the book to perform their liturgical activity. Based largely upon texts attributed to the patriarchal founders of Daoism,<sup>38</sup> *Daojiao yifan* is the instrument of a certain search for orthodoxy. Although in the late imperial and Republican periods, as well as at the beginning of the recent resurgence of Daoism, a disciple may have received his robe in an informal way from his master's hands, the book stresses the importance of *chujia* through the mediation of the clothing ritual, *Guanjin keyi* 冠巾科儀 (Ceremony of the headdress and the robe), more commonly called the "small ordination" (*xiao shoujie* 小受戒). Min Zhiting insistently recommends returning to a rite that, he says, was lost not during the Cultural Revolution but during the seventeenth century.<sup>39</sup> Although some monks active before the Maoist prohibition of Daoism attest to the ancient existence of this rite,<sup>40</sup> it was probably not systematically performed, at least not in the form described by Min. To renew traditions from a time forgotten, Min advocated a return to the sources, to rigorously observe the ritual practices as they were prescribed by the patriarchs of this ancient religion.

The attempt to standardize this essential rite and to unify its practice throughout the country is also a way of uniting the religious community. If the ceremony of the headdress and the robe aims at seeing the monks' names inscribed in the books maintained by the divinities of the celestial bureaucracy, it also enables the keeping of the rolls on earth, inside the Daoist Association, whose function, among others, let us not forget, is precisely the inventory of monks. Another of the provincial and national Daoist Associations' instruments for standardizing religious practice and promoting orthodoxy is the network of Daoist colleges, created during the 1980s in order to train a new generation of Daoist priests of different orders, the supreme training institution being the National Daoist College at Baiyunguan 白雲觀 in Beijing.

Yang Der-ruey, through his study of the Shanghai Daoist College, describes in his chapter in this volume how the Daoist priests there are no longer disciples and masters but students and teachers (*laoshi* 老師 have supplanted *shifu*). The teaching method has nothing to do with the traditional transmission, in the frame of a privileged relationship. It is reduced to a simple classroom teaching day from 7 A.M. to 5 P.M., and it makes a distinction between work and private life.<sup>41</sup> There, *daoshi* seem to be kept away from their original families (even Zhengyi 正一 masters who are supposed to perpetuate the family tradition) without forming a new "rit-

ual family." It may be that they will find this familial solidarity after their training, otherwise, as Yang emphasizes, *daoshi* becomes an alienated job like any other.

But the monks and nuns at Hanzhong's Wengong temple see the Daoist colleges as a distant and prestigious elite institution, and nurture little hope of ever going there. The type of alienated academic-style learning promoted by the colleges and some of the larger *conglin* monasteries has not penetrated to the smaller "hereditary" temples, which maintain the privilege of perpetuating the passing down of knowledge from master to disciple, a conventual life based on trust that creates a real relation "between four ears" within the traditional norms and standards of the larger *chujia* "family"—an institution that is itself encouraged by the Daoist Associations, which are run mainly by Quanzhen monks, because it fits perfectly with the state's religious policy of confining religious personnel and activities to the inside of temples. Many rituals, for example, should be performed in the temple and no longer at people's homes, as they were in the past, notably the ceremonies of the recall of the soul at the time of death (which traditionally had to be performed near the deceased body at his home no more than three days after death, but now has to be performed in the temple without the body).

In conclusion, we can note that as the case of the Wengong temple shows, while state orthodoxy promotes a standardized and purified version of the *chujia* tradition, the reality at the local level is one in which *chujia* is strongly upheld as ritual and collective identity, but often stretched and accommodated in light of individual circumstances.

Fieldwork shows that while Daoist monks' interpretation of *chujia* does subject it to a norm, it also permits a number of exceptions, which are not necessarily under suspicion of carelessness or amateurishness. A parallel can be drawn between this and the way in which monks understand the ban on alcoholic beverages and meat. They generally do not consume these at the monastery (although this can happen, especially when prestigious guests stay to eat). But some monks occasionally make exceptions, such as when they accept invitations to dine with laypeople outside the temple, or when they are traveling. They do not find themselves being reprimanded for it, and often they themselves remain conscious of the fact that they still have a long way to go before attaining the ideal of purity. This is the very notion of the precept *jie* 戒, which would therefore have a quite particular meaning in Daoism: left to judge for himself, each person observes the requirement according to the state of his progress along the path. Like vegetarianism and abstinence from alcohol, solitary life, away from soci-

ety and kin, *chujia*, is practiced as an asceticism. For some adepts, it is a necessary prerequisite to self-perfecting; for others it comes with time, following the different refinement practices. At a certain stage, withdrawal from society occurs naturally, to the extent that *chujia* designates both the moment when the adept becomes a novice (the first stage of a monastic career, before taking the cloth) and more generally an ideal religious lifestyle, which is subject, in practice, for some, to a margin of possible progression. In this sense, the categories *chujia* and *zaijia* would not be as completely distinct and impervious as we would like to say they are; one finds *chujia ren* who are still a little *zaijia*. The leeway that monks have with respect to *chujia* norms today reflects the diversity of “predestined affinities,” *yuanfen*, that Daoist monks may have with the monastery. It is also a component of the ritual kinship that links monks together over a vast network, a network that existed for a long time and enabled the swift redeployment of Quanzhen communities in the 1980s; a network that has visibly changed with the Daoist Association’s new order, but also with contemporary China’s improved transportation facilities; a network that has diminished under the one child policy—which makes monastic vocations even more difficult—while at the same time being reinforced by the way in which this sort of relic of communities organized around spiritual fraternity has become more appealing to some in a society that has seen the great fraternities and even fraternity itself almost disappear. Beyond the different forms it may assume, *chujia* remains part and parcel of a certain quest for the Dao.

## 4. Urban Daoism, Commodity Markets, and Tourism

### *The Restoration of the Xi'an City God Temple*

Fan Guangchun

Located in the busiest commercial district of downtown Xi'an, the City God Temple 城隍廟 traces its origins to the early fourteenth century. By the early twentieth century, its grandeur and prosperity rivaled those of Beijing and Nanjing. Visited by millions of worshippers throughout the year, the City God Temple also evolved into a retail center for small commodities and goods in the city. But in the early 1960s, the religious activities of the City God Temple were terminated, and the temple functioned primarily as a wholesale market and redistribution center for small merchandise for China's Northwestern region. The revival of the temple as a Daoist ritual site began in 2001 when, as part of its urban development program, the city government decided to revert ownership and management of the temple back to the Xi'an Daoist Association (XDA 西安道教協會) and gave it the mandate to restore the temple as a major historical site of religious, tourist, and economic significance for the city of Xi'an. The XDA has since taken advantage of this state and local government initiative and mandate. Using a host of innovative funding programs, the association raised a total of 600 million RMB, with which it began to rebuild the City God Temple into a religious venue that would integrate modern tourism and shopping with religious worship and ritual service.

In this chapter, I trace the process of the City God Temple's revival in Xi'an based on my own field notes as both an observer and a participant. I examine specifically the roles of the local government and its economic and urban modernization initiatives, and the XDA's responses to these initiatives. I pay particular attention to the Daoists' internal and institutional adjustments to market forces and their strategies for preserving and developing the Daoist religion in the age of rising commercialism and consumer society.

A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE CITY GOD TEMPLE  
IN XI'AN

Old Chinese cities usually had artificial moats as defense structures, which used to be named *shuiyong* 水庸, and later *chenghuang* 城隍 (the City God, or God of walls and moats). Worshipped as a god, it was enshrined in a temple, hence the name City God Temple.<sup>1</sup> Typical to cities, City God temples initially appeared only in a small number of cities, but from the tenth century, in the Song dynasty, the City God cult was canonized within the imperial state's sacrificial institution and was bestowed with hierarchical ranks according to the corresponding administrative districts, such as city, prefecture, and county. By the early Ming (fourteenth century), there were City God temples all over the country, each of which was conferred a rank equivalent to the chief magistrate of its district, and the temples were built on the same scale as the district's administrative court. Furthermore, the functions of the city gods extended from governing the city and maintaining public security to protecting the nation, exterminating demons, ensuring timely wind and rain, and guiding the souls of the dead. Every new local magistrate was required to worship the city god with offerings when he took office. It was against such a historical background that the City God Temple of Xi'an came into being in 1387, under the sponsorship of the second son of the Ming founding emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋. It was built into a large temple, rivaling in scale those of Beijing and Nanjing, and became famous as one of three "Capital City God Temples" in China. Originally it was located inside the East Gate of Xi'an before 1946, but it was rebuilt at the present-day West Street. During the Qing, the temple twice was burnt down and rebuilt. Once, in 1723, it was totally destroyed by fire. In order to rebuild it, the governor-general of Shaanxi and Sichuan ordered the Mansion of the prince of Qin of the Ming dynasty demolished and its construction materials removed to rebuild the City God Temple according to the style of a Ming palace, with a grand main hall and wooden decorated archways that still exist today. It was large in size, with a perimeter of 4,650 meters. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Xi'an City God Temple was regarded as the most important such temple in Northwest China. Pilgrimage to the temple was not only an important religious activity for commoners and the magistrates of Shaanxi province, but was also a blessing ritual engaged by officials from the four other provinces in the Northwest (Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, and Xinjiang).

The City God was enshrined comparatively late in the Daoist pantheon.

The City God cult was impregnated with popular religion and culture and closely associated with the Zhengyi 正一 ritual tradition. Ascetic Quanzhen 全真 Daoists rarely conducted rites at the City God Temple, which was typically inhabited by Zhengyi priests; the abbot was affiliated with the Jingmingdao 淨明道, a branch of the Zhengyi tradition, and most officiants were *huoju* 火居 (hearth-dwelling) practitioners.

The thriving folk sacrificial ceremonies held in the City God Temple provided its neighborhood with many commercial opportunities. Since the Qing dynasty, around the middle of the seventeenth century, the Xi'an City God Temple evolved into a wholesale market and distribution center of small commodities for the Northwest provinces. The concentration of shops formed one of the earliest "shopping centers" in the region, hence it was called the "city in the city." According to the recollection of inhabitants who lived in the neighborhood in the 1950s, all kinds of religious activities used to be held in the temple on the first and fifteenth days of each lunar month, especially at the time of the Temple Fair on the eighth of the fourth lunar month, when it was always overcrowded with religious followers and visitors. A folk saying went, "At the City God Temple, within its radius of 9.3 *li* (about 5 km), trade is booming there, from silks and satins, to whips and harnesses," vividly suggesting the temple market's thriving commercial prosperity, which lasted until 1966. During the Cultural Revolution, many of the temple market buildings were torn down, statues were demolished, the temple fairs were abolished, and religious activities were prohibited. Moreover, the temple estate was put under the management of the government estate department. Not until the 1980s were some buildings handed over to the Xi'an Daoist Association to collect rent, while the main hall and the music and dance chamber were transferred to Bureau of Cultural Relics, and the enclosed court was turned into a wholesale market for small commodities with a three-story shopping plaza built outside. By the end of the twentieth century, there were 120 temporary stalls inside the temple court and 500 in the shopping center outside, with about 1,000 commercial workers in employment. Once again, the Xi'an God Temple regained its fame and status as the largest distribution market of small commodities and goods in the Northwest.

#### CHANGES IN TEMPLE ADMINISTRATION

Religious activities revived after the Cultural Revolution. In the mid-1980s, the government tried to implement the religious policy that called for the repatriation of religious buildings to the religious communities



represented by the state-recognized associations, but this initial government effort achieved little. By the end of twentieth century, the municipal Xi'an Daoist Association and the provincial Shaanxi Daoist Association both had applied several times to restore the City God Temple as a religious venue, but to no avail. The last of the temple's resident Daoist clerics died in 1995. To be sure, the buildings, except for the main hall, were managed by the Daoist Association for rental income. But in the social and political environment of the time, many government officials viewed religion as an element alien to the socialist system, and religious teachings as antagonistic to socialist ideology. So it was undesirable to see the restoration of religious activities on a large scale. In addition, some government departments had already gained control over temple property through political campaigns, and they were reluctant to lose their gains. Therefore, they resisted and caused delays in the implementation of the state's repatriation policy. In the case of Xi'an's City God Temple, there were two main reasons preventing its return to the Daoist community. First, it seemed difficult to relocate such a large number of commercial stalls inside and around the temple. Second, the temple's estates were in the hands of different departments: the main hall was under the Bureau of Cultural Relics, the market under the Bureau of Commerce, and the rental buildings under the Daoist Association. Furthermore, the high density of stalls, congestion of traffic, and inflammable materials piled outside the ancient buildings were obstacles to restoring religious activities.

Not until 2001, when the national State Council designated the City God Temple as a key historical site for state protection, did it compel the Xi'an city government to take measures to protect the ancient buildings from the danger of fire. Thus the Xi'an Bureau of Cultural Relics, in order to ensure the security of the ancient buildings, required the Bureau of Commerce to dismantle the wholesale market. But the Bureau of Commerce merely reduced the number of stalls inside the temple from 120 to 70, which obviously couldn't meet the fire prevention requirements. At long last, in March 2003, the city government shut down the market, allocating a total of 200 million RMB for the relocation of the stalls. It also finally transferred the ownership and management of the main hall and annex halls to the Xi'an Daoist Association, thereby identifying the association as the administrative authority of the temple. Meanwhile, as part of its overall development plan for the West Street, the Lianhu district government made a plan to rebuild the City God Temple and the surrounding streets.

One of the participants in the rebuilding project was an American archi-

tectural firm, whose design highlighted the tradition of the City God Temple as a commercial market. But the experts in the review committee appointed by the district government thought that the American design overemphasized commerce—"valuing commerce over culture and exploitation over protection." For this reason, they suggested to draw on the experience of the City God Temple in Shanghai and the Confucius Temple in Nanjing to improve the design to highlight religious and folk characteristics, thereby reconstructing the temple into "a compound in traditional architecture style but with modern functions, integrating the history and culture of Xi'an as China's capital for thirteen dynasties, and combining tourism, temple fair, and shopping mall." They also called for the design to turn the temple market center into "the longest and largest pseudo-archaic street in Xi'an, combining entertainment, shopping, and tourism, and exerting a positive influence on the preservation of folk and religious culture." Consequently, after the modification of the plan, the rebuilt City God Temple complex consisted of four areas: the temple proper, the shopping mall above and below ground, ancient buildings of the Ming and Qing, and a street for local snacks. The whole area, excluding the roads, covers 97 *mu* (65,000 m<sup>2</sup>), in which the City God Temple encompasses 20 *mu* (13,340 m<sup>2</sup>), occupying 21 percent of the total area. According to the plan, the City God Temple included the main hall, memorial archway, music and dance chamber, sleeping quarters, Wenchang Pavilion, Fire God Hall, Fertility Goddess Hall, and the newly built Scriptures Pavilion, Medical God Hall, God of Wealth Hall, refectory, Guest Hall, east and west wings, winding corridors, flower beds, a square, a Bell and Drum Tower, and a decorated archway facing the street. The plan was to restore the appearance of the City God Temple during the Ming and Qing dynasties. By April 2006, all the buildings surrounding the City God Temple had been demolished, and the commercial street, the gate of the temple, the decorated archway, and the square had been built.

From the changes in management and construction planning over the past forty years, we can see a dramatic change in the attitude held by city government leaders towards the development of Xi'an and the implementation of the national religious policy. Up to the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, Xi'an's commodity economy was underdeveloped, and its markets were rather depressed. So the City God Temple market played an essential role in the distribution of daily necessities and consumer goods among Xi'an residents. Understandably, the government had to meet the economic needs of ordinary people at the cost of the spiritual needs of a few religious followers. By the beginning of the twenty-first century,

the commodity economy of Xi'an was rather developed, with large supermarkets and wholesale markets springing up all over the district. Under these changed conditions, the importance of the City God Temple market in the economy decreased greatly. What's more, the shabby look of the old City God Temple street stained the overall appearance of Xi'an's historical center. Restoration was imperative. However, in the reconstruction of the street, the same problem continued as to how the authorities should handle the temple as a religious venue. During the Cultural Revolution, the religious venue couldn't get necessary recognition, let alone protection. But after about twenty years of development, there was a great change in government leaders' views on religion. Generally speaking, religions were no longer regarded as alien to socialist society, but as cultural relics that could support the local economy. Also, some administrative authorities could no longer afford to pay large sums of money for the preservation of ancient religious buildings. So they finally decided to hand them back to religious communities. For example, in the early 2000s, the Shaanxi provincial government and the Xi'an city government transferred ownership and management of famous shrines such as the City God Temple, Xiangzi Temple 湘子廟, Louguan Temple 樓觀台, Jintai Temple 金台觀 in Baoji, and Baiyunshan 白雲山 Temple in Yulin to Daoist associations. Indeed, under the personal supervision of some government leaders, the whole handover process went smoothly.

The positive environment for the Daoist temple revival was achieved by the joint efforts of the Daoist sector as well as the government. On the one hand, the Daoist sector made unremitting appeals for the implementation of the new state religious policy of returning of Daoist property to the Daoists. For instance, the former president of the China Daoist Association, Min Zhiting 閔智亭, and its present president, Ren Farong 任法融, who used to be monks in famous Daoist temples in Shaanxi Province and enjoyed a strong reputation for such philanthropic activities as donating to education and aiding those in poverty, frequently put forward proposals to the Chinese Peoples' Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) at the national level, and held many face-to-face discussions with the municipal and provincial government leaders in Shaanxi about the demands from the Daoist circles and the need to protect the interests of Daoism. On the other hand, local government leaders gradually came to an understanding that Daoism was not only an important part of Chinese culture, but also an indispensable factor contributing to the stability and harmony of society. Thus, they frequently visited the temples and solved many problems effectively. For instance, the Preaching Platform at the famed Louguan

Temple—one of the founding places of early Daoism, had been divided up and was managed by different parties: Laozi's shrine and the monastery were both under the management of the resident Daoists, while the area between them, which was the key venue for religious activities, was under the administration of the local Bureau of Cultural Relics. As a result, the temple had been left idle for dozens of years. This chaotic situation had remained unchanged for a long time owing to a lack of financial resources. In recent years, under the direct supervision of leaders of the Shaanxi provincial government, the local Bureau of Cultural Relics was removed from the management of the temple at long last. Less than one year later, the Preaching Platform of Louguan Temple received donations of about 12 million RMB from home and abroad, with which it was quickly renovated and the buildings in disharmony with Daoism demolished. A brand new religious venue was planned and completed there in October 2006.

#### THE XI'AN CITY GOD TEMPLE UNDER XDA MANAGEMENT

The Xi'an City God Temple was officially handed over to the Xi'an Daoist Association in March 2003. It was a mess after the market's removal, with garbage scattered everywhere. The music and dance chamber and the wings of the Temple, which had been used as commodity storerooms in the past, were dilapidated, with weeds growing on the roof and water leaking everywhere. To meet the challenge, the XDA took four measures to progressively resume the religious activities of the City God Temple.

##### *Setting Up the Management Organization*

The Xi'an City God Temple's early lineage affiliation before the Qing dynasty remains unclear. By early twentieth century, the temple became affiliated with the Jingming Zhongxiao 淨明忠孝 Daoist school, a branch of Zhengyi Daoism. The City God Temple was since under the leadership of a succession of Jingming Daoist lineage masters from Yao Chunfa 姚春發, through Li Funian 李傳綏 and An Laixu 安來緒, to Zhang Cunzhu 張存柱. But since the 1950s, all Daoist residents at the temple were "lay" disciples who held jobs in secular world outside the temple. Since Zhang Cunzhu's death, the last Jingming Daoist disciple at the City God Temple, it was difficult to carry on his lineage. As the Zhengyi Daoists living scattered in Shaanxi were not officially registered and certified by the state, the XDA dominated by the Quanzhen Daoist clerics took over the temple's administration. It dispatched Quanzhen Daoist clerics from other temples to manage it, though the original Zhengyi "lay" disciples of the temple are

still allowed to take part in religious activities as members of the Daoist Music Society.

As of summer 2006, there were eight sojourning (*guadan* 掛單) Daoist monks (initiated at other temples) residing at the temple. Three were graduates of the China Daoist College in Beijing (following a curriculum similar to the one described by Yang Der-ruey in chapter 2 of this volume), and two others had been trained for a long time at Mingsheng Monastery 明聖宮 in Lintong county. The City God Temple was registered as an official religious venue at the Xi'an Bureau of Religious Affairs on June 17, 2005, with Liu Shitian 劉世天, a thirty-first generation disciple of the Longmen lineage of the Quanzhen order as its legal representative (*faren daibiao* 法人代表). Liu Shitian entered a small Daoist temple in southern Shaanxi province when he was a boy. He later moved to Baxian Monastery, the famous Daoist temple in Xi'an.<sup>2</sup> While there, Liu was sent to the China Daoist College where he studied for five years and was a disciple of Min Zhiting, the late head of the China Daoist Association. Through his participation in the management of Baxian Monastery and Mingsheng Monastery on Mount Li in Lintong County, he became an experienced monastic manager. In view of Liu's Daoist learning and monastic managerial skills, the Municipal Bureau of Religious Affairs and the XDA appointed him as the abbot of the City God Temple to oversee and carry out its full-scale reconstruction.

Liu's management of the temple followed the model of Baxian Monastery, which stressed the adoption of modern administrative structures and eschewed the drawbacks of the earlier management approach that overstressed ideological education while ignoring the material needs of the clergy. The old management approach also expected monastic leaders to attend to everything while dispelling the initiatives of the masses. It also enforced egalitarianism by violating the interests of the able, and put too much importance on teaching by example and precept while neglecting monastic regulations. To get rid of these defects, Baxian Monastery's administrative committee formulated twenty regulations involving personnel, religious services, and financial affairs to guide the monastic management there. The new management system defined the duties of each person or post, distributed benefits according to work performance by rewarding the excellent and industrious while penalizing the inferior and the lazy. The administrative committee had the prior as the leader in charge of administration, routine business, and religious services. Under the committee, eleven temple offices were entrusted with religious activities, guest reception, financial affairs, scriptural study, property care and

management, fire prevention, procurement, office work, supervision, markets, and sanitation.

The goals of the new temple management were to project a positive image of a modern Daoist temple: service (*fuwu* 服務), moral education (*jiaohua* 教化), inclusiveness (*yuanrong* 圓融), and harmony (*hexie* 和諧). “Service” refers to the expectation that all Daoists will devote themselves to the national interest as well as to engage in meritorious deeds of mercy and to serve the believers and tourists wholeheartedly. “Moral education” refers to the dissemination of Daoist teachings to the masses through various measures, by using the rich and colorful temple culture to guide people to do good and not evil, and to improve the lives of individuals and society. “Inclusiveness” means to explore and collect the excellent contents of Daoist culture and put them in the service of modern society, while at the same time introducing and absorbing the new ideas of modern society into Daoism, developing the temple into windows of truth, benevolence, and beauty. “Harmony” refers to the establishment of harmonious relationships between individuals, between people and communities, between communities and society, and between human beings and nature.

#### *Raising Funds for Temple Renovation*

The planning and reconstruction of the City God Temple and its surrounding area needed huge investments. The investment budget was 600 million RMB, including 50 million RMB for the renovation of the temple proper. It was hard for the Xi’an Daoist circles to afford these expenses, so they decided to seek other channels to raise the funds. These included (1) collecting donations from faithful followers and Daoist communities at home and abroad; (2) applying for compensation allocations from the municipal administration; (3) asking the municipal administration to cover the cost of the construction of the subsidiary landscape buildings of the City God Temple, such as the square, and the decorated archway facing the street; and (4) soliciting investors to establish shopping malls under and above the planned open square. Using funds donated from Daoist followers in Xi’an, they had the main hall repaired, the statues of deities remodeled and repainted, and the altars and ritual implements put in place, enabling the Daoist priests to conduct the religious services and the lay followers to worship there. Furthermore, the temple was well equipped by the renovation of the east and west wings and the construction of the administrative office, the reception room, the dormitory, and the kitchen.

### *Launching Religious Activities with Characteristic Features*

Shaanxi province is rich in Daoist traditional monasteries such as Chongyang Palace 重陽宮, the original ancestral temple of the Quanzhen order; Longmendong 龍門洞 Temple, which is the founding place of the Longmen lineage; and the Louguan Preaching Platform, where Laozi reputedly lectured on his *Daodejing* 道德經. The tradition of living an ascetic life as Daoist practice, formulated since the twelfth century, is well represented in the famous monasteries of the Quanzhen order. The Xi'an City God Temple, however, exemplifies a different modality of Daoist religious culture, deeply embedded within the local folk rites to ask for blessings from deities and recite scriptures for repentance of sins in order to save the souls of the departed. Other common goals of worship include prayers for the tranquility of family members, success in lawsuits, academic accomplishment, and so on. Aside from following the Quanzhen tradition of self-cultivation practice, the City God Temple clerics also seek to serve the local community by providing ritual services at their temple to meet the religious needs of the local population.

Staging temple fairs on the first day or fifteenth day of every lunar month, holding prayer meetings for blessings, and playing ancient Tang dynasty court music, were established as the routine services for the local community and the public after the XDA took over management of the temple. Traditionally, the City God Temple fair on the eighth day of the fourth month of the lunar year was the largest one, attracting tens of thousands of people from Xi'an and beyond. Besides holding religious activities of all kinds and giving a music performance accompanied by drummers, local opera performances were also offered at the temple. However, in the early stage of restoration, it was impossible for the City God Temple to hold large-scale temple fairs as before. According to the statistics gathered so far, the number of pilgrims gradually increased, from 10,000 in 2003 to 20,000 in 2004 after the restoration of religious activities. By 2005, the number of pilgrims rose to 30,000.

### *Reviving the Guyue Society*

As the famous capital for at least twelve dynasties, Xi'an abounds in a rich heritage of culture and arts. Developed from the palace music of the Tang dynasty, drum music (*guyue* 鼓樂)—strains of music accompanied by drumbeats—is one of the three best preserved Chinese instrumental music traditions and is acclaimed as an “ancient symphony” and “living fossil of Chinese ancient music.” Sublime, hallowed, and elegant, it has



remarkably retained the characteristics of the palace music of the Tang. The ancient *suzi* 俗字 music score is still used for *guyue*. It is said that during the An Lushan rebellion in the late Tang period, palace musicians escaped and blended into the populace, bringing *guyue* into the local folk culture. Performed at temple fairs, the Chang'an *guyue* tradition gradually evolved into three strains—Buddhist, Daoist, and secular—and attained its height in the Ming and Qing. At present, the music is still practiced in the districts of Xi'an city and the northern parts of Mount Zhongnan, such as Chang'an, Zhouzhi, and Lantian counties. Many *guyue* societies organized by local people hold activities in towns and the countryside. Influenced by the Xuanzong and other Tang emperors who believed in Daoism, Tang palace music had a strong Daoist flavor, so that it was natural for it to merge with Daoist music when it spread among the people. Many of the XDA *guyue* society's tunes, which draw heavily on the rhythm of Daoist scriptures, are products of the combination of the Daoist scripture recitation and the Tang court music tradition.

Under the influence of folk culture, since the establishment of the Xi'an City God Temple there has been a tradition of organizing troupes to perform *guyue*. In the early twentieth century, the temple still preserved the *guyue* music scores written during the reign of the Ming Jiajing emperor in the temple's Hall of Kuixing. Unfortunately, the scores as well as many other musical instruments, religious implements, and scriptures were destroyed by Japanese warplanes in 1942. The Daoist priests of the City God Temple usually use *guyue* music as an important means to publicize and propagate Daoist doctrines, with the music being passed down from masters to disciples. A performing troupe is typically made up of nineteen persons, with a minimum of seven required. Besides routinely chanting scriptures, the Daoists of the temple would play the *guyue* music every day. Following the example set by the City God Temple, the clerics of the adjacent Yingxiang Temple 迎祥觀 also regarded playing *guyue* music as part of their basic religious activities. Studying assiduously for many years, An Laixu, a Daoist cleric at the City God Temple, became one of the most accomplished performers of *guyue* music, enjoying equal popularity with Hua Yanjun 華顏鈞 (a.k.a. A Bing 阿柄), another famous performer from Southeast China of the late Qing and early Republican eras. An Laixu not only instructed disciples in the Daoist communities of the City God and Yingxiang temples, but also taught *guyue* music skills to local nonprofessional bands in Xi'an by holding several music research conferences at the City God Temple. More than 150 scores hand-copied by An Laixu have become an important music corpus of the Xi'an *guyue*. They have now



been compiled by the Shaanxi Branch of the Chinese Musicians' Association. The scores passed down by An Laixu remain popular. Invited by Lü Ji 吕冀, the chairman of the Chinese Musicians' Association, An Laixu led the *guyue* society of the City God Temple to Beijing to put on a special performance in 1961, and was well received in the capital's music circles. An Laixu was elected as a deputy of The Third National Cultural Circles Representatives' Congress, a member of the Chinese Musicians' Association, and a committee member of the Shaanxi Political Consultative Conference. But during the Cultural Revolution, he was forced to leave the City God Temple and lived in a village in the suburb of Xi'an until his death in 1977. His life story is recorded in the *Dictionary of Chinese Musicians*.

Zhang Cunzhu, one of An's disciples, and several other lay disciples who had been disseminating the *guyue* of the City God Temple, came back to the City God Temple after its restoration as a religious venue. Supported by the XDA and the Shaanxi Bureau of Culture, their *guyue* band was reorganized in the City God Temple in May 2005 as a branch of the temple music society. As of June 2006, there were thirty members in the *guyue* band. Most band members were retirees, and all were of the Zhengyi tradition. They rehearsed twice a week and carried out free and public performances on Daoist holidays and at temple fairs; in this way *guyue* is made popular with the general public as an important content of Daoist rituals. Moreover, to meet broader social needs, the *guyue* band also goes on performing tours in the surrounding areas outside Xi'an. In the middle of September 2005, the band went to Beijing to participate in the first China Folk Culture Festival. They gave a special performance at Beijing Baiyun Temple and held an academic conference on *guyue*, which helped the Xi'an *guyue* tradition win recognition from experts of the Ministry of National Culture, the Chinese Arts Research Institute, the Chinese Conservatory of Music, and the China Daoist Association, who encouraged the Xi'an *guyue* to apply to for recognition by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage. The temple's *guyue* band has participated many times in large-scale performances on the Xi'an city wall and gave a special performance at the Europe-Asia Economic Forum. The troupe, together with five other Xi'an bands, regularly gives performances on the East gate of the Xi'an city wall. As of this writing plans were being made to put on a daily show in the City God Temple in the future.

Two noteworthy patterns have emerged in my preliminary field notes on the monastic revival of the City God Temple in Xi'an. One is that the cen-

tral and local state's changing perceptions of religion and its religious policy under new market-oriented conditions have created new opportunities as well as obstacles for Daoist clerical and lay-activist expansion in contemporary Chinese society. As shown in the chapters by Adeline Herrou and Yang Der-ruey, as well as others in this volume, since the 1980s the PRC state, at both the central and local level, has significantly relaxed its draconian policies of suppression and containment of state-sanctioned and organized religious institutions such as the Daoist associations (*daoxie*) and large historically reputable monasteries and temples. This religious openness, which came about as part of the state's larger policies of "reform and openness," is also the result partly of economic pressure from China's unfolding market liberalization, and partly of political pressure on the local government officials to produce an effective record of governance (*zhengji* 政績) in order to respond positively to higher-level policy initiatives and to advance their bureaucratic careers. This changing state policy creates the new contemporary religious landscape wherein Daoist institutions and their laity and clergy are afforded new opportunities for action.

Yet the state's liberalizing policy initiatives alone are far from sufficient to bring about monastic revival at the Xi'an City God Temple. Indeed, the activism of the XDA and Daoist clerics such as Liu Shitian has proven to be the key moving force behind the temple's revival. Leveraging the temple's historical legacy as a commercial hub, ritual center, and folk-cultural venue for the local community of Xi'an, Liu and the XDA persisted in their temple revival project and exercised political wisdom in taking advantage of early state policy initiatives and economic opportunities by collaborating successfully with city officials. As this and the chapters by Herrou and Yang show, the key to successful Daoist monastic survival and engagement with modernity hinges on whether Daoist clerics and institutions know when, what, where, and how to engage with the unfolding forces of the contemporary Chinese society, state, and market.

PART II

# Transformations and Reinventions of Daoist Self-Cultivation Traditions



## 5. Daoists in the Modern Chinese Self-Cultivation Market

*The Case of Beijing, 1850–1949*

Vincent Goossaert

As this volume shows, Daoism changed in many different directions at the same time during the twentieth century. Many aspects of such change were directly ushered in by political processes of brutal secularization and modernization, which dramatically disrupted Daoists' connections with local temples, community life, and rituals. There is, however, one facet of Daoism that changed in less traumatic ways and actually thrived: its self-cultivation tradition, and the associational networks devoted to the practice of this tradition. By contrast to local temples that were being ruined and destroyed for most of the twentieth century, self-cultivation networks expanded and diversified. To analyze this process of expansion and diversification, I propose in this chapter to describe Daoist self-cultivation as a market, itself, as we will see, made up of different markets, all consisting of various competing suppliers aiming to meet demand in instructions in techniques allowing one to transcend one's physical limitations, based on Daoist visions of the body—this is, for the purpose of the present chapter, the narrow definition of self-cultivation.

The language of markets in religious studies is heavily charged, so I want, as a preamble to a chapter that is more descriptive than theoretical, to make my stand clear. While interested in some of the questions and insights offered by sociologists of religion using the vocabulary of “religious markets,” I do not subscribe to the “rational choice” paradigm that has come to be identified with this vocabulary. In rational choice, scholars (such as Laurence Iannaccone, Rodney Stark, and Roger Finke) assume that human beings behave in religious matters as in other matters, making reasoned and informed choices that maximize their interest, and that the criteria (demand, preferences) for making such choices do not vary much between individuals.<sup>1</sup> Besides a number of theoretical criticisms that

have already been expounded by other scholars,<sup>2</sup> my personal objections to accepting these assumptions include (1) the observation that in matters of religion, choices (when there is a choice) are often collective rather than individual; (2) that such choices are in large part a matter of aesthetic taste—thus introducing a variable that does vary to a considerable extent between individuals (and social classes)—and (3) that as a historian, my evidence offers precious little that pertains to individual choices, and therefore, does not allow me to discuss them.

Nonetheless, I propose that under certain conditions, it is not only legitimate but useful to borrow vocabulary and analytical tools from economics (a tradition that goes back to Weber's notion of "salvation goods") in order to analyze certain—by no means all—aspects of religion as markets (rather than one single market),<sup>3</sup> all the while refraining from assuming rational choice and making predictions or assuming causality deriving from such assumptions. This "cautious religious markets approach" is meant to describe how the markets in question work, how competition is regulated, and how external constraints affect suppliers and change the markets themselves over time. Because all religious markets are very specific, they need to be described in detail before we can even start to apply general rules about consumer behavior. So, instead of singling out "success stories" (or failures) and trying to quantify them, as rational choice theorists like to do, I would rather like to describe the variety of players in the markets, through typologies and examples. This approach does justice to competition and pluralism in the religious field, without forestalling interpretation of the outcome of such competition.

Because of the relatively low level of regulation exerted on modern Chinese self-cultivation milieus by both the state (except during the high Communist period) and religious institutions, and because there was a great deal of competition between spiritual masters looking for patrons and disciples, and the publication of a very abundant self-cultivation literature, mostly with commercial editors, it seems apt to use the expression "self-cultivation market." The great fluidity of and traffic in ideas, practices, and persons in self-cultivation milieus call for an approach that does not take ideas and practices, Daoist or otherwise, in isolation but looks at their open negotiation and interaction. After all, self-cultivation is a market now, in the PRC, in Taiwan and Hong Kong, and in the West, with hundreds of groups selling books, training sessions, DVDs, and membership fees. It therefore seems natural to look at the earlier stage of the history of self-cultivation expecting to find comparable configurations of open competition.

This chapter takes Beijing as a case study (while also drawing on examples from other parts of China) to explore the self-cultivation market in the changing sociopolitical context of modern China, between the late Qing and the end of the Republican period. It pays particular attention to the evolving role in this market of the Daoist clergy, based on my previous work on Beijing Daoists,<sup>4</sup> and to other competitors, notably the new religious groups that emerged during the 1910s and 1920s that I call redemptive societies. While the social role of the Daoists was, and is, very far from limited to the teaching of self-cultivation, I focus on this specific question here because self-cultivation teachings are the realm where Daoists in general, and in Beijing in particular, found themselves most comprehensively challenged by other specialists and engaged most creatively with the challenges of modernity. The situation in Beijing was in some regards unique, but the Daoists and other spiritual masters in Beijing were engaged in modernizing processes of market expansion similar to those observed elsewhere in China.

I begin with a general introduction to self-cultivation techniques and the masters teaching them, before introducing in more detail three distinct markets: self-cultivation books, masters, and communities active in late imperial and Republican Beijing. I then offer some concluding remarks on how competition, and the markets themselves, changed in the course of the modern period.

## THE SELF-CULTIVATION MARKET

The self-cultivation techniques taught and practiced by Daoists and other spiritual masters in late imperial and modern China ranged from *yangsheng* 養生, the body cultivation techniques that aimed for well-being, robust health, and long life (including breathing techniques, dietetics, gymnastics, and particularly meditation—the most common term used being *jingzuo* 靜坐) to more advanced methods for transforming rather than strengthening the body, aiming at transcendence represented as immortality. Self-cultivation was described by its practitioners with many different terms (*xiuzhen* 修真, *xiandao* 仙道, *dandao* 丹道, . . .), each conveying a specific meaning, corresponding to, overlapping with, or radically distinct from “Daoism” as an institution.

Most people interested in self-cultivation techniques aimed merely at curing a disease or reaching long age and robust health through *yangsheng*. On this level, few people cared to distinguish the relative contribution of Daoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, other religious traditions, or medicine.

Furthermore, from the early twentieth century on, many, accommodating modern views, were willing to consider *yangsheng* or *jingzuo* as a scientific discipline, not as the first stage in a spiritual program.

While Daoists did not reject purely physiological *yangsheng* techniques, they considered them as merely preliminary preparations for the real inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) self-cultivation that entails the complete transformation of the person. *Neidan*, for which the Daoist Quanzhen 全真 order has since the Yuan period been the main institutional vehicle, presented itself as the ultimate formulation of Daoist spirituality. It described and taught how to handle the cosmological structures of the universe and the body (structures made of symbols such as numbers or trigrams), and it allowed adepts to nurture in themselves a pure transcendent body, a process often described as the conception, within oneself, of a child. Because it placed itself on an abstract, symbolic level, *neidan*, while sometimes lyrical, was an intellectually demanding, speculative discipline that considered other self-cultivation traditions coarse and inferior. This conception of *neidan* was widely shared by lay Chinese, and *neidan* was considered along with Chan Buddhism as the summit of Chinese spirituality. If Daoists in general, and Quanzhen Daoists in particular, were widely recognized as authoritative transmitters of the *neidan* self-cultivation tradition, they enjoyed no monopoly over it. A fundamental feature of *neidan*, since its very origins, was to reject the secret initiation characteristic of ancient Daoist immortality cults, and to favor the open circulation of texts; there was therefore no mechanism whereby an institution could control its diffusion. *Neidan* was widely practiced and transmitted by non-Quanzhen Daoists, as well as other segments of society, in an open self-cultivation market that had rather low barriers of entry.

While it is convenient to posit a self-cultivation market in the singular, a closer look makes us realize that it was actually made up of several distinct markets that operated on different logics. I see at least three such markets at work in modern China. First, the market for self-cultivation books,<sup>5</sup> on which were traded rather inexpensive and nonexclusive goods, that people tended to buy in large number and variety. The second is that for masters offering their instructions in exchange for various goods, from monetary donations to time commitment and devotion. These are more expensive goods, but still nonexclusive, as very committed adepts tend to try several masters, one after the other or even concurrently. The third market is that for communities trying to recruit committed members who will work for the community, expand its activities, and bear witness to the efficacy of its teachings. Here, choice tends to be exclusive, at least at any given time.



People interested in self-cultivation could be active on one or several of the three markets; some were avid buyers and readers of self-cultivation literature and became self-trained practitioners without ever becoming disciples of a master or members of a self-cultivation community. Some people, on the contrary, were members of a religious group and practiced self-cultivation as part of the collective activities of this group, without necessarily ever looking for books or a personal master. Furthermore, these markets evolved differently during the course of modern history, and this is why it is useful to look at them separately.

Such an analytical framework is also useful because it can be applied to other markets, which are not purely religious, such as the medical market, which also comprised a market for medical books (both technical and self-help) and traditions,<sup>6</sup> a market for actual doctors, and a market for groups that provided healing as part of the benefits of membership. Beside the actual (and important) overlaps between these different self-cultivation and medical markets, the fact that they can be analyzed in a similar way suggests that choices were not only a matter of individual spiritual options but also hinged on availability, costs, and other such factors.

#### THE MARKET FOR SELF-CULTIVATION BOOKS

The respective role of books and face-to-face (individual or collective) teachings in the quest for transcendence is a major theme running through the whole literature of spirituality of this period. Adepts were supposed to read books by themselves, and test the (ancient) books and the (living) masters against each other: they could reject “false masters” who taught in contradiction to the books, but they could truly understand the books only by studying with a “true” master. Some practitioners began with a master, others began with books; entirely self-taught practitioners are often mentioned in the self-cultivation literature. The journals published during the 1930s by Chen Yingning 陳櫻寧 (1880–1969) in Shanghai, discussed by Xun Liu in chapter 6 in this volume,<sup>7</sup> carried letters by adepts living in Beijing (and elsewhere) who read and practiced according to a large variety of self-cultivation books, but complained that they found no master to train them, a striking claim considering the variety of masters then active in the city (and whom we are going to discuss). This again points to the highly unregulated nature of self-cultivation, and to the fact that Daoists and other spiritual masters failed to answer the expectations of certain prospective self-cultivation adepts.

I find it convenient to present the very large late imperial and Republican-

period self-cultivation literature—hundreds of titles have been published as part of recent collections, and more are scattered in libraries without any descriptive or analytical listing so far—according to four categories based not on affiliation with specific self-cultivation traditions but rather on the intended readership. First, by “classics” I refer to ancient (pre-1700) works that had acquired canonical value by late Qing times and are as such very frequently quoted in later works. Second, by “essays,” I mean the vast category of short or medium-size writings by individual modern self-cultivation writers. By “encyclopedias,” I mean books that aim to provide a comprehensive view of either the whole self-cultivation tradition or one specific sub-tradition, by anthologizing and excerpting the most salient examples of the genre. Last, the “manual” is a type of book that offers a complete, self-sufficient do-it-yourself approach to self-perfection.

### *Classics*

By “classics,” I mean all self-cultivation books that have achieved canonical status, be they scriptures (*jing* 經) or essays and poetry by earlier (often Song and Yuan period) authors such as Zhang Boduan’s 張伯端 *Wuzhenpian* 悟真篇 (Verses on awakening to transcendence). While this is not the place to discuss the contents of such texts, it is important to note that they maintained a very large readership (even beyond self-cultivation practitioners) throughout the modern period and therefore were constantly reprinted, either with or without commentaries. The publishers for these classics were of different kinds; some spirit-writing halls and charities printed them for merit; commercial presses printed them for profit, and in a few cases, Daoist temples also printed them for distribution among their networks. Let us see just one example of a classic published in Beijing: the classical Song-period *neidan* manual the *Lingbao bifa* 靈寶畢法 (Ultimate method of Lingbao), which was republished in 1937 by a redemptive society, the Daoyuan 道院, and printed and distributed by the Yongshengzhai 永盛齋, a commercial press located at Liulichang (Beijing’s leading bookstore district) that specialized in religion, morality books, and spirit-writing, and was active from at least the 1860s until 1937.<sup>8</sup>

### *Essays*

This second type certainly accounts for the largest amount of self-cultivation books published in the late Qing and Republican period. It corresponds to rather short (one modern volume, and between one and three thread-bound volumes) books that did not cost much to produce. These books reflected the teaching of one master (living, or deceased in recent times) or

of one spirit-writing hall. In terms of genre, contents included prose essays, sometimes accompanied with charts and diagrams; poetry; recorded sayings (*yulu* 語錄); commentaries to classics; and any combination of the above.

A good example in the Beijing context is the works of Liu Mingrui 劉名瑞 (whose career is discussed below). Liu authored three self-cultivation books, *Daoyuan jingwei ge* (Songs on the tenuous essence of the origin of the Dao, 1888), *Qiaojiao dongzhang* (Canonical essays on striking and stretching, 1892), and *Panxi yikao* (Studies on the Yijing by Panxi, 1894). All three are firmly in the Quanzhen literary tradition, with a combination of speculative essays and poems, comments on charts and classical *neidan* texts, and dialogues between master and disciples; the style is uncompromisingly classical and evinces a circle of well-educated adepts. The bibliography provided for adepts (more than 150 titles, in both “classics” and “essays” categories)<sup>9</sup> and the quotations that punctuate his discourse show that Liu expected his disciples to master the scriptural legacy of the Three Teachings and especially to be conversant with the *neidan* classics. This was clearly not a work for beginners. Liu also published a medical book, *Yuanhui yijing* (Mirror of primordial medical knowledge, 1908), very close in style to his self-cultivation books, and likely with partly similar intended audiences.

Liu’s three self-cultivation books were all published by the Yongshengzhai, and the printing was paid for by Liu’s disciples.<sup>10</sup> This would seem to be typical of the “essay” type of self-cultivation books, which were often not sure to make a profit and thus required subsidy. Indeed, Liu’s three books were not reprinted (as far as I know) before a Taiwan press specializing in self-cultivation published a new edition during the 1960s. The Yongshengzhai also published a large number of books produced by spirit-writing groups, which (like many similar books throughout China) had varying degrees of self-cultivation content, some of them being primarily self-cultivation books. One example is the *Xianfo dandao yao-pian* (Essentials of the way of alchemy revealed by the Immortal and the Buddha), a volume of revelations of *neidan* self-cultivation instructions received from Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 and Jigong 濟公 at a Beijing Daoyuan spirit-writing altar and published in 1936.

### *Encyclopedias*

The works I label “encyclopedias” differ from the previous type not so much in length (even though some encyclopedias are much longer than the typical essay) as in scope and intended audiences. Some of these ency-

clipedias endeavor to present the whole self-cultivation tradition by introducing and giving excerpts of the major classics and providing essays that sketch an overview of the major concepts and techniques, without going into much discussion of the differences between various texts and sub-traditions.<sup>11</sup> Such digests have been circulating since before the nineteenth century, but a substantial number were compiled and printed during the modern period. This certainly suggests that there was then a readership who was not satisfied with the essays, which were typically aimed at adepts already possessing a solid self-cultivation culture. While encyclopedias certainly may have interested advanced practitioners who also read essays, they also had a larger intended readership.

Other subtypes of encyclopedias include the collected works of an important author, such as Fu Jinquan 傅金銓 (1796–1850), Min Yide 閔一得 (1758–1836), or Li Xiyue 李西月 (1796–1861), who had a well-organized and well-funded organization to pay for and distribute such collections; and collected works pertaining to a given tradition, such as female alchemy (*nüdan* 女丹).<sup>12</sup> The largest cases concerned complete collections such as the *Daozang jiyao* 道藏輯要, first collected and printed in the early nineteenth century by a Beijing spirit-writing group.<sup>13</sup> Yet another subtype comprised large all-comprehensive works that presented the self-cultivation system of an organized institution, such as a lay devotional group.<sup>14</sup> In all these cases, editing an encyclopedia also meant reinterpreting the texts therein and editing them by deleting unwanted aspects and adding new meanings. For instance, in 1897 a lay Daoist group in Chengdu published under the title of *Wu-Liu xianzong* 伍柳仙宗 (The Immortality Lineage of Wu and Liu), a collection of texts (already well distributed independently) attributed to Wu Shouyang 伍守陽 (1574–1644) and Liu Huayang 柳華陽 (fl. 1736). This collection proved very popular and went through many editions; it had the effect of creating a new distinct Wu-Liu 伍柳 tradition identified as such by self-cultivation adepts.

### *Manuals*

By contrast to books in the three previous categories, which situate themselves within a rich self-cultivation textual culture, either as primers or as advanced reading, the texts I label “manuals” are straightforward, easy-to-read practical instructions that guide adepts who may not have a living master to supervise them and are not equipped with the self-cultivation culture that would allow them to make sense of the complex vocabulary and imagery of the earlier texts. While a number of essays and encyclopedias claim to be “easy to understand,” the works discussed here really are

do-it-yourself manuals built around progressive steps in the practice rather than abstract notions. The first one chronologically is Jiang Weiqiao's 蔣維喬 (1873–1958) *Yinshizi jingzuo fa*,<sup>15</sup> (Method of seated meditation by Master Yinshi), published in 1914 by the Shanghai-based Commercial Press (Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, the leading modern press in early twentieth-century China). This hugely popular self-help book was instrumental in developing the trend of popularizing and scientizing Daoist self-cultivation—a trend that reached maturity with the redemptive societies and then with the *qigong* movement during the Communist period.

Another case, very influential among Beijing adepts, is that of Zhao Bichen's 趙避塵 (1860–1942) *Xingming fajue mingzhi* (Clear explanations on the methods and instructions for the cultivation of body and mind), published in 1933 in Beijing by a lodge of the Zailijiao 在理教 redemptive society. This book, which continues nowadays to be a reference work in *neidan* practice among lay Daoist practitioners,<sup>16</sup> is structured around a description of a sixteen-stage progression toward transcendence, from preliminary exercises accessible to all to intense meditative enclosures. Each stage is illustrated with a chart and some theoretical explanations, followed by disciples' questions and Zhao's answers. The direct and lively style of the dialogues and the occasional polemical or autobiographical passage make this book easier to read than those in the categories of "essays" or even "encyclopedias."

### *Competition in the Self-Cultivation Book Market*

The self-cultivation book market was very fluid, with lots of competition, and types of books such as encyclopedias and manuals clearly gained market shares (at least in terms of title output) during the modern period. But, just as important, the market itself changed, with modern print technologies lowering prices beginning in the last years of the nineteenth century, and periodicals appearing and competing with books. The small commercial presses specializing in spirit-writing books and self-cultivation, like the Yongshengzhai in Beijing, continued to play a significant role, while others, such as the Yihuatang 翼化堂 in Shanghai, turned into modern presses with larger print runs and China-wide advertising and distribution networks. The Yihuatang, based near the Shanghai City God Temple, started during the 1850s as a small press specializing in morality books (given for free or sold at cost), and expanded during the 1920s and 1930s; its catalog of self-cultivation books included hundreds of titles, from all our four categories.<sup>17</sup>

Another development on this market was the emergence of large confes-

sional presses. Up to the early Republican period, temples and monasteries did publish books, but only on a limited scale. For instance, the Baiyunguan 白雲觀, Beijing's leading Daoist temple, printed books mostly for its own internal use, as well as only three (as far as I have found) self-cultivation books for the lay public: two short books (that fit squarely the "essay" type) by the famed abbot Gao Rentong 高仁峒 (1841–1907, abbot 1881–1907)—a short anthology of quotations, *Longmen mizhi* (Secret instructions of the Longmen Lineage, 1902) and Gao's own collection of poetry, with a large portion of self-cultivation poems, *Yunshui ji* (Anthology of clouds and water, 1885)—as well as *Changchun zushi yulu* (Recorded sayings of Patriarch [Qiu] Changchun, 1908), an anthology of thirteenth-century texts by or about the patriarch Qiu Changchun 邱長春 (1148–1227). A new type of confessional press that emerged during the Republican period was the commercial press set up by redemptive societies that published both books and journals. An important case in Beijing was the Tianhuaguan 天華館, a Beijing-based press operated from 1917 on by a redemptive society, the Tongshanshe 同善社, that published a series of self-cultivation and morality books, some of them being Tongshanshe spirit-writing revelations, but the others being mainstream, older classics.<sup>18</sup>

The development of modern presses certainly developed the self-cultivation book market. Whereas up to the early twentieth century, small temple or commercial presses published large numbers of "essay"-type books all with small print runs, the development of presses such as Yihuatang or Tianhuaguan allowed books (re-edited classics, but also encyclopedias) to reach larger audiences, while large commercial presses printed new types of books such as Jiang Weiqiao's manual. All the while, essays continued to be produced in large numbers by more traditional ventures such as the Yongshengzhai. Competition intensified, but it resulted in expanding the market rather than condemning some to failure.

#### THE MARKET FOR SELF-CULTIVATION MASTERS

If buyers of self-cultivation books were faced with a large array of choices, people willing to become disciples of a self-professed self-cultivation master had no less of a choice. The practice and transmission of self-cultivation techniques in society at large encompassed a large range of spiritual masters, a range that extended far beyond the borders of Daoism, and beside Daoists and Buddhists also included doctors, martial artists, and preachers of lay devotional congregations (often called "sectarian" in the Sinological literature). All these specialists lived in a common unstructured milieu,

driven by strong competition that favored individualization (each master had his or her own system and methods) and yet a sense of shared values and intellectual frameworks. This milieu, with its focus on individual religiosity and self-accomplishment and its accommodation of pluralism, fits very well with sociological definitions of religious modernity, even though it has been operating for several centuries. It is also modern in the sense that it thrives in the midst of a majority of people who are simply not interested in the type of religious goods on offer in the self-cultivation market.

These various spiritual masters all had in common a strong sense of lineage transmission and identity, and dependence on adepts or donors for a living. Those who effected cures and attracted many disciples could enjoy a comfortable life; many others actually survived as laborers, hawkers, or temple employees. The milieu of spiritual masters cut through social hierarchies, including village martial artists and lay congregational leaders as well as urban upper class amateur teachers in self-cultivation techniques. If there was a definite continuum among the techniques themselves, there were also sharp distinctions according to level of literacy and style of the practice. Urban amateurs, being more literate and having more access to commercial printing, produced the largest numbers of *neidan* and *yangsheng* essays; they tended to look down on less literate martial artists and lay congregational leaders, even though they did not necessarily reject martial arts or devotional movements in general. In this, Daoists were no exception, as they included both haughty abbots and poor itinerant clerics.

Not only was there much in common between the different types of spiritual masters, but some masters actually qualified for several roles simultaneously. For instance, many clerics also worked as healers and/or martial artists, and martial artists were frequently enrolled by lay devotional groups. In this fluid world, personalities mattered most, and ideological and technical content as well as social organizations supporting the teachings changed easily; this is also shown in Elijah Siegler's chapter in this volume, in which spiritual masters such as Mantak Chia 謝明德 represent themselves as Daoists, doctors, or martial artists according to the context. In other words, the same self-cultivation technique could be transmitted by a traditional clerical lineage or by a lay devotional congregation; by the same token, an individual charismatic teacher could bring a new self-cultivation technique into an established organization or network and change radically the practices and worldview of this organization or network, while its social profile would nonetheless remain the same.

In view of this fluid situation, I propose to analyse self-cultivation mas-



ters in four categories that are not based on confessional affiliation, but rather on social status. The first, monastic leaders, includes both Daoist and Buddhist institutional leaders, even though in the Beijing context, I am only going to discuss the former—Buddhists were also fully part of the milieu of spiritual masters, as eminent clerics had lay disciples trained in Chan meditation and mysticism, and some also taught body techniques (*gongfu* 功夫) for helping meditators in controlling the body and also for the sake of good health. The second, masters outside the monasteries, comprises ordained clerics who worked independently of the prestigious clerical training institutions and built their own personal networks. The third, self-trained literati, concerns persons outside any religious institutions who had trained for a long time for personal reasons (most often, healing a disease) and had eventually reached such a degree of mastery that they attracted disciples. Finally, “religious entrepreneurs” are self-cultivators who created their own communities of practice in innovative formats.

### *Monastic Leaders*

The above sketch of self-cultivation milieus applies to the whole of the Chinese world, and many practitioners traveled, thus circulating texts, ideas, practices, and reputations. Not all local conditions were similar, however. For instance, in contrast to the situation in postwar Taiwan described by Lee Fongmao in chapter 8 in this volume, where ordained Daoists engaging in self-cultivation were very few, the Beijing scene was characterized by an important presence of institutional Daoism, and in particular the prestigious Baiyunguan. Large Quanzhen monasteries such as the Baiyunguan were a major source of authority in orthodox *neidan*, because they incarnated (through the training and consecration of clerics) the Longmen lineage, the most important and prestigious lineage within the Quanzhen order, and thus the teachings and the spiritual charisma of the immortals Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 and Qiu Changchun, both universally recognized masters in self-cultivation. Whereas opinions on the lifestyle best suited to *neidan* practice diverged largely between those recommending celibacy and ordination (*chujia* 出家) and those advocating secular life (*zaijia* 在家), consensus was that the ascetic curriculum of elite Quanzhen priests, notably formative itinerancy, and their monastic discipline certainly furthered their chances of reaching transcendence. In short, the Quanzhen clergy, and particularly the elite Baiyunguan clerics, were credited with considerable symbolic capital in the diverse and contested field of self-cultivation techniques.

The pedagogy of *neidan* in Quanzhen monasteries was not formalized in a way comparable to Chan meditation in elite Buddhist monasteries,



because there was no procedure for collective training comparable to the meditation semesters in the meditation halls (*chantang* 禪堂). The early Quanzhen order (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) had developed a collective meditation regimen (*zuobo* 坐鉢, "sitting around the clepsydrabowl") but this was apparently discontinued by the late Qing. The only occasion when Quanzhen monasteries like the Baiyunguan organized formal lectures was during the consecration training period, and the focus then was on liturgical training rather than on meditation and self-cultivation.<sup>19</sup> Among the clerics in residence (for a few years' training, or on a permanent basis) in a Quanzhen monastery, probably the vast majority practiced some form of meditation, but only a quantitatively small ascetic elite engaged in advanced *neidan* regimens, often in long-term seclusion—there were a few enclosures available for them within the Baiyunguan.

Even within large monasteries, then, *neidan* was taught individually from master to disciple.<sup>20</sup> The Baiyunguan leaders were considered authorities in this realm and were sought after for instruction, but they apparently accepted only small numbers of formal disciples, some clerics, some lay, completely distinct from the monastic organization. Quanzhen monastic pedagogy, as seen in the writings of Gao Rentong and other Baiyunguan leaders, was based on master-disciple conversations alternating with periods when disciples read and meditated on their own. Disciples were expected to study *neidan* classics and to mull them over until their logic and rhetoric became second nature for the adept. Conversations brought together one or several of the master's disciples, and were not ritualized in the way certain Chan master-disciple "encounters" were: such conversations are best recorded in the sayings (*yulu* 語錄) published individually or within the collected essays and poems of late imperial Quanzhen masters. There, disciples reported their problems in practice or their difficulty with understanding certain texts, and requested precise guidance. The instruction was both and at the same time highly speculative and practical; one major theme was the obstructions, or "demonic obstacles/temptations" met by the adept whose desires and worldly attachments have not yet been completely eliminated.<sup>21</sup> For this reason, training was highly individualized and not amenable to group teaching or a formal curriculum.

The authority enjoyed by Baiyunguan monastic leaders in self-cultivation milieus derived from their ascetic training and accomplishments, not from doctrinal expertise. As a consequence, these leaders and the Baiyunguan itself did not publish many books, but they produced or distributed some self-cultivation charts and drawings to help adepts in the course of visualizations and meditations. The best known is the *Neijing tu* 內經圖, a map of

the human body that was carved on a stele and erected in the Baiyunguan around 1886. The *Neijing tu* basically illustrates the “microcosmic orbit” (*xiao zhoutian* 小周天) that is a preliminary stage in the *neidan* progress toward transcendence, but one that nonetheless requires a considerable amount of theoretical knowledge, dedication, and guidance.<sup>22</sup> Engraving a stele allowed Baiyunguan leaders to teach in the monastery’s courtyard, but also to produce rubbings. The Baiyunguan also possessed woodblock prints representing a cognate chart, the *Xiuzhentu* 修真圖, sold at a shop in the outer city, and used by some of Gao Rentong’s lay female adepts.<sup>23</sup>

Gao Rentong’s and the other Baiyunguan leaders’ disciples included fellow clerics as well as some laypersons from the elite section of Beijing inhabitants. An official, visiting the Baiyunguan in 1875, talked with a number of lay disciples practicing meditation in the monastery’s graveyard.<sup>24</sup> Eunuchs were favorite and dedicated disciples: the 1886 *Neijing tu* stele was the work of Liu Chengyin 劉誠印 (1845–95), the eminent eunuch of Empress Dowager Cixi’s court who became a Quanzhen cleric and led hundreds of fellow eunuchs to convert, be ordained at the Baiyunguan, and found their own Quanzhen monasteries.<sup>25</sup> It is also said that the stars of Beijing opera were all disciples of the Baiyunguan abbots; for instance, Yang Xiaolou 楊小樓 (1877–1937), a famed actor much appreciated by the empress dowager, became a Daoist and stayed at Baiyunguan during the last years of the Qing, only to later resume a brilliant acting career. Even though he then married, Yang maintained a Daoist daily practice of reciting scriptures, meditating, and practicing self-cultivation, including body techniques he found highly beneficial for acting. More generally, it might be ventured that Daoist initiation provided both useful self-cultivation skills and self-respect and social prestige to members of professions that were otherwise despised, such as eunuchs and actors.

Lay disciples also included women, whom monastic leaders trained in female alchemy (*nüdan*).<sup>26</sup> This tradition of *neidan* as specifically applied to the feminine body developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. *Nüdan* texts were mostly revealed within the framework of Lü Dongbin spirit-writing cults and lay Quanzhen, and were a consequence of the strong participation of women within these cults.<sup>27</sup> Although I know of no *nüdan* text composed in Beijing, such texts were used and practiced there.<sup>28</sup>

In short, the Baiyunguan was in late imperial and Republican times a center of *neidan* training of great repute, and authoritative works, textual and visual, were produced there to support such training. Quanzhen monasteries continued into the twentieth century to play a major role in

transmitting the high tradition of *neidan* spirituality, by training an elite of clerics and playing as guardians of a corpus of texts that can be considered as the summit, in speculative terms, of the literary heritage of Daoist mysticism. This prestigious tradition did not very much reach out to Beijing laity, however, and if people of high social standing or financial wherewithal—eunuchs, Manchu nobility, opera stars—could, and rather often would, socialize with the Quanzhen leaders and become their disciples in self-cultivation techniques, this was not a possibility open to ordinary citizens. The many middle-class folk, merchants, low-level officials, and scholars who wanted to practice longevity techniques, to heal otherwise incurable diseases, or gain access to the spiritual world, had to find other channels.

### *Daoist Masters outside the Monasteries*

Other Daoists, independent from the prestigious Baiyunguan, answered to such demands, teaching a basically similar tradition but in a different social setting. A number of Daoists who chose to dedicate their lives to training disciples in *neidan* stood clear of the major monasteries, probably because the discipline of communal life, the tasks of running a community, and the heavy liturgical calendar proved too much of a burden. They rather lived itinerant lives and eventually settled in a modest hermitage, possibly provided by a rich lay disciple.

One of the most eminent *neidan* masters in the late Qing, and certainly the most eminent in Beijing, was a Quanzhen cleric, Liu Mingrui 劉名瑞 (1839–1932).<sup>29</sup> Liu was a sickly youth, orphaned early, who became a soldier to make a living, and soon climbed the ladders of military hierarchy. A man once gave him books on alchemy; on reading them, Liu decided to quit the army and to become a Daoist. He returned to Beijing where he sustained himself with employment as a menial worker. He was taken as a disciple by Zhen Youxu, but he himself provides very little detail on his Daoist training apart from rather formulaic allusions to a long, excruciating process of finding a master and practicing asceticism.

In 1868 Liu returned to his native area in Changping (just north of Beijing) and together with disciples he retreated on a hill. There they studied the classics of the Three Teachings as well as medicine. Liu practiced medicine and accumulated enough money through his practice and through subscriptions to build a temple, named Taoyuanguan 桃園觀, and publish four essays, mentioned above. In 1900 he moved to Ciqu village, east of Beijing, to “hide himself.” He seems to have really disappeared, for even some of his disciples thought him dead.<sup>30</sup> It is unclear whether his

retreat was purely motivated by a spiritual urge or whether there might be a connection with the Boxer war and his possible links with Boxers that now forced him to lay low. In any case, he lived in isolation for more than thirty years, and in 1931, three companions who had been reading his books for twenty years finally had the chance to meet him. All three became his disciples, and Liu wrote down for them a summary of his teachings as well as the history and rules of his lineage.<sup>31</sup> The next year, Liu Mingrui died, aged 93.

Liu was not much of a proselytizer. A later author credits him with 110 disciples, but also mentions that he only twice “descended the mountain,” that is, left his isolated hermitage to meet people other than his devotees.<sup>32</sup> We do not know who his disciples were; probably a mix of laypersons who had come to him for a cure and stayed on, and Daoists, either his novices or already ordained clerics. One was a temple manager from a nearby village.<sup>33</sup> Apparently his favorite disciple was Piao Dazhi 票大志 (1852–?).<sup>34</sup> Piao, formerly a devoted Confucian student, later decided to embark on a religious career and solemnly requested Heaven to help him find a master. He met Liu, who was then acting as a doctor: he found Liu’s appearance extraordinary and took him as his master. Liu first gave him alchemical classics to read and then tutored him on the basis of his own works.

Liu Mingrui’s attitude toward teaching and transmission was complex. On the one hand, as a Quanzhen cleric, he recognized it as his duty to transmit the tradition and spread the message of salvation to the whole of humanity. This is the explicit reason why he published three Daoist books, which incidentally drew more disciples to him and contributed to making his reputation, something Baiyunguan leaders (who published much less) did not need to do. On the other hand, he expressed a deeply felt Daoist urge to find the rare worthy disciple, developing the Daoist tradition of testing candidates (turning down the majority of insincere ones) and insisting on the necessity of having hereditary qualities, the “Daoist bones.” Liu was eloquent on the difficulties of transmission, and on heavenly punishments for transmissions to unfit candidates.<sup>35</sup> He was critical of routinized communal monastic consecration, and of other (unnamed) Quanzhen masters who focused on only one technique.<sup>36</sup> His own practice was to test candidates until they had proved fully worthy, and then to perform a ritual of transmission, complete with an announcement to Heaven.<sup>37</sup>

Liu was clearly very demanding with his disciples, who had to engage fully in the path of self-cultivation. We may comment that he was able to develop his rhetoric of the superiority of the full-time ascetic because he had a hermitage endowed for this purpose and a community of disciples.

Many other masters never reached this stage. Liu probably sustained himself on his medical practice, but likely also thanks to rich lay disciples. Indeed, late Qing spiritual masters had to find a community to support them, preferably a rich lay adept: initiation in self-cultivation did not come cheap in the Daoist tradition. This was a far more pressing issue for independent masters such as Liu Mingrui than for monastic leaders, and it was discussed frankly by another nineteenth-century Daoist, who pitied the fact that authentic masters had to beg rich laypersons to support them.<sup>38</sup>

### *Self-Trained Literati*

Interest in self-cultivation was quite high among literati, both because of the intellectual appeal of the complex spirituality developed in *neidan* classics, and because of the practical benefits in terms of self-healing and long life. Some were interested in their capacity as “Confucian doctors” but the majority kept self-cultivation to the private realm, only sharing this interest with their family and friends, or in small groups such as spirit-writing halls. While most of those who pursued this interest were content with enjoying the practical benefits and reading classics for their pleasure, a few went beyond mere enjoyment and started to write and teach about their practice. A high-profile example is the celebrated merchant and political thinker Zheng Guanying 鄭觀應 (1842–1921), who was both a leading advocate of Western-inspired economic, social, and political reforms in the Shanghai public sphere, and a devoted adept of self-cultivation and spirit-writing cults in his private world.<sup>39</sup> Zheng, while not exactly self-trained, as he admitted having studied with several Daoists, was typical of our “literati” category inasmuch as he was not interested in building his own lineage and group of disciples, but rather claimed authority at large through publishing. He prefaced one of Gao Rentong’s books (the *Longmen mizhi*) and himself edited and published other Quanzhen Daoist self-cultivation essays and encyclopedias. Even more influential than Zheng, the best known case of self-trained literati self-cultivators in the modern period is that of Chen Yingning, discussed in depth by Xun Liu in chapter 6 in this volume. Even though Chen did visit a number of other masters, including at the Baiyunguan, he mostly established his authority on textual learning.

### *Religious Entrepreneurs*

The three types of self-cultivation masters defined above were all well-established, socially accepted roles; they all tended to have rather limited numbers of disciples selected by wealth, dedication, or through social net-

works. Ambitious self-cultivators working from outside clerical institutions and without social capital provided by recognized excellence in literary or medical practice had to devise their own way to mastery and to become religious entrepreneurs. They did so by setting up new ways of teaching, innovating in terms of contents, style, and/or institutional organization. This was the case of the founders of the Republican-period redemptive societies, discussed in the next section, as well as self-cultivation masters who remained at a more local level, such as Zhao Bichen (1860–1942), one of the most influential such masters in modern Beijing.<sup>40</sup>

As he recounts himself, Zhao, who grew up in a village in Changping County, some fifty kilometers north of Beijing, was frequently ill and when he was fifteen his mother took him to see Liu Mingrui, who cured him and took him as a disciple.<sup>41</sup> Zhao was also tutored in his home village by Liu Yunpu 劉雲普, a martial artist who had once traveled around selling his services as an armed escort and later settled down as a merchant and part-time doctor. Liu practiced charity, taught fighting techniques to the village youth, and imparted his Daoist self-cultivation techniques to Zhao. Zhao spent the first half of his life looking for more masters—he proudly insisted that he met more than thirty—accumulating initiations in various lineages, for each of which he provides a genealogy. The photographs of his six most important masters are featured at the beginning of his book, accompanied by the narrative of their encounters. The one put first, and apparently most revered, was a Buddhist cleric, Liaokong 了空, the manager of a small temple in Beijing's outer city, whom he met in 1895 and again in 1920 when he certified Zhao by conferring on him "Heaven's mandate" (*tianming* 天命). Zhao would later do the same with his favorite disciples. Zhao also learned from or trained with two leaders of the Zailijiao, Peng Maochang 彭茂昌 and Tan Bo 譚柏; an official who was a disciple of the celebrated ascetic Buddhist cleric Jing'an 敬安 (Bazhi 八指, 1852–1912); and an expert in agricultural economy who later became an itinerant practitioner of *neidan* and martial arts.

In spite of this lifelong pursuit of self-cultivation, Zhao Bichen was never ordained as a cleric; he married and had children. He seems to have worked first as a clerk for the salt administration and later as a merchant, only devoting himself to self-perfection full-time in his sixties, and he became famous with his 1933 book, discussed above. His teaching was innovative in at least two regards. First, in terms of content,<sup>42</sup> he integrated modern science, especially Western medicine and anatomy, into a traditional Daoist discourse on the body. Zhao and his disciples proclaimed the superiority of Chinese "spiritual culture" over Western materialism,<sup>43</sup>

while being influenced by, and indeed making much use of, Western ideas and vocabulary to prove their claims—a discourse parallel to the development of “scientific Buddhism” during the same period. Zhao shared some tendencies with his contemporary Chen Yingning, discussed by Xun Liu in this volume, such as the inclusion of modern Western science in their discourse, a strong desire to break open ancient exclusive transmission lines and reach out to a large audience, with pointed attention to women, and a shift to lay-centered (although not outright anticlerical) networks. As Lee Fongmao’s chapter in this volume shows, the discourse of science became dominant in self-cultivation milieu toward the end of the twentieth century.

Second, Zhao was a more ardent proselytizer than clerical masters such as the Baiyunguan leaders or Liu Mingrui, or than self-trained literati. To reach large audiences, he relied on a redemptive society, the Zailijiao. The list of his accredited disciples<sup>44</sup> provides the name of the Zailijiao lodge to which each of them belonged. Zhao’s close acquaintance with several Zailijiao masters further proves that he relied on this society’s organization for recruiting disciples, and possibly to sustain himself. In contrast to his master Liu Mingrui, Zhao was strongly against secret initiations and oaths,<sup>45</sup> although he was also against mediumnic initiations without a living master.<sup>46</sup>

What was the social background of Zhao’s disciples? Among his more prominent disciples we find opera stars, warlords, and Kuomintang cadres;<sup>47</sup> the majority probably had a profile similar to that of the Zailijiao adepts in general: urban middle-class, merchants and clerks, with a rather high proportion of retired persons;<sup>48</sup> women were well represented, and some couples of adepts are mentioned as such. This social background stood in contrast to those of both Baiyunguan leaders and Liu Mingrui. As a consequence, Zhao’s style of teaching, reflected in his writings, differed from that of his master much more than the techniques themselves. He did not evidence Liu’s intellectual virtuosity and taste for discursive speculative discussions, but rather geared his teachings toward entirely practical purposes. The *Xingming fajue mingzhi* is a guideline, not a basis for one’s own speculations. Zhao’s written style, largely vernacular, is markedly different from Liu’s strictly classical prose.

### *Competing Masters*

As the case of Zhao Bichen clearly shows, self-cultivation adepts did try out several masters, but added them up rather than making exclusive choices. Nonetheless, the high degree of competition between masters was in evi-



dence in their writings, where they commented on each other's teachings. I have not seen many cases of Beijing Daoists nominally attacking their competitors, but they argued forcefully and repeatedly against heterodoxy (*xie* 邪). Specifically, the Daoist masters criticized false masters without proper transmission,<sup>49</sup> and practices that not only provided no positive result but even led the adepts to divine punishments: they specifically targeted exclusive focus on only one physical practice (for instance meditation by contemplating a burning incense stick), instead of a comprehensive body-and-mind training, and worst of all sexual techniques. Meanwhile, literati and religious entrepreneurs resorted to more or less overt anticlerical arguments, claiming that clerics were mostly immersed in performing rituals and making money, by contrast to truly devoted self-cultivators like themselves.

Yet, direct competition was to an important extent mitigated by segmentation in the market, as these various types of self-cultivation masters attracted different audiences. While specific sections of urban elites maintained close connections, sometimes through bonds of discipleship, with monastic leaders, entrepreneurs recruited mostly from the urban middle-class. The emergence of new types of self-cultivation masters did not necessarily lead to the decline of existing ones, it rather may have expanded the market and offered the possibility of a regular self-cultivation practice to people who had hitherto either contented themselves to reading and self-trained practice, or had just never contemplated self-cultivation in the first place.

#### THE MARKET FOR SELF-CULTIVATION COMMUNITIES

The market for self-cultivation communities in many ways overlaps with that for masters, but can be analyzed distinctly because, even though some adepts may maintain links of some sort with various masters, they usually belonged to one community only. I would suggest that the various types of self-cultivation communities in late Qing and Republican Beijing can be divided into four broad, ideal types, with many groups evolving from one type to another over time.<sup>50</sup> The first type is the pure master-disciple relationship within a lineage, as practiced in Daoist circles, both inside and outside the monasteries. The second is the closed group of adepts forming an ascetic brotherhood, not necessarily with a (living) master, as often seen in spirit-writing groups. The third is a larger, looser network or community (*xiulian tuanti* 修煉團體) of practitioners exchanging help and advice often through written media (journals, books) and occasionally meeting



with a master. Finally, the fourth type is a religious group practicing a self-cultivation method (*gongfa* 功法) within the framework of a larger moralistic discourse, such as in the redemptive societies or, in the contemporary period, Falungong 法輪功.

### *Lineages*

The lineage, an organization of actual and/or ritual kinship integrating disciples in a recorded genealogy of master-disciple transmission, and worshipping its ancestors/patriarchs, is a key social form in Chinese society, and self-cultivation is therefore no exception. The prestigious monastic leaders and other clerical Daoists used it as the only framework in which they transmitted self-cultivation knowledge, to both ordained Daoists and laypersons. For instance, Liu Mingrui belonged to a rather small Quanzhen lineage, called Namowu 南無派, and ordained all his disciples in this lineage, of which he compiled a genealogy.<sup>51</sup> Most modern Daoists active in teaching self-cultivation belonged to the Longmen lineage 龍門派, which emerged during the seventeenth century but claims to have been created by the early Quanzhen patriarch Qiu Changchun. Such was the prestige of the Longmen lineage as a font of self-cultivation authority that many other groups, including brotherhoods and redemptive societies discussed below, actually claimed to have inherited Longmen transmission or even to be the “true” Longmen, bolstering this claim by giving adepts ordination names crafted after the Longmen lineage’s poem.

Other masters took more distance with the clerical Longmen lineage and created instead their own lineage. For instance, Zhao Bichen set up a lineage of his own, which he called Qianfeng xiantian pai 千峰先天派.<sup>52</sup> In doing so, Zhao was following the model of the many lay Daoist groups organized around spirit-writing cults who had established their own lineage, and was straying away from the Liu Mingrui model that remained squarely within the Quanzhen institution and the perpetuation of clerical lineages linked to the founding patriarchs. Affiliation in a lineage (whether Longmen or a new lineage) provided legitimacy, but little community cohesion. In the self-cultivation lineage, typically devoid of any corporate resource (such as an endowment or a temple), members did not typically sustain each other much, and mostly drew on the personal master-disciple relationship, thus creating rather ephemeral or virtual communities.

### *Brotherhoods*

Lineages were prestigious and rather exclusive. By contrast, the type of communities I label here “brotherhoods” (in order to emphasize horizon-

tal bonds between practitioners rather than vertical master-disciple relationships) have certainly been the most quantitatively important locus for transmitting and practicing self-cultivation, both before and during the modern period. While this is a particularly vast and diverse category, I would like to briefly evoke two subtypes that came in many cases to merge during the modern period: the lay devotional congregations and the spirit-writing halls.

Lay devotional congregations were a major venue for the transmission of self-cultivation techniques. Ever since scriptures of these congregations (*baojuan* 寶卷) appeared in the fifteenth century, they have contained *neidan* vocabulary. However, the *neidan* material in these texts was often used for its legitimization value and did not usually seem to refer to a consistent practice. A number of devotional texts, however, discussed in more detail *neidan* asceticism as a way of salvation parallel to devotion.<sup>53</sup> Groups that followed a heavily Buddhist-influenced approach to individual progress are better known (because they happen to be better represented among those studied in the field), but some lay devotional congregations were distinctly Daoist in their spiritual practice and transmitted rather orthodox and elaborate forms of Daoist self-cultivation techniques. This was the case, notably, of the Hongyangjiao 紅陽教 and the Baguajiao 八卦教 (a founding scripture of which is actually a *neidan* manual) active in various parts of north China during the Qing dynasty,<sup>54</sup> and the Xiantiandao 先天道, more prevalent in southern China, that laid a particular emphasis on Quanzhen self-cultivation. The Xiantiandao claimed Quanzhen patriarchs as its own; mid-Qing texts of Xiantiandao leaders contain spiritual poetry in pure Quanzhen style;<sup>55</sup> and twentieth-century field observations of Xiantiandao communities show that the practitioners considered themselves as Daoists, and were fully recognized as such by Quanzhen milieus, notably in Hong Kong.<sup>56</sup>

Lay congregations constituted around mediumistic spirit-writing (*fuluan* 扶鸞 or *fujū* 扶箕/乩) cults were an extremely common form of religious organization throughout China during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>57</sup> Among the deities offering revelations in these cults, Daoist immortals and patriarchs provided guidance on self-cultivation, both in general and individually, notably Qiu Changchun, Zhang Sanfeng 張三丰, and Lü Dongbin. Lü Dongbin in particular has been active revealing *neidan* manuals (the most famous of which is the *Jinhua zongzhi* 金華宗旨)<sup>58</sup> and instructions to individual adepts since at least the mid-Ming period, and probably the Yuan period. In some groups, lay adepts were formally accepted as disciples by Lü Dongbin through spirit-writing. They

were given ordination names according to the Longmen lineage poem and trained in *neidan* spiritual practice as well as Quanzhen Daoist liturgy by elders.

Spirit-writing cults to Lü Dongbin and revelation of *neidan*-related scriptures and instructions did take place in Beijing. An early case is Jiang Yupu 蔣予蒲 (1756–1819), an official long stationed in Beijing who maintained an active spirit-writing cult to Lü during the first years of the nineteenth century and received *neidan* scriptures through this medium, and eventually compiled a whole collection of texts, the *Daozang jiyao*. The cult counted a number of high officials as members, and created a lineage (called Tianxianpai 天仙派).<sup>59</sup> The number of small spirit-writing groups actively receiving revelations and spreading books with Daoist contents, independently of the Daoist clergy, kept growing during the Republican period. We have at least two documents emanating from spirit-writing groups operating in Beijing during the Republican period that were mostly devoted to transmitting Daoist lore and *neidan* training. The Huashan zongtan 華山總壇 is known by a collection of its revelations published in 1942.<sup>60</sup> The group formed in 1927 and initiated a new lineage. The deities who offered the revelations almost all belonged to the Daoist pantheon or were Quanzhen patriarchs. The most often quoted is Chen Tuan 陳搏 (a tenth-century founding figure of the *neidan* tradition), which may explain the name “Huashan altar,” since Chen was active on this mountain and is still venerated there. This group showed a strict adherence to Quanzhen tradition quite at odds with the syncretism characteristic of most spirit-writing groups; yet the initiated members were not clerics but married laypersons.<sup>61</sup> Another spirit-writing group, the Yiyi daoshe 益義道社, edited the recorded sayings of Qiu Changchun, *Qiu zu yulu*. This volume comprises both historical works associated with Qiu (as in the *Changchun zushi yulu* published by the Baiyunguan) and sayings that were apparently revealed by spirit-writing during the nineteenth century. The society’s “Daoist branch altar” was managed by Zhongli Quan 鐘離權, Lü Dongbin, and Qiu Changchun, all Quanzhen patriarchs.<sup>62</sup>

### Schools

What I label “schools” are communities of loosely connected people engaged in a rationalized self-cultivation regimen based on shared textual references, as developed from the 1920s on by masters such as Zhao Bichen and Chen Yingning, and in the later *qigong* 氣功 movement. The conception of self-cultivation as a shared intellectual pursuit in such cases is often expressed by the term *xue* 學 (study, discipline). The notions of

*xue* and *tuanti* 團體 (community) that were used to build this new type of self-cultivation community during the Republican period were likely in part inspired by the more structured lay Buddhist (*jushi* 居士) movements. Such movements promoted Buddhist “studies” and a synthesis of science, modernist ideologies of progress, and Buddhism, even though to what extent the lay Buddhist groups spread the practice of Buddhist self-cultivation techniques (especially meditation) in a manner comparable to what the Daoist-inspired self-cultivation schools did remains to be studied. In any case, the fact that numerous religious activists were active in lay Buddhist groups, spirit-writings cults, Daoist lay self-cultivation groups, and redemptive societies does account for much reciprocal influence in terms of ideology, organizational models, and actual techniques between all these groups.<sup>63</sup> Note, however, that the differences within this type can be wide; for instance, whereas Chen Yingning chose to build his own China-wide community of adepts through journals and classroom teachings (his Xianxueyuan 仙學院, Academy for Immortality Studies, was founded in 1938), Zhao Bichen clung to direct initiation into his lineage and local networks of a redemptive society.<sup>64</sup>

### *Redemptive Societies*

From the 1910s on, a number of spirit-writing groups emerging from the milieu of lay devotional congregations espoused an ideology of universal salvation that led them to promote a syncretism not only of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism, but of all world religions, including Islam and Christianity. They took the place of institutional Confucianism, which had disappeared with the empire and the examination system, as the transmitters of the classical scriptural legacy and traditional morality, yet within a social organization adapted to new, Western-inspired models of a “religion” (with a church hierarchy, Sunday prayers, missions, journals, and even, in some cases, baptism). These groups claimed to represent religious modernity in its universal dimension by opposition to local cults now condemned as “superstition”; they integrated disciples into a larger, churchlike, and nationwide organization of adepts. Recent scholars have used the category “redemptive societies” to qualify groups with the above characteristics.<sup>65</sup> The Republican period witnessed the development of a bewildering variety of redemptive societies, and their engagement with self-cultivation varied to a great extent. I will only mention here those particularly active in Beijing and having developed well-documented self-cultivation regimens and relationships with the Daoist clerics, books, and techniques.<sup>66</sup>

Although it is of more ancient origin and is not closely associated with spirit-writing, the Zailijiao (Teaching of the Abiding Principle, also known as Limen 理門 or Lijiao 理教), can also be counted among the redemptive societies. In Republican-period Beijing, Zailijiao openly operated dozens of lodges and Zailijiao masters taught within, or simply took over several temples.<sup>67</sup> It proselytized by running charities and campaigning for total abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and opium, and offering cures for addicts. The lodges were managed by resident elders, called *dangjia* 當家, who formed a clergy of sorts. These elders pursued a rather intense self-cultivation regimen, and some were considered saints. According to extant photographs, they tried hard to look like Quanzhen Daoists, with long beards, blue gowns, and a gourd in hand.<sup>68</sup> Yet there does not seem to have been any systematic program of *neidan* training in Zailijiao lodges beside that of the *dangjia* and a few devoted disciples. As in all redemptive societies, members joined Zailijiao for different reasons, some being chiefly interested in self-cultivation, and others rather in devotion, ethics, or charitable activities and cures. Self-cultivation, although important and prestigious, was only a part of redemptive societies' identity. For instance, Zhao Bichen criticized most redemptive societies (he even named Zailijiao along with the Tongshanshe and Wushanshe 悟善社, on which more below) for insisting too much on doing good deeds that generate merit, and not enough on actual self-cultivation work.<sup>69</sup> Zhao Bichen filled the need of the section of Zailijiao membership that was particularly drawn to *neidan*, but he does not seem to have influenced the course of the Zailijiao as a whole.

Another case of a very close connection between a successful redemptive society and Daoists is that of the Tongshanshe (Fellowship of Goodness). The Tongshanshe was one of the most widespread groups to appear during the Beiyang (1916–1927) period. This society was founded at the beginning of the twentieth century in Sichuan, as an outgrowth of Xiantiandao communities, but moved its headquarters to Beijing in 1917, when it legally registered with the government. By the early 1920s it had a national organization and more than one million members: a spectacular expansion that was certainly spurred by the fact that new members were required to recruit at least ten more members, otherwise they had to pay the equivalent of ten membership fees.<sup>70</sup> It was extremely successful during the Beiyang period until it was banned by the Nanjing regime and had to go underground.<sup>71</sup> The society's activities included rituals, sitting meditation, and inner alchemy. The society also engaged in charitable works such as supporting funerals for common people, ran schools for traditional learning (*guoxue* 國學), and offered English and Esperanto classes.<sup>72</sup> As we

have seen, the Tongshanshe also ran a press in Beijing, the Tianhuaguan, that published a series of self-cultivation books.

The Tongshanshe developed for its adepts a method of self-cultivation directly inspired by orthodox Daoist *neidan* (through the Xiantiandao tradition), and this method was widely disseminated.<sup>73</sup> Initiation in Tongshanshe (as in Xiantiandao and other redemptive societies like Yiguandao 一貫道) included a rite where a master opened a passage within the new adept's body (allowing energy to circulate freely, and self-cultivation to proceed to higher levels), and required from the adept daily meditative exercise for the passage to remain open.<sup>74</sup>

An equally important redemptive society is the Daoyuan (School of the Dao), founded in 1916 in Shandong, which seems to have modeled itself largely on the Tongshanshe. The Daoyuan is best known for having created a much-admired nationwide charity organization, the Red Swastika, Hong wanzi hui 紅卍字會, which gained state recognition for its mother organization during the Nanjing period,<sup>75</sup> but it was equally interested in *neidan* techniques. Its own method apparently was an adaptation of the slightly earlier Tongshanshe method, and was described in large numbers of meditation instructions revealed through spirit-writing and published by the many Daoyuan branches.<sup>76</sup> In addition, Beijing Daoyuan adepts also published in 1936 the *Xianfo dandao yaopian*, a volume of revelations of *neidan* self-cultivation instructions received from Lü Dongbin and Jigong at a Beijing spirit-writing altar. While the introduction squarely aligned the revelations with the worldview of the redemptive societies, arguing that it represented a synthesis of all world religions preached by emissaries of the supreme god, the revelations themselves are much more traditional and Daoist in style. The Daoyuan also ran several journals that carried Daoist self-cultivation contents.<sup>77</sup>

Yet another redemptive society, the Wushanshe (Society for Awakening to Goodness), was founded in Beijing in 1919 and remained closely associated with the city even though it had, like all redemptive societies, branches in all major Chinese cities. Similar in many regards to the Tongshanshe and equally active in charity and spirit-writing, the Wushanshe evolved into a more public, explicitly religious form when it renamed itself Jiushi xinjiao 救世新教, "New Religion to Save the World," in 1924.<sup>78</sup> It counted many members of the Beiyang elites and warlords among its members and leaders, notably Wu Peifu 吳佩孚 (1874–1939) and Jiang Chaozong 江朝宗 (1863–1943), the Beijing mayor and collaborator during the Japanese occupation.<sup>79</sup> Jiang, who became the Jiushi xinjiao leader during the 1930s, is of particular interest to our argument, as he was also one

of the most active patrons of the Baiyunguan during the 1910s and 1920s. Jiang was the first among the lay sponsors listed by the Daoist association founded at the Baiyunguan in 1912;<sup>80</sup> he was a major donor for the 1914 and 1919 consecrations, and he was among the committee who financed the modern edition of the Daoist canon in 1923–1926.<sup>81</sup> Details fail to tell how Jiang used his experience and intimate knowledge of the Baiyunguan in his leading a new religion, but this can hardly be a minor aspect. I would assume that Jiang's status as a self-cultivation master, at least in the eye of Jiushi xinjiao members, derived in part from his training with Baiyunguan leaders.

### *Competition in the Self-Cultivation Markets*

Because membership tended to be exclusive, competition between self-cultivation communities tended to be quite fierce. Beginning with the late Qing, Daoists found themselves outpaced in the competitive, open self-cultivation market in terms of publications and overall influence, by devotional congregations, spirit-writing cults, and redemptive societies that commanded audiences and resources far beyond theirs, and that wanted to take their place. The activity and productions of societies such as Zailijiao, Tongshanshe, Daoyuan, Huashan zongtan, and Yiyi daoshe show that the prestige of the Daoist self-cultivation techniques, and the Quanzhen tradition in particular, was very high in Republican Beijing (and elsewhere as well). Because clerics who could claim to master these techniques were relatively few, and by tradition were only interested in training a few devoted (mostly rich) adepts on an individual master-disciple relationship, without any larger group of formal lay practitioners, many laypersons willing to practice Daoist self-cultivation had to look outside the clergy.

Spirit-writing groups and redemptive societies filled this need, as they claimed to dispense the same teaching, but without the limitations imposed by clerics. They distributed self-cultivation printed material, including Quanzhen classics, in large numbers, in the form of books from their own presses or articles in their journals; so, during the same period but in a very different framework, did Chen Yingning and his associates running the Yihuatang in Shanghai. It is also very significant that the modern publication of the Daoist canon in 1923–26 was the work of a group of lay people, among which several were prominent leaders of redemptive societies. These publication efforts stand in contrast to the Baiyunguan and other Daoist clerical institutions that printed little material, and mostly for internal use only.

Yet, in spite of the apparent contradiction, Daoist masters instilled in



their “happy few” disciples a comprehensive culture based on reading and commenting on a large number of self-cultivation and other books, whereas redemptive societies (and, later, *qigong* groups) tended to focus on one unique streamlined, rationalized self-cultivation method (*fa*). Redemptive societies also reinterpreted the meaning of “oral instructions” and developed classroom training, by contrast to ordained Daoists who maintained the necessity of master and disciple face-to-face discussion; elaborating on the Xiantiandao tradition, the redemptive societies had regular (monthly, or at least yearly) collective meditation classes with certified instructors, and examinations that allowed the ranking of adepts on a standardized scale of self-cultivation progress.<sup>82</sup> For instance, Daoyuan adepts were given extremely detailed printed instructions on meditation procedures and a meditation logbook to be checked by instructors.<sup>83</sup>

That the redemptive societies overtook the Daoists in the self-cultivation market is very clearly expressed by observers of the 1920s and 1930s. See for instance, a 1933 gazetteer from Sichuan whose author, in its entry on Daoism, writes, “Nowadays, Daoists only know how to fool people with talismanic water and incantations. They have totally given up on dietetics and self-cultivation. They are just a fraud. But, the groups such as Daode xueshe 道德學社 and Tongshanshe that are now proliferating throughout the country are a branch of Daoism but they do know something about self-cultivation.”<sup>84</sup>

Some redemptive societies explicitly developed a rhetoric of opening up the Daoist tradition described as being hitherto a preserve of a few secretive clerics—a rhetoric that was later further exalted in the *qigong* movement, and, as Elijah Siegler shows in chapter 11 of this volume, in Western Daoism.<sup>85</sup> The prestige of the Quanzhen institution in North China made it a source of legitimacy few spiritual masters could ignore, and some actually claimed to be the real heirs of the Quanzhen tradition. Such a claim is particularly apparent in the case of one of Zhao Bichen’s masters, Tan Bo 譚柏, a Zailijiao initiate. Tan once heard in his village, in Yutian 玉田 county (east of Beijing), that an “immortal,” named Xie Shujia 謝樹嘉, had come to transmit the Dao. Tan paid homage to Xie, who accepted him as his disciple. Just at this point arrived four Daoists from Laoshan 嶗山 (a major Quanzhen center in Shandong) who were after Xie, on a mission to punish him according to the rules (of the Quanzhen order) for revealing (Quanzhen) techniques to the world. Xie escaped and Tan went on to initiate many disciples as had his master, and to be recognized as the second patriarch of the Jinshan 金山 lineage (the Quanzhen lineage originating from Laoshan) as well as a master in Zailijiao.<sup>86</sup>



Whatever the historical veracity of such a story, one can hardly be more explicit about its moral: redemptive societies such as Zailijiao saw themselves as the vehicle for saving the world with the Quanzhen tradition, but against Quanzhen clerics who wanted to keep this tradition for themselves. Zailijiao's claim to Quanzhen orthodoxy is further documented in an undated manuscript, *Lijiao yuanliu* 理教源流 (History of the Lijiao). This Zailijiao genealogy adopts at first the format of standard Quanzhen manuals of the lineages, except that the Longmen lineage begins with Qiu Changchun and continues with historical Zailijiao patriarchs. *Neidan* poems in classical style and various invocations, some Zailijiao and some orthodox Quanzhen, are then provided. It is possible that this text originated with Zailijiao adepts who were disciples of Zhao Bichen,<sup>87</sup> yet the claim that Zailijiao is true Quanzhen is stronger than anything Zhao himself wrote. This legitimization technique is not unique, as Xiantian dao and other groups also claimed to be the true inheritors of the Buddhist Linji 臨濟 lineage, the Buddhist equivalent of the Longmen lineage.

However, if outright hostility toward Daoists sometimes appears, such as in the Zailijiao story above, the relationship between Daoists on the one hand and leaders of spirit-writing groups and redemptive societies on the other was much more often rather co-operative. As David Palmer's chapter in this volume shows, Li Yujie 李玉階, while being the leader of redemptive societies that definitely promoted the modern, scientific "opening up" of the Daoist tradition, lived in close contact with Quanzhen Daoist clerics during the Sino-Japanese war, and later, while in Taiwan, conferred active political protection to Daoist priests through the creation and direction of the Daoist Association. The case of Jiang Chaozong in Beijing, simultaneously Beijing mayor, patron of the Baiyunguan and leader of a redemptive society, is quite similar—the opposite political positions notwithstanding.

Even when relationships were cordial, redemptive societies' claim to open up the Daoist tradition obviously directly threatened the position of the Daoists as guarantors, transmitters, and interpreters of their own tradition. How did the Daoists react? Some of them formulated critiques not of the redemptive societies' self-cultivation techniques themselves, but of their being included in a "sectarian" context in which people were trapped. Zhao Bichen wrote: "The Tongshanshe has a real technique for self-cultivation, but it forces its adepts to buy membership before they can be trained, and they furthermore must swear an oath that they will not practice any other doctrine or technique."<sup>88</sup> Like Chen Yingning and other spiritual masters, then, Zhao envisioned a community of practitioners who could be strongly devoted to their master but who would not join and be

bound by a churchlike institution. Daoist masters also criticized lay devotional groups and redemptive societies' reliance on spirit-writing, insisting on the necessity for instruction from institutionalized authorized masters. Yet, if they excluded it from monastic practice, Quanzhen leaders by no means denied the possibility of entering into contact with immortals. Gao Rentong himself confessed having once asked Lü Dongbin through spirit-writing whether he would obtain immortality, and asked for instructions.<sup>89</sup> In his article on Buddhists and spirit-writing, Fan Chunwu has shown that Republican Buddhist leaders were also ambivalent toward a practice and networks that revealed texts they approved of, and yet undermined their authority. Whereas reformist Buddhist leaders launched fierce attacks on redemptive societies and tried to prevent Buddhist presses and journals from publishing anything revealed through spirit-writing, many lay Buddhists (*jushi*) were also part of these societies to gain more training in self-cultivation, and some clerics willingly taught within them.<sup>90</sup>

Through such polemics, Daoists (and Buddhists) attempted to assert their authority in the larger milieu of spiritual masters with whom they competed for patrons. They all stressed their claims to authority, in particular the proper lineage transmission, the prestigious Quanzhen scriptural heritage and comprehensive vision of salvation, and the demanding clerical training they had experienced. At the same time, masters such as the Baiyunguan leaders, Liu Mingrui, or Zhao Bichen were not equals on the self-cultivation market, and they occupied different positions in relation to competitors. Whereas monastic leaders could and indeed had to maintain aloofness and ritual purity by pretending to ignore the outside world, Liu Mingrui, like many other temple Daoists and itinerant clerics, earned a living as a doctor, and some like Zhao Bichen went as far as working with redemptive societies, so as to be able to proselytize.

Yet the emergence of the redemptive societies during the 1910s and 1920s is not the story of a success that doomed less market-savvy Daoists to failure; instead it is a story of how the religious goods (what self-cultivation meant) changed and how the market itself was modified and expanded as a result. As we have seen, new presses (included those of the redemptive societies) and new types of self-cultivation books expanded the audience and readership for the book market without condemning "traditional" books to failure; similarly, there is little evidence that redemptive societies took adepts from Daoist lineages, or even from brotherhoods and self-cultivation schools. Rather, they radically modified the market itself by expanding demand, through bringing adepts, who joined the redemptive societies for reasons other than self-cultivation, but practiced it as well because in

these societies self-cultivation, ethics, charity, mutual support, and ritual were linked in a way they were not in other religious groups. Furthermore, this modification of the market was itself short-lived, as political conditions soon turned against the redemptive societies (and to a lesser extent, brotherhoods) during the 1940s.

Lee Fongmao's chapter (8) in this volume, which moves the story closer to our time and in a different setting, shows in great detail how the markets for self-cultivation books, masters, and communities have continued to evolve and develop. He notably observes communities that remain within the Quanzhen lineage model competing with ascetic groups offering training classes (either in the brotherhood or school model), and redemptive societies, notably the Tiandijiao 天帝教 also explored by David Palmer in this volume, where self-cultivation is merely one element in a larger religious practice. All of these groups make claims of authority by using Daoist self-cultivation resources (texts, images, charismatic authority of past patriarchs, lineage legitimacy). Many masters leading these various groups claim an initiation from a Daoist (directly or at earlier stages of their lineage history) to legitimize themselves, and such claims were also common in the *qigong* movement. However, the status of these masters differs widely according to the type of group they teach to. In the lineage type of community, they are or act like Daoists as far as their self-representation and social role are concerned. By contrast, they tend to adopt a very different social role, that of a scholar (with doctrinal or intellectual authority, based on published writings and formal classroom teaching) in brotherhoods and even more in schools, and of a congregational leader exerting charismatic authority in redemptive societies. Obviously, social and religious modernity has increased the importance of written media (journals, books, Internet) and the model of classroom teaching (with unified curriculums) in the transmission of self-cultivation, and thus has altered the relations between masters and practitioners. But when taking a longer historical view, one realizes that the four types have coexisted for quite a long time, and that the prestige of the Daoists acting within the lineage model has not decreased, even though they have long been in the minority. Behind the apparent age-old continuity of an "ancient" self-cultivation tradition, instruction in this tradition is a type of religious good that has never ceased to modify and multiply in a diverse and segmented array of markets.

## 6. Scientizing the Body for the Nation

### *Chen Yingning and the Reinvention of Daoist Inner Alchemy in 1930s Shanghai*

Xun Liu

#### *A Ballad to the Void*

My body comes from within the Void;  
And back into it, my body must also go.  
Come and go, all but within the Void,  
Where the tree of karma may grow.

Ascribed to Heyang zi, an inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) adept active during the Qianlong 乾隆 reign (1736–95),<sup>1</sup> both this poem's title and its content are thought to encapsulate the quintessence of the cosmology and the normative body of inner alchemy since the Song (906–1279). The "Void" (*xu* 虛) is imagined as the ultimate origin of creation from which the human body stems and to which it returns. The body is seen as an ephemeral manifestation of the Void. Alternating between coming and going, the body of the Void thus evokes emptiness, evanescence, and impermanence. Permeating this representation of the cosmology of the body is the unmistakable Buddhist notion of karma (*ye* 業), as the practitioner is urged to adopt proper conduct, speech, and consciousness to ensure a rebirth and return to the Void at the end of the poem. To Master Heyang zi and his generation of inner alchemists, the use of the word *Void* captures the mystery and subtlety they must have intuited about the truth of the cosmos and the alchemic body.

But by the early twentieth century, this way of seeing and representing the world and the body came to be challenged by Chen Yingning 陳櫻寧 (1880–1969), arguably the most influential adept and writer of inner alchemy of his time.<sup>2</sup> For Chen, the traditional *neidan* discourse as embodied in this and numerous other poems failed to understand the most crucial issue of self-cultivation: what is the body made of? Defining reality in terms of the Void without explaining what the Void was seemed nothing short of intellectual fraud. In a long commentary published in fall 1936,

Chen delivered a scathing attack on the traditional inner alchemic vision of the body and the cosmos as defined in terms of the Void:

According to my personal cross-verification, all this is but a hypocritical fraud and empty talk, and is completely devoid of reality. Saturating and full, matter (*wuzhi* 物質) fills everything between Heaven and Earth. Where is a place that is void and empty? But because there is a myriad of minuscule matter not visible to the eye, they are simply labeled as the Empty Void (*xukong* 虛空). Ice turns into water. Water then changes to vapor. Vapor further disperses to become the Empty Void. But even though it is called Empty Void, it is neither empty nor vacuous because the substance of water and ice still exists in the universe. If one thinks that it is empty, vacuous, and consists of nothing, isn't he in grave error?<sup>3</sup>

The intensity of Chen's criticism reveals his impatience with the adulation of the Void in inner alchemy. In a related context, Chen ridiculed the fashion among many inner alchemists since the Song of sporting the character for "Void" as part of their style names or sobriquets.<sup>4</sup> For underlying the cult of the Void was a view of the cosmos and of the body as totally empty and immaterial. For Chen Yingning, this could not be further from the truth. The world was made up of matter. The cosmos and the body were undeniably material and physical. Like water, the physical world may take various forms. But regardless how ephemeral or formless it may appear to the eye, it existed solidly as matter.

The difference between the Body of Void and the Body of Matter may seem to be a trivial squabble of pure metaphysics, but in the context of the early decades of the last century, interest in issues of cosmology and body took on historical significance. Body truly mattered. What constituted the body carried for Chen and his fellow practitioners of Daoist inner alchemy direct implications for the health and well-being of both the individual and the nation.

Like most of his generation born and raised in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Chen Yingning grew up in a time when notions of world history and social Darwinian concepts of natural selection through competition were gaining currency. In the new world of "survival of the fittest" among the nations, a healthy and strong body was viewed as the abode of a sound mind. Indeed, the physical health and strength of the individual came to be seen as inextricably linked with the power and prosperity of a nation.<sup>5</sup> An impassioned Mao Zedong addressed the subject in the April 1917 issue of *New Youth*: "Our nation is wanting in strength. The martial spirit has not been encouraged. The physical condition of the population deteriorates daily. This is an extremely disturbing phenome-

non. If this state of affairs continues, our weakness will increase further. If our bodies are not strong, we will be afraid as soon as we see enemy soldiers. Then how can we attain our goals and make ourselves respected?"<sup>6</sup>

But what was the cause of the weakened body of the nation? How should it be rejuvenated and made strong? Pointing to opium smoking, foot-binding, concubinage, the Manchu court, foreign imperialism, and other cultural, social, and political institutions and customs as the sources of China's ills, many late Qing and early Republican reformers and revolutionaries pushed for their abolition as ways to strengthen the body of the nation, while others advocated the practice of personal hygiene and the improvement of public sanitary conditions as the means of creating a new citizenry and achieving modernization.<sup>7</sup> Reform-minded intellectuals such as Zheng Guanying 鄭觀應 (1842–1922) and Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬 (1873–1958), new mass religious organizations like the Fellowship of Goodness (Tongshanshe 同善社), and Daoist and Buddhist clerics and monasteries were all focused on the cultivation and transformation of the individual's body as a means for nation building and for forging new cultural and religious identity.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, during the late Qing and the early Republican period, the intense focus by state and nonstate actors on the body as the site for forging the new nation gave rise to the emergence of what Vincent Goossaert, in chapter 5 of this volume, has called "the self-cultivation market," where intellectuals and religious organizations vied with the modernizing state in shaping China's course of modernity according to their own visions.

It was against this larger historical background that Chen Yingning began his own search for and reformist activism in Daoist self-cultivation. For him, the enervation of the Chinese body stemmed directly from a flawed cosmological view of the body epitomized by the cult of the Void evident in Master Heyang zi's poem. Chen's understanding of the problem was grounded partly in his personal experience of childhood illness and partly in his involvement in the Buddhist reform movement, his exposure to Western science, and his studies of Daoist cosmology and self-cultivation practice. It led him first to a rejection of Mahayana Buddhist metaphysics and its view of the body as a fundamentally corrupting influence on Chinese culture, and then to a syncretism of elements of modern science with a reformulated Daoist cosmology and inner alchemic body which he called the Immortals' Learning (*xianxue* 仙學).

Chen was born in a landholding gentry family in Huaining county in western Anhui. We know little about his mother. His father, a *juren* 舉人 degree holder, made a living by teaching classics at a private school he ran

at his own home. Chen's granduncle was a highly respected practitioner of Chinese medicine in Anqing, a region known for producing good doctors since the Ming. Both his father and his granduncle were also well-versed in Daoist classics. Born into a family of such learned tradition, Chen was from early in his childhood subject to the inevitable high expectation of success in learning and officialdom. From what Chen and his relatives told us, he was a prodigy. He began learning to read with his father at the age of three. By twelve, Chen read the Confucian classics and composed poems and essays. He took his *xiucai* degree at age fifteen and seemed well on his way to a successful career in either scholastics or officialdom. Then illness struck. Chen contracted a life-threatening disorder known as young pupil's consumption (*tongzi lao* 童子癆). He was informed by doctors that there was no medicine that could cure him. In despair Chen turned for help to his granduncle, who directed him to study Chinese medicine in the hope of finding a cure. While studying the medical classics, Chen happened on some Daoist self-cultivation techniques ascribed to an immortal. Out of curiosity and desperation, he tried practicing them. With sheer perseverance, Chen was able to control and ultimately "cure" himself of the illness through years of practice.<sup>9</sup>

#### NATIVIST CRITICISM OF MAHAYANA BUDDHISM

Chen's bout with illness and his encounter with the Daoist self-cultivation regimen had an enduring effect on him. He reoriented his attention from the pursuit of a traditional literati career to a full-blown search for health and balance of the body. For him, illness was an inescapably physical experience. It was the very expression of the physicality of the body. Such a conviction put him at odds with the Buddhist view of the body. As Chen traveled in search of a cure to various sacred mountains and monasteries, he sought learning from eminent Buddhist monks such as Yuexia 月霞, Tixian 啼閑, Bazhi Toutuo 八指頭陀, and Yekai 冶開, but found their Buddhist methods of self-cultivation too narrowly focused on cultivating the mind, yet rather useless for healing the flesh. They had nothing to offer for repelling illness and prolonging the life of the body.<sup>10</sup>

Yet despite his frustration, Chen systematically studied the Buddhist Tripitaka and practice with several eminent monks in Shanghai and Hangzhou between 1913 and 1915. Concurrent to Chen's pursuit of Daoist studies at the White Cloud Monastery in Shanghai in the early Republican years, the Chinese *sangha* was undergoing a profound reform. Under the charismatic leadership of eminent Buddhist lay activists and thinkers like



Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (z. Renshan, 1837–1911) and monks like Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947) and Yuexia, Buddhist clergy and lay practitioners carried out stimulating reforms in Buddhist doctrine, rituals, clerical training, monastic practice, and organization. From the early 1900s, lay and clerical Buddhists from around the country joined efforts in forming national and international Buddhist organizations. Visionary leaders such as Yang Wenhui established Buddhist seminaries and institutes, recarved and republished Buddhist canonical scriptures, and pursued intersectarian and international exchanges among various Buddhist sects and countries. Many Buddhist journals and newspapers flourished, creating a national Buddhist media. Numerous centers and societies for lay Buddhist learning and practice known as *jushi lin* 居士林 mushroomed in many parts of the country, forming a national network of lively and vigorous lay Buddhist practice. These experiments and reforms revitalized Buddhism both institutionally and doctrinally.<sup>11</sup> They also generated much energy and excitement for those outside Buddhist circles in China.

In Shanghai, Chen became involved in Buddhist reform. He attended the short-lived Buddhist Pinjia Seminary (Pinjia jingshe 頻迦精舍) at the Har-doon Garden in fall 1914. There Chen befriended the famous lay Buddhist activist and practitioner Gao Henian 高鶴年 (z. Yeren 野人, h. Yinshi 隱士, 1872–1962). Gao was a compatriot originally from Guichi in Anhui. Though Gao later became known for his Pure Land Buddhist faith and ascetic practice, he spent his youth as a Daoist acolyte at the famous Mount Qionglong Daoist Monastery (Qionglong shan daoyuan 穹窿山道院) in Suzhou. The sobriquets Gao adopted for himself reflected his continuing interest in Daoism, even well after his conversion to Buddhism at the age of eighteen.<sup>12</sup>

At the time, both Chen and Gao had just completed years of travels to Buddhist and Daoist mountains and monasteries in search of teachers. They now settled down to pursue scriptural studies in Shanghai. While Chen was exploring Buddhism, he was committed to the Daoist vision that the human flesh body can be perfected and made immortal through proper self-cultivation techniques. Having converted to Pure Land doctrine, Gao also stressed the importance of asceticism for self-transformation, but he held that the goal of such ascetic practices was to assist the delivery of the soul to the Buddhist paradise in the next life. When they met at the seminary, the two became fast friends. They often spent hours discussing and debating the Buddhist scriptures they read. Yet despite their differences, they learned to appreciate each other for their respective commitment to practice. In summer 1913 when Gao decided to go on a pilgrimage to the Buddhist sacred mountain of Wutaishan 五臺山 in



Shanxi again, Chen inscribed a short poem on Gao's travel hat to signify his support. In several other poems he composed for the occasion, Chen praised Gao for his undaunted spirit in pursuing Buddhist ascetic practices through the pilgrimage, while mildly reminding his friend that the Buddhist Pure Land paradise could be achieved in the present, not in the next world. While wishing Gao well on his journey to the Buddhist sacred mountain, Chen exhibited his competitive side by telling Gao that he was also a kindred spirit poised to take "an immortal's raft" (*xian cha* 仙槎) for a voyage to Qingdao, which was the gateway to the Quanzhen 全真 Daoist Mount Lao (Laoshan 嶗山) in June that year.<sup>13</sup> Together with Gao, Chen was at the center of the exciting Buddhist revival in education, doctrine, and lay activism. While attending the seminary, Chen served as secretary and assistant to the renowned Pure Land Buddhist monk Yinguang 印光, who lectured at the seminary. In the fall, the eminent monk Yuexia of the Buddhist Huayan school founded the Huayan Institute (Huayan daxue 華嚴大學) at Haroon Garden. But three months later, the new institute had to move to Hangzhou due to a tiff between Madam Haroon and the Buddhist clergy at the seminary in Shanghai.<sup>14</sup>

From 1915 on, the Huayan Institute at its new home in the famous Buddhist Haiyan Temple outside Hangzhou flourished, becoming one of the most exciting centers of Buddhist learning at the time. It offered stimulating seminars on Buddhist scriptures and practice that attracted many young Buddhist clerics and lay practitioners from different parts of the county. Chen stated many years later that at the time, he felt the need to learn more about Buddhism and its reforms after completing his Daoist studies in Shanghai in 1914.<sup>15</sup> So in 1914 Chen left Shanghai for Hangzhou to register for Buddhist studies at the institute, and spent two years at the institute studying the Buddhist Canon (*Dazang jing* 大藏經).<sup>16</sup>

But Chen's pursuit of Buddhist scriptural studies and meditation practice did not fundamentally change his earlier assessment of Buddhism, especially the Mahayana.<sup>17</sup> On the contrary, his erudition in Buddhist learning only served to solidify his rejection of Buddhism and its view of the body. To Chen, Mahayana Buddhism fails to comprehend and confront the reality of life. He commented on the story of Śākyamuni, the founder of Buddhism:

When Śākyamuni left home for self-cultivation, wasn't he also motivated by the same dreariness and fear of inconstancy of life (*wu chang* 無常)? He met a dotard at the eastern gate, a sick man at the western gate, and a dead corpse at the southern gate of his city. Only then he resolved to go into the mountains to practice asceticism. It is a pity that he should

have had such a poor lot to be born in India instead China. The two teachers he encountered were not very wise and sagacious in learning. As a result, he never developed a very thorough approach to a solid and veritable practice that would avoid and get rid of the triple sufferings of aging, illness, and death. The repertoire he evolved, which he put on show for a full forty-nine years of his life with gusto and plumb, is but a single word of "enlightenment" (*jue* 覺). I am not saying that there should not be any enlightenment in life. The only pity is that there is not the slightest shred of a method to overcome aging, illness, and death, except for that single word. For neither sitting in contemplation (*canchan* 參禪), nor refining the gaze (*xiuguan* 修觀), nor reciting scriptures (*songjing* 誦經), nor intoning the mantra (*chizhou* 持咒) can attain the goal. Even when a sudden enlightenment does come, what is the use of it?<sup>18</sup>

Thus for Chen, the futility arose from the Buddhist view of the world and the body as nothing more than a figment or appearance of the Mind. To Chen, the Buddhist rejection of the physical world and the bodily experience as fundamentally illusory and unreal was an ontologically unsound proposition which was profoundly at odds with observed facts about the physical world and the body. Furthermore, Chen held that because of its denial of material or physical universality, Buddhism imposed an artificial distinction between the dharma realm (*fa jie* 法界) and the phenomenal body (*se shen* 色身). Using the familiar metaphor of a bail of water in the sea, Chen reasoned:

The water in the wooden pail is like the Phenomenal Body whereas the sea is like the Dharma Realm. The wooden pail is like an obstacle in between. But one must not mistakenly regard the Phenomenal Body as an obstacle, giving rise to aversion to the Body. One must understand that once the true obstacle is broken, the Phenomenal Body becomes the Dharma Realm. But to abandon the Phenomenal Body to look for the Dharma Realm is not congruent to truth.

So in Chen's view, it is precisely such a distinction that puts asunder the unity or communion between the spiritual and the physical realms. Consequently any enlightenment achieved through Mind-centered cultivation remains but an illusion in the Mind itself and exerts no effect on the body, and the material world is thought of as nonexistent and unreal. Chen reasoned:

People who seek immortality stress only practice, but not enlightenment. They certainly cannot attain any transformative powers of divinity and efficacy through enlightenment. This is because any transformative powers of efficacy and divinity are intimately con-

nected with the Material. But Buddhist enlightenment is too detached from the realm of the Material (*wuzhi jingjie* 物質境界). Even if you reach a consummate enlightenment, the Material outside the Mind remains unchanged, by a shred or an iota.<sup>19</sup>

Chen Yingning went further by criticizing the Buddhist construction of the cosmos and the body as totally alien to the Chinese mind, and attacked the widespread adoption of Buddhism in China since the Han dynasty as a cultural disaster for China. He lamented:

What is most incomprehensible is this. Before the Qin and Han times when Buddhism had not entered China, and during the three dynasties of sagely rule by Yao, Shun, and Yu, governance and society remained pure and benign, and the popular customs and mores simple and honest, far beyond comparison by any later dynasties. Further, the territory remained unified as one, and there was no shame of a broken realm yet. Ever since its coming to the East, Buddhism has inculcated the minds of millions of Chinese with its abstruse and sophisticated Mahayana philosophy, which should have far exceeded the three dynasties of the Sages in both achievements and virtue. But why does our country still languish in so much difficulty? Why are the popular mores so increasingly diluted, livelihood so impoverished, and the vitality of the nation so enervated? How have we suffered from the upheavals by the Five Barbarians and Sixteen States, the division between the Southern and Northern Kingdoms, the succession of the Five Dynasties, and the shame of subjugation by the Liao and Jin, the agony of conquest by the Yuan and Qing dynasties, and the current anxiety of aggression by the Powers? Aren't these but all that the Mahayana acumen and perfection has amounted to?<sup>20</sup>

Speaking here from a nativist perspective, Chen impugned Buddhism as an alien body of ideas and practice that invaded, dismembered, and enervated the body of the Chinese nation and culture. Chen's attack on Buddhism has direct implications for his efforts in reformulating Daoist inner alchemy, leading to his profound skepticism and rejection of the Mind-centered model of the body in traditional inner alchemy. He viewed such tendency toward valorization of the Void in traditional *neidan* discourse an outright Buddhist influence to be purged and rejected for the same perils it posed to the body of the individual and that of the nation.

#### TOWARD A "SCIENTIFIC" BODY OF VITALISM

Like many of his contemporaries, Chen's exposure to Western science first began in the context of the late Qing reforms. In the aftermath of the

Sino-Japanese war, the Qing court came under great pressure for reform both at home and abroad. Gradually, the Qing court began to implement a series of reform initiatives and programs that began with the Hundred Days' Reforms in 1898 and culminated in the New Policies (*xinzheng* 新政) in 1901. These reforms focused on improving central and local administration, defense, foreign relations, and education. As part of these overall state building projects, the Qing court and local administrators began to set up various new schools as either additional or alternative ways of training its future much-needed officials and technical elite. By 1904 when the Qing court abolished the traditional civil-service exam system, the new schools and colleges with a curriculum that stressed science and technology became the main means of training and selecting the governing elite.

One of the leading institutions of new Western scientific learning (*xinxue* 新學) and a center of industrialization in China at the turn of the century was the famous Jiangnan Arsenal (Jiangnan zhizao ju 江南制造局). Its translation service (*yixueguan* 譯學館) was responsible for publishing a host of textbooks on the natural science subjects of physics, chemistry, mathematics, and biology.<sup>21</sup> Chen's elder brother was specialized in the new Western learning. Well versed in physics and chemistry, he was particularly adept at mathematics and mechanical drawing. It was under his tutelage that the younger Chen first began studying sciences. Decades later, Chen Yingning would recall with fondness the days and nights he spent reading books on various subjects in physics, chemistry, and biology. But while Chen acquired basic knowledge in the various subjects of natural science, his initial joyful foray into this field of learning was cut short by the untimely death of his elder brother, who had suffered from a pulmonary hemorrhage (*tuxue zheng* 吐血症). Having lost support from his brother, Chen had to suspend his studies of science. Later in 1905, Chen passed an entrance examination and enrolled at the new Anhui Provincial Advanced College of Politics and Law. During his two years there, Chen studied with Yan Fu 嚴復 (z. Youling, 1854–1921), one of the most seminal minds and reform advocates in late-nineteenth-century China. It was Yan Fu who introduced his contemporaries to a host of western thinkers from Darwin to Adam Smith.<sup>22</sup>

The two decades between 1916 and 1937 when Chen was married and settled in Shanghai constituted another significant period of his systematic study of sciences.<sup>23</sup> Aside from reading widely in subjects of science, Chen lived and worked in the social and intellectual milieu of Western scientific learning and practice in Shanghai. His wife, Wu Yizhu 吳彝珠 (1882–1945), was not only a fellow practitioner of Daoism, but also a practicing special-

ist trained in modern gynecology and obstetrics.<sup>24</sup> Outside her practice at her own clinic where Chen also worked, Wu also taught courses in gynecology and obstetrics at the Renhe Advanced School of Obstetrics in the city. Quite a few of Dr. Wu's colleagues later joined Chen Yingning's close circle of friends and followers, which included many accomplished medical doctors, returned scientists, engineers, and scholars trained abroad and at home.<sup>25</sup> Chen's early exposure to scientific learning and his later experience of living among this social and intellectual environment also came to shape his thinking about the nature of the body in Daoist inner alchemy.

Early in fall 1934 Chen categorized world civilizations into three major schools: Materialism (*wuben zhuyi* 物本主義) represented by the European civilization (*Ouhua* 歐化), Mind-centered Idealism (*xinben zhuyi* 心本主義) represented by the Buddhist culture of India (*Tianzhu fohua* 天竺佛化), and Life-centered Vitalism (*shengben zhuyi* 生本主義) represented by the Daoist culture of China (*Daojia wenhua* 道家文化).<sup>26</sup> For Chen, Western materialism and Buddhist idealism were either deficient or excessive. Both failed to grasp the subtle reality of the world around us, as they each focus on only one aspect of it:

Those idealist philosophers of ancient and modern times have held that the material realm of the universe is all but an illusion (*huanwang* 幻妄). Everything is but the manifestation of the mind. As the ideas arise in the mind, the external world is engendered. As the mind is extinguished, so is the manifested world. But this kind of theory knows only the function (*yong* 用) without understanding its substance (*ti* 體). Those experimental scientists only know man as an aggregate of various materials, but they can't explain human will, thought, feelings and desire. They know only the substance without understanding its function.<sup>27</sup>

For Chen Yingning, the unity of substance and function (*ti yong* 體用) is the key to understanding reality. Knowing just one aspect of reality fails to capture both its totality and its unity. For that reason, it is Daoist vitalism that has truly intuited and reconciled both aspects of reality, as it strikes a balance between the two extremes of materialism and idealism. For the same reason, Chen found science, which he believed to be the quintessence of Western materialism, the most effective remedy for rectifying the excesses of the Buddhist Mind-centered model of the body in Daoist *neidan*.

For Chen, the dominance of the Mind-centered construction of the body as evidenced in the adulation of the Void was of relatively recent origin. Aside from the apparent Buddhist influence, the insubstantiality of the

body occurred with the major paradigmatic shift in self-cultivation practice around the late Tang period, when outer alchemy (*waidan* 外丹) began to be replaced by the emerging inner alchemy (*neidan*) as the favored way of cultivation. Practitioners have since turned their back on the physical and material dimensions of the body, and focused instead inwardly on the elusive mind wherein to seek transformation:

“Smashing the empty Void or pulverizing the vacuous Emptiness” are all phrases from Daoist books of later periods. None of these are found in any of the classics of the ancient immortals. This is because most of the ancient immortals began cultivation in outer alchemy. Their practice is entirely engaged with the material and the substantive (*wuzhi de* 物質的). It does not concern the empty Void at all. Nor did it work on the flesh body yet. But fearful of the complexities and hardships of outer alchemy, self-cultivators of later times preferred the simplicity and ease of inner practice. They switched to begin their practice with Essence, *qi*, and Spirit (*jing qi shen* 精氣神) of the body. There subsequently evolved the theory of Refining the Essence into *Qi* (*lianjing huaqi* 煉精化氣), Refining *Qi* into the Spirit (*lianqi huashen* 煉氣化神), and Refining the Spirit to return to the Void (*lianshen huanxu* 煉神還虛). As they later felt the theory insufficient, they added an additional level of Refining the Void to unite with the Way (*lianxu hedao* 煉虛合道). As a result, the Way of Alchemy had since then become linked with the empty Void.<sup>28</sup>

For Chen, the most catastrophic consequence of this shift is the valorization of the mind over the body, and to such a degree that the physicality or materiality of the body was rejected in the process. Most symbolic of this rejection is the modern practitioner's contentment with the sole deliverance of his Yang Spirit (*yang shen* 陽神) through self-cultivation, and his all too ready dismissal of the legendary feat of “ascent by flight in broad daylight” (*bairi feisheng* 白日飛升). For such a feat epitomizes the true union of the spiritual and the physical realms, whereby the ancient immortal allegedly soars up into the empyrean with not only his perfected Yang Spirit but also his perfected flesh body (*routi* 肉體), achieving the rare wonder of the perfection of both body and spirit (*xingshen ju miao* 形神俱妙).<sup>29</sup>

#### FROM COSMOLOGY TO PHYSICS AND BIOLOGY: SCIENTIZING DAOIST INNER ALCHEMY

To achieve the wonder of the union of spiritual and bodily perfection, the body with all of its physical and material aspects must be reclaimed as the

focus and foundation for self-transformation and transcendence. It is for that task that Chen turned to science. He saw a certain affinity between science and the teachings of the ancient immortals on the cosmology of the body. In September 1935, in response to an article that advocated syncretism between science and Buddhism, Chen argued against such a possibility and instead pointed to what he perceived to be practical and positivist tendencies within the Immortals' tradition as possible convergences with science. He argued that because of its emphasis on practice and verifiable results, the Divine Immortals' Learning was similar to science, and those who possessed scientific thought and knowledge would find the values of the Immortals' Learning most accessible and easiest to understand.<sup>30</sup>

The most detailed and fully evolved expression of Chen Yingning's belief in the fundamental correlation between science and inner alchemy is found in an unpublished manuscript entitled "Learning Immortality Will Succeed" (*Xuexian bicheng* 學仙必成). Chen first completed the manuscript in early 1945 and revised it later in 1947. Intended as a primer for people interested in the practice of inner alchemy, the tract was written in simple day-to-day language. The discussion was set in a dialogue format. Though it was never printed in Chen's lifetime, it was hand-copied and circulated among Chen's disciples and other members of the Shanghai group, and in Daoist circles in and beyond the city in the 1940s. In his tract, Chen incorporated concepts from the fields of physics and biology of his time in explaining the fundamental ideas, procedures, and methods of traditional Daoist inner alchemy. The most intriguing aspect of Chen's reformulation of the Daoist discourse of inner alchemy is seen in its ontology, which is depicted in figure 6.1, an illustration drawn by Chen.

As shown here, Chen incorporated elements of both atomic and organic theories in reformulating a new and materialistic interpretation of the *neidan* ontology and cosmology. In this reformulated *neidan* cosmology, the Way (*dao* 道), the ultimate reality of the universe, is explained as a unity composed of two aspects: substance and function. These dual aspects of the realm of the Way are correlated to the dual dimensions of the realm of Man (*ren* 人): spiritual nature (*xing* 性) and physical life (*ming* 命). They are two sides of the same coin: substance is the source of function, whereas function is the application of substance. For Chen, the relationship between the two is not a mere metaphysical abstraction. The substance of the Way is by no means void or empty, but something concrete, physical, and unmistakably material in nature.

By incorporating concepts of atomic theory and biology on the physical structure of matter and animal life, Chen redefined the otherwise



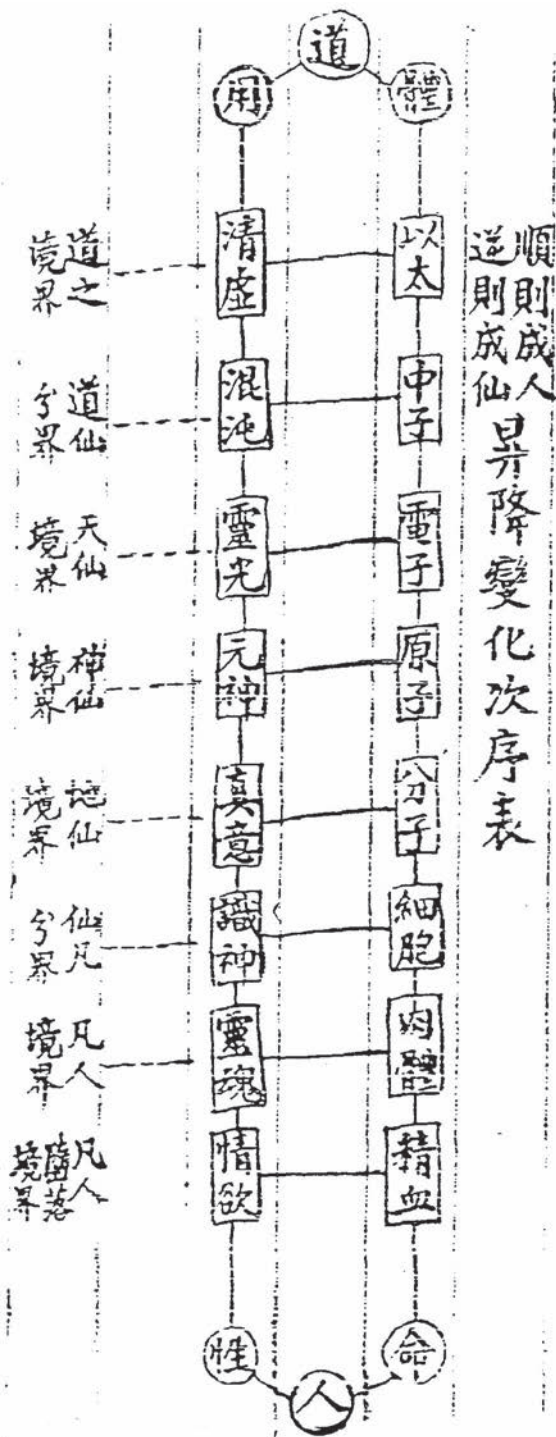


Figure 6.1. Chen Yingning's ontology of inner alchemy. From Chen Yingning, "Xuexian bicheng," 36.



ephemeral and inscrutable *qi* as a continuum of ether (*yitai* 以太), neutrons (*zhongzi* 中子), electrons (*dianzi* 電子), atoms (*yuanzi* 原子), molecules (*fenzi* 分子), cells (*xibao* 細胞), body (*routi*), and semen and blood (*jing xue* 精血). In doing so, Chen imputed the unmistakable materiality of the physical and biological categories to the substance of the Way. *Qi*, the most fundamental element of the cosmos and the body, is thus unequivocally defined in material and physical terms.

Furthermore, implicit in the physical continuum as the substance of the Way is also the concept of evolutionary change from the realm of the Way to that of Man. From the level of ether down to the level of the generative substance of paternal semen and maternal blood, each of the physical and biological categories represents the various interconnected stages of continuous evolutionary change. Chen further carried the implied principle of evolutionary transformation by reformulating the cosmogony described in chapter 42 of the *Daodejing* 道德經:

The so-called expression “The Way begets the One” means that the “ether” congeals into the Neutron, also known as the Nuclei. “The One begets the Duo” means that the Neutron splits into the Yin Electron (Negatron) and the Yang Electron (Positron). As for “The Duo begets the Trio,” it means that the Yin and Yang Electrons form all kinds of atoms by different combinations. “The Trio begets the Myriad Beings” means that one kind of Atom forms, or two or three kinds of Atoms combine into the numerous and most miniscule unit of any matter known as the Molecule. “A Myriad Being yokes the Yin and embraces the Yang” means that regardless of what kind of matter and despite the difference in form, all are based on the Atom. Each Atom contains a nucleus. The nucleus is a neutral particle. It is a combination of Yin and Yang Electrons. But it inclines more toward the Yang. Additionally there are more or fewer additional Yin Electrons encircling and revolving around the nucleus. Hence the saying “yoking the Yin and Embracing the Yang” (*fuyin er baoyang* 負陰而抱陽). In a normal state, all Atoms are neutral and harmonized in nature. In other words, no matter how numerous the Yin Electrons there are, their total negative electric charge is always equal to the total positive charge of the electrical nuclei. So it does not show any electric discharge from the outside. This is what the *Daodejing* says about “Intermeshing into harmony.”<sup>31</sup>

By evoking the principles of subatomic structure and change of matter, Chen concretized the classical Chinese cosmogony in his reformulation by bringing the abstruse speculations of metaphysics down to the level of what he saw to be observable and verifiable facts of physics. Similarly,

Chen also introduced the concepts of evolution and structure of organisms as the underlying principle of human life. Instead of the abstract and elusive atemporal *qi* (*xiantian qi* 先天氣), human reproduction and life were alternatively reconceived through the union of the concrete matter of the paternal semen and maternal egg (*fujing muluan* 父精母卵).<sup>32</sup> The body is thus the product of human biological process of procreation. Indeed, informing the biological continuum from the most primitive cell to the most complex and fully evolved organism like the human body is the same evolutionary principle underlying all forms of life in the world. Chen wrote:

Our parents are preceded by their parents. If we ask, "Where did our first parents come from?" they did not fall from the sky, nor did they burrow out of the earth. They are naturally evolved from an advanced species of animal (*gaodeng dongwu* 高等動物) that was similar to but not quite human yet. The advanced species was in turn evolved from a lower species (*dideng dongwu* 低等動物), which evolved further down from an even lower species. One level after another, it evolved further from down to the lowest level of the primitive cell (*yuanshi xibao* 原始細胞).<sup>33</sup>

Beyond the level of the cell, the biological organism of life was linked to the process of cosmogony through the deeper structure of molecules, atoms, electrons, neutrons, and finally to the ultimate state of ether. So matter as a continuum of the Way is not only imperishable but continuously evolving and transforming from one state to another without end or exhaustion. Chen wrote: "Matter can neither be created nor extinguished, but it can undergo tens of thousands of transformations."<sup>34</sup>

Chen's use of science in stressing the physicality or material nature of the cosmos and the body did not, however, lead him to an acceptance of the dichotomy between spirit and matter, mind and body. For him the spiritual realm and the physical realm are intricately interconnected and inseparable. They are but two aspects of one unity. Matter and all material things and beings could not but exist as various powers or functions. He wrote: "All matter in the universe possesses appropriate energy or power (*nengli* 能力). The energy must stem from a kind of matter. Energy cannot be just created out emptiness (*pingkong* 憑空). Matter is the substance, whereas power is its application. Both substance and application are the two aspects of one thing (*yi wu er mian* 一物二面)."<sup>35</sup>

Indeed, as Chen explained, each and every stage of the substance exists as a specific function or application on the continuum of the Way. Such function or application is deemed inherent to the substance of the Way.

So ether expresses or manifests its supreme efficacy in the form of the Pure Void state (*qingxu* 清虛), whereas the generative force of the paternal semen and the maternal egg takes the form of Passions of Lust (*qingyu* 情欲). In this inherent tendency of the substance of the Way to manifest its power lies the so-called natural (*shun* 順) mechanism of transformation, which constantly propels the continuum of change to evolve from the higher realm of the Way (*dao zhi jingjie* 道之境界) toward the lower realm of Degeneracy (*duoluo jingjie* 墮落境界) of Man. Hence the saying, "To go along with the natural mechanism of change is to become a mortal" (*shun ze chengren* 順則成人).<sup>36</sup>

But that is only half of the story. Chen's emphasis on the materiality of the cosmos and the body never precludes him from imputing a dynamically transformative power to spiritual manifestations of the Way. Though each state of the substantive continuum exists as a specific power, the human body itself contains the whole spectrum of the powers that emanate from their respective substance. It is precisely the careful and intentional manipulation of the differentials between these various levels of manifested powers that makes it possible to stem the tide of aging and decay. For instance, the Intelligent Spirit (*shishen* 識神), which manifests itself in the cell, can be properly employed through meditative cultivation to assist in the transformation of the lower level of substance of the body into the higher level of the cell and beyond. As the lower levels of substance, like semen and blood, are gradually refined into higher forms of substance by focusing the higher spiritual powers of the body, the body is then launched on its transformative journey back to perfection.

For Chen, it is precisely here that science and the Immortals' Learning part ways. While both science and the Immortals accept the physicality or materiality of the cosmos and the body, scientists stress exclusively the substance or materiality of the Way (*dao zhi ti* 道之體), ending ultimately in a materialist determinism that totally ignores man's spiritual potential. Immortals, on the other hand, focus on the manifested powers or applications of the Way (*dao zhi yong* 道之用), leading to the vitalism (*weisheng zhuyi* 唯生主義) that unites substance and application in the Way. Chen argued that through hard practice focusing on the nonsubstantive, conscious, and spiritual aspect of the body, the natural mechanism of transformation may be reversed to evolve toward immortality (*ni ze chengxian* 逆則成仙).<sup>37</sup>

The extreme materialist scientists recognize only the body of flesh.

As for the function of human consciousness, it is seen as no more than just the impulse of the body. There is no so-called soul (*ling hun* 靈魂).

When the body is destroyed and its matter disintegrated beyond any means of reorganization, human consciousness will perish accordingly. If you talk about any Spiritual Nature and Life outside the body (*routi yiwai haiyou xingming* 肉體以外還有性命), they will laugh at you, regarding it merely a dream. We learners of the Immortals must strive for this great accomplishment. We must practice hard and solidly attain the state of “perfection of both the form and the spirit.” Only then can we command respect and admiration from the scientists.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, Chen did not see the body’s physicality as a barrier to achieving the perfection of both body and spirit. It is the very source and venue for the transformation of the body. As the embodiment of the cosmic continuum, the body’s materiality contains the very seeds for effecting a reversal of the natural transformation inherent to the body, and such reversal can be only effected through practice within and upon the body by uniting the functional aspect with the substantive aspect of the Way.

Chen’s efforts at reformulating the traditional *neidan* discourse of cosmology and body are by no means mere exercises in metaphysics. Chen was motivated by several historical factors of his time. As China struggled to redefine *neidan* in relation to its own past and the West, the body and the cosmos became hotly contested fields for intellectuals of various persuasions. The burgeoning revival of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism at the time marked not only the predominance of Buddhist idealism and Mind-centered cosmology, but it epitomized the pervasive influence of the Buddhist view of the body in self-cultivation practice since Song.

At a time when national survival was deemed at stake and when tradition was challenged in the face of advancing modernity, Chen rejected the Buddhist vision of the body and the cosmos as no longer adequate to serve the nation as well as individuals. To Chen, the Buddhist view represented a foreign cultural tradition which evolved in India. Chen and his followers problematized the Buddhist rejection of the phenomenal world and the body as unreal or insubstantial in order to lend it negative political and cultural implications. As a result, Chen and his followers rejected the Buddhist renunciation of the physical world and its focus on the cultivation of the Mind as self-deceptive escapism, spiritual apathy, and defeatism, and as being totally against the principles of science.

According to Chen, the authentic Chinese vision of the cosmos and the body is to be found in the Immortals’ Learning rooted in what he perceived to be a pristine past unsullied by Buddhist influences. For modern Daoism and *neidan* practice to survive, the traditional Daoist inner alchemic dis-

course had to be exorcised of its pervasive Buddhist influence. What better a sword to perform such a task of exorcism than science? With its ready acceptance of the independent existence of a physical world, science was seen as the best counterpoint against the ideational excesses of Mahayana metaphysics. This is undeniably part of the motives behind Chen's efforts to "scientize" traditional *neidan* discourse.

But Chen's appropriation of science must not be understood purely in utilitarian or sectarian terms. For it reflects genuine soul-searching efforts at reconstructing an authentic body of culture and nation at a crucial historical junction for modern China, when defining the world and the body as substantive and physical rather than ephemeral and immaterial was seen by reformers like Chen Yingning as not only epistemologically honest and objective, but a moral imperative. For Chen, a physical and substantive body was not just a mere philosophical nuance. It was the very reason for action and self-cultivation. Contentment with being just human alone meant being wasteful of the full human potentials for perfection. In times when China's national survival was at stake, failure to strengthen one's body through self-cultivation amounted to nothing less than moral dereliction of one's duty to one's true self and to the nation.

In assessing Chen's efforts at "scientizing" the traditional *neidan* discourse, we must remember that he was the first influential adept and writer of inner alchemy who had studied the natural sciences, thoughtfully considered both its great achievements and its disastrous effects, and consciously sought to reconcile the principles of modern science with the knowledge and the practice of Daoist *neidan*. By incorporating ideas and principles of physics and biology into the discussion of inner alchemy, Chen made efforts to stem the tidal trend in modern *neidan* discourse toward the Mind-centered view of the body, and to reassert the material body as the foundation for the practice of inner alchemic self-cultivation.

Chen seems to represent an important trend among the lay-centered religious reforms of the early Republican period and since. His reformulation of *neidan* in scientific terms can be compared to Li Yujie's 李玉階 "new religious philosophy" composed almost concurrently at Huashan in the 1930s and discussed by David Palmer in chapter 7 in this volume. Like Chen, Li's reformulation translated Daoist cosmology into a similar graded hierarchy of physical particles and was also part of a project to spiritually restore the body of the Chinese nation. But While Li Yujie's cosmology ultimately found an organized religious form that drew inspiration from Daoism, Chen Yingning's approach had a profound impact on the subsequent development of *neidan* practice and communities in Taiwan, as

described by Lee Fongmao in chapter 8 of this volume, and on the institutional development of Daoism in the early years of the Peoples' Republic—when Chen served as one of the leaders of the China Daoist Association from 1957 until his death in 1969. It also laid the conceptual foundation for later approaches by both *qigong* researchers and practitioners, as described by Lü Xichen in chapter 9, to either quantify or materialize *qi* and other bodily aspects of the practice.<sup>39</sup>

## 7. Dao and Nation

### *Li Yujie—May Fourth Activist, Daoist Cultivator, and Redemptive Society Patriarch in Mainland China and Taiwan*

David A. Palmer

For almost a century, the May Fourth paradigm of secularization and anti-traditionalism has been the mainstream ideology of China's intellectual and political elite, shared in its broad outlines by both the Kuomintang 國民黨 (KMT) and Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and even upheld by Chinese elites in colonial and postcolonial entities such as Hong Kong and Singapore.<sup>1</sup> And yet, the hegemony of May Fourth thought has obscured another current, also pervasive though much more diffused and fragmented, of twentieth-century Chinese elites seeking *religious* channels for the construction of Chinese modernity. Christian influences on leading modernizers such as Kang Youwei 康有為, Sun Yat-sen 孫中山, and Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 have long been noted, and the link between Christianity and modernity continues to be a source of fascination among Chinese seeking to emulate the power and success of the West. Only recently, however, have elite attempts to draw on China's indigenous religious heritage received the attention of scholars. We now know that it was commonplace for Republican-era leaders of the Beiyang regime, of the KMT, and of the Japanese-controlled zones to join redemptive societies<sup>2</sup>—which, as described by Vincent Goossaert in chapter 5, were major players in the market for self-cultivation practices—and that senior CCP members played a key role in the spread of the *qigong* movement in the post-Mao Peoples' Republic, as described by Lü Xichen in chapter 9 of this volume.<sup>3</sup>

Through the biography of senior KMT cadre, public intellectual, and religious leader Li Yujie 李玉階 (1901–94) presented in this chapter, we will see a case of a religious construction of the modern nation drawing heavily on Daoist sources combined with scientism and nationalism, as in the case of Chen Yingning 陳櫻寧, discussed in this book by Xun Liu in chapter 6. Li Yujie was one of the leaders of the May Fourth movement

in Shanghai; became a senior functionary in the Republican government; claimed a spiritual relationship with Daoist Immortal Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓; retired to the Daoist mountain of Huashan 華山 for eight years during the Sino-Japanese war; composed works that reformulated Daoist cosmology in scientific language; was a newspaper publisher and political commentator in postwar Taiwan, where he was also involved in several business enterprises; and was a founding director of Taiwan's Daoist Association of the Chinese Republic (Zhonghua minguo Daojiao hui 中華民國道教會). He was also a leading disciple of the Tiandejiao 天德教—the Heavenly Virtues Teachings—a Republican-era redemptive society; founded his own society, Tianrenjiao 天人教—the Heavenly Human Teachings—on Huashan in the 1930s; and again established a new religious movement, Tiandijiao 天帝教—the Heavenly Lord Teachings—in Taiwan in 1979, which, as described in Lee Fongmao's chapter in this volume, taught one of the most popular forms of *qigong* and inner alchemical cultivation on the island at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The life of Li Yujie offers a fascinating glimpse into the links between Daoism and intellectual trends, politics, redemptive societies, and religious renewals throughout the span of the twentieth century in both mainland China and Taiwan.

#### THE HEAVENLY VIRTUE AND HEAVENLY LORD DENOMINATIONS

This chapter attempts a brief outline of the narrative of the lives of Li Yujie and his master, Xiao Changming 蕭昌明 (1895–1943), as presented by followers of the Heavenly Virtue and Heavenly Lord teachings in contemporary Hong Kong and Taiwan. Data for this paper are primarily derived from fieldwork conducted in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Huashan in June 2005, May 2006, and June 2007, especially interviews conducted during the second field trip<sup>4</sup> with key followers of Xiao Changming and Li Yujie, notably his eldest son Li Weisheng 李維生 (b. 1925), who, during his adolescence at Huashan, was the spirit medium who revealed many of the texts and prayers which now form the bedrock of Tiandijiao teachings and practice, and was the leader (“Master Emissary” 首席使者) of the Tiandijiao from 1995 to 2006. Other persons interviewed include Tiandijiao archivists, historians, and clergy, and leading members of the Tiandejiao. Li Yujie and his wife were quite meticulous about storing their personal documents and materials: the Tiandijiao is very conscious of its history, having its own archive managed by Li Yujie's granddaughter-in-law<sup>5</sup> and an active in-house publication program of historical materials on Tiandijiao.<sup>6</sup>



Interviews with Daoist monks from Huashan in July 2005 and August 2007 confirmed local knowledge of Li Yujie's years on the mountain in the 1930s.

The Tiandejiao and Tiandijiao are two related but distinct modern "denominations" of Chinese religion. Tiandejiao was first founded in 1927 by Xiao Changming as the Society for the Promotion of Religious Unity 宗教大同促進社.<sup>7</sup> After the founding of the PRC, its headquarters were moved by Xiao's wife from Huangshan to Hong Kong in 1950, where the General Altar was established at Qingshan in Tuen Mun, New Territories.<sup>8</sup> Other disciples, notably Wang Diqing 王笛卿, independently established the society in Taiwan around the same time. As a result there has been very little communication between the Hong Kong and Taiwanese communities,<sup>9</sup> and in both areas, particularly in Hong Kong, the society appears riven with internal divisions, distrustful of communication with the outside world, and in a state of general decline. Xiao's second wife is still alive and revered as the "Holy Mother" 聖師母 and her son-in-law reportedly manages the society's affairs, but both seldom appear in public. Besides the central temple in Tuen Mun, there are some seventy other Tiandejiao altars in Hong Kong, most of which, with the exception of a large temple in Taipo, are private or semiprivate family shrines. The number of altars is said to have peaked at around 200 in the 1980s. There are more than thirty Tiandejiao temples in Taiwan.

The distinctive features of Tiandejiao religious life include recitation and practice of the "Twenty Characters" 念廿字 revealed by Xiao Changming as representing the essential virtues of loyalty 忠, forgiveness 恕, incorruptibility 廉, intelligence 明, virtue 德, rectitude 正, justice 義, faith 信, patience 忍, fairmindedness 公, magnanimity 博, filial piety 孝, benevolence 仁, compassion 慈, awareness 覺, moderation 節, frugality 儉, truth 真, propriety 禮, and harmony 和.<sup>10</sup> Worship takes place before an altar at which is hung a large yellow framed "Bright Cloth" 光布 representing the invisible realm, originally supposed to replace deity statues, and contemplation of which is said to produce spirit communications. Contemporary Tiandejiao temples, however, typically enshrine statues of Xiao Changming and other disciples such as Wang Diqing, or divinities such as Guanyin 觀音, in front of the yellow cloth, or on another altar. Tiandejiao followers also practice "spiritual healing" 精神治療, which can be compared to *qigong* healing by emission of external *qi* with the healer's left palm placed above the patient's head and the fingers of his right hand pointed toward the patient's eyes and forehead. This form of healing is the main method of recruitment of followers, although the focus of religious practice is supposed to be the Twenty Characters rather than healing.<sup>11</sup>

Like other redemptive societies of the Republican era, Tiandejiao advocates the unity of religions, reveres the founders of the Five Teachings (Laozi, Confucius, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammad), and holds rituals to avert the world apocalypse of the end of the Three Kalpas 三期末劫.<sup>12</sup> The Tiandejiao canon 天德藏經 is made up of some thirty or so works of Xiao Changming, including sutras for ritual recitation; works on spiritual practice, meditation, and healing; regulations for the organization of Tiandejiao communities and the establishment of altars; disquisitions on the Twenty Characters; and notes from public lectures.<sup>13</sup>

Tiandijiao, founded by Li Yujie in 1979 (in Li's terms, "restored" 復興 by the Lord on High as the most ancient religion in the universe), is a much younger denomination, based on the same foundation as Tiandejiao: the Twenty Characters, the Bright Cloth, the same style of spiritual healing, the doctrines of religious unity and prayer rituals to avert the apocalypse. Though Xiao Changming is honored as Li Yujie's master and as Li's predecessor in the genealogical religious lineage of the universe, he is not worshipped at Tiandijiao shrines, and the scriptures used are not Xiao's but those composed during Li's years at Huashan. Sitting meditation 正宗靜坐, also based on Li Yujie's realization at Huashan, is also practiced to a much greater degree than in Tiandejiao. With a claimed membership of more than 200,000, it was at the time of writing one of Taiwan's largest religious organizations, with an integrated organizational structure and a sophisticated membership, including a large number of intellectuals, professors, and professionals.<sup>14</sup> Tiandijiao is not present in Hong Kong but currently has temples in Japan and in Los Angeles, USA. Its secular academic branch, the Society for the Study of Religious Philosophy 宗教哲學研究社, has played a leading role in organizing academic exchanges on Daoism and Chinese culture between Taiwan and the mainland (notably with the China Academy of Social Sciences and Beijing University),<sup>15</sup> publishes an academic journal,<sup>16</sup> and sponsors efforts to synthesize traditional Chinese energy cosmology and modern science.<sup>17</sup> Tiandijiao also operates a charity, the Red Heart Society 紅心字會, which has conducted rescue work in flooded parts of Yunnan province, provides assistance to old people living alone at home, and offers childrens' Confucian scripture recitation classes.

Relations between Tiandejiao and Tiandijiao, though cordial on the surface, are tense. Li Yujie's breaking off from Tiandejiao to establish his own movement in 1979 angered many Tiandejiao followers, whose resentment is compounded by the obviously greater vigor and expansion of Tiandijiao. The two groups attempted a rapprochement in the mid-1990s by holding

annual joint conferences on Xiao Changming, but the discussions often turned polemical.<sup>18</sup>

In spite of the differences between the two groups, there is overall little discrepancy between the accounts of Xiao Changming's life as related by followers of either denomination. The main difference concerns the role of another pivotal figure in our story, the mysterious Cloud Dragon Sage 雲龍至聖, who is recognized by both groups as having accompanied the young Xiao Changming to Hunan from his hometown in Sichuan and played a key role in Xiao Changming's spiritual initiation. But while Tiandejiao followers claim that the Cloud Dragon Sage was a Chinese Buddhist monk from Vietnam, Li Yujie's disciples claim that he was a hermit from the Kunlun Mountains who had been an officer under General Yan Gengyao during the reign of the Qing Emperor Qianlong 乾隆, had retreated to the mountains of Qinghai after his defeat, and was more than 200 years old when Li Yujie met him. In addition to his role in Xiao Changming's spiritual awakening in the early 1920s, the Cloud Dragon Sage reappears in the Tiandijiao narratives on Li Yujie, which claim that Li met him in 1937 in the mountains of Taibaishan and personally instructed him to settle at Huashan. The Tiandijiao narrative legitimizes Li Yujie as having been directly initiated by the Sage and thus puts him on a par with Xiao Changming. Also worthy of note is the more "Daoist" flavor of the Tiandijiao account, of which more at the end of this chapter.

#### XIAO CHANGMING AND THE HEAVENLY VIRTUE TEACHINGS

Our story begins with the life and work of Li's teacher, Xiao Changming, a body cultivation master and religious healer of the first half of the twentieth century. Born in the hills of Lezhi county 樂至縣 in central Sichuan in 1895, Xiao spent his childhood in a world of grinding poverty and increasing banditry.<sup>19</sup> In the wake of the Boxer movement, which spread to Sichuan after its defeat in North China, the religious environment of the province was in flux. Xiao is said to have manifested a precocious religious inclination after having been cured of a fatal disease by invisible Immortals at the age of four. According to stories told by his followers, he had been sent into this world from the Subtle Land of the Myriad Fragrances 眾香妙国 but could not bear the attachments of human life, and so had attempted through his illness to return to the Buddha Realm. But the Ancient Formless Buddha 無形古佛 foiled his attempt by curing his illness and told him to stay in this world and save the people by healing them.

Until his adolescence Xiao practiced healing and poetry, stayed at temples, visited Buddhist monks, and began to attract a following. He is said to have spent half a year at Qingchengshan, where he practiced meditation in a cave for seven days in 1907, at the age of twelve. Accused of swindling and not even sure himself if his powers were real, he went into hiding and then joined the army, where he resolved to fight evil by killing the enemy. According to Tiandejiao followers, a heavenly assembly was held to stop him from going along that path, and it was decided to send the Cloud Dragon Sage to meet Xiao Changming and lead him along the correct way. Xiao was impressed by the Sage's powers and agreed to follow him down the Yangtze river to Hunan. Along the way, the Sage tested Xiao by falling ill and imploring him to treat him. After being convinced of Xiao's sincerity, his health was restored, his hair turned black, and he appeared to become like a young man. Xiao thus gained confidence in the reality of his own healing powers.

The Sage took Xiao to Hunan Province, where they continued to live a wandering life as healers. It is during this period that Xiao Changming is said to have learned the method of healing by emission of cosmic *qi*—called at the time “spiritual healing” 精神療法, which claims to take the *qi* directly from the universe, contrary to Daoist inner alchemical elixir cultivation and contemporary forms of *qigong*. The difference here is that when using Daoist inner alchemical cultivation, the practitioner, when healing others, loses energy and may deplete his own share of life force, while in Xiao Changming's method, one draws on the infinite source of cosmic *qi* 炁.

During this period in the mountains of Hunan, operating in the same area as Mao Zedong's hometown, Xiao is also claimed to have initiated Mao Zedong's mother as his disciple—an assertion that one follower supports on the basis that one of Xiao's chief disciples, Bao Guiwen 包桂文, who came from a wealthy background and did not join an official work unit after 1949, was affected by none of the political campaigns of the Mao era in spite of his class background and association with Tiandejiao, which was branded a “counterrevolutionary secret society” 反動會道門, showing that he enjoyed special protection from Mao (Bao was later one of the first to revive external *qi* healing after the Cultural Revolution, contributing to post-Mao *qigong* fever).<sup>20</sup> Another story has it that Zhou Enlai, in his days at Wuhan, was a fervent admirer of Xiao, visited him frequently, and sought teachings from him.

Xiao married his first wife during the years in Hunan; she was from a rich family, and his father-in-law used his wealth to support Xiao's healing and religious activities. After cultivating for three years—and eat-

ing a magic mushroom that gave him incommensurable powers—he was instructed by the Cloud Dragon Sage to teach his method and to save mankind.

He began by establishing an association called the “Society for the Promotion of Religious Unity” in Changsha in 1921; a few years later in Wuhan he founded a larger association, the Society for the Study of Religious Philosophy, which, like the earlier organization, aimed to use a rational and “academic” approach to the religions of the world while promoting meditation and “spiritual healing.” Xiao’s reputation seems to have spread among the elite of the KMT: his disciples included Mao Zuquan 茅祖權 (1883–1952), president of the executive yuan, and Wang Zhennan 王震南 (1892–1963), president of the military court 軍法司長 and first cousin of Chiang Kai-shek. One account claims that Xiao met with Sun Yat-sen and told him that he was wrong to try to “destroy superstition”; he then accompanied Sun to Putuoshan where, at a Guanyin temple, many spirits appeared to Sun, leaving a deep impression on him, which he penned in his recollections on the island. Another account holds that the warlord general Gu Zhutong 顧祝同 (1893–1987), at a military meeting near the Yangtze River during the Sino-Japanese war, asked Xiao for help against the Japanese. Xiao, as a spiritual cultivator, was reluctant to intervene, but finally agreed. He wrote to the meeting that the Japanese would be unable to advance. Immediately afterward, a thick fog descended on the area for ten days, preventing Japanese planes from flying in, and ensuring the successful defense of the area.

#### LI YUJIE MEETS XIAO CHANGMING

When Xiao established a branch of the Society for the Study of Religious Philosophy in Nanjing in 1930, through his disciples in the KMT leadership he was introduced to Li Yujie, who was then secretary to Minister of Finance Song Ziwen 宋子文 (T. V. Soong, 1894–1971) and who instantly became his disciple. Li would quickly become a leading member of Tiandejiao.

Li was born in 1901 in a literati family of modest means, in a small house in Suzhou. His father, a failed candidate in the imperial examinations, was a schoolteacher in a local academy who gave Yujie a strict upbringing in the Confucian classics. This influence was reinforced by his mother, who was a descendant of Liu Zongzhou 劉宗周 (1578–1645), the great late Ming neo-Confucian scholar, and who often read his work, the *Complete Writings of Master Liu* 劉子全書.

In 1913, Li moved from Suzhou to Shanghai, where he began his sec-

ondary education. On leaving his mother's home, she gave him his father's hand-copied Daoist morality books, the *Tablet on Supreme Correspondence* 太上感應篇 and the *Book of Hidden Virtues of Imperial Sovereign Wenchang* 文昌帝君陰騭文. Each month, Li is said to have saved a small amount of money to reprint the books, which he then had distributed to the people at the docks by a ferry managed by his uncle.

When the May Fourth movement erupted in Beijing in 1919, students in Shanghai quickly mobilized, and Li Yujie actively participated, becoming one of the chief liaisons between striking students and workers. The movement in Shanghai had begun when Shao Lizi 邵力子 (1882–1967), editor of the *Republican Daily* 民國日報 and professor at Fudan University (and who would, two decades later, become Li Yujie's political patron as chairman of Shaanxi), notified his students of the Beijing strikes and encouraged them to follow suit, igniting a movement that spread to all schools in Shanghai. Businesses and shopkeepers then joined the strikes and boycotts of Japanese goods, as did bus and taxi drivers and factory workers. When the electric and waterworks unions also decided to join the strike, the Shanghai Student Union, concerned that a total power blackout would seriously disrupt the people's lives and public order, sent Li Yujie and three other representatives to persuade them to reverse their decision, averting chaos in the city.<sup>21</sup>

When school resumed in September, Li transferred to the radical Zhongguo Gongxue 中國公學, a modern college founded a decade earlier by anti-Qing revolutionaries returned from Japan, and whose faculty included such modernist and reformist thinkers as Hu Shi 胡适 (1891–1962) and Yu Youren 于右任 (1879–1964). Li was chosen as the school's representative to the Shanghai Student Union, in which he was elected director of the general office 總務科主任. Now a figure in the world of radical politics, he joined the KMT later that year.<sup>22</sup> After graduating, he found employment in the ministry of finance and quickly rose in rank, having acquired a reputation for reforming corrupt tax collection practices in the liquor and tobacco division, until he was appointed director of finance for Shanghai.<sup>23</sup>

In 1926, Li Yujie married Guo Chunhua 過純華, a native of Changzhou. Since his mother and grandmother had both selected different choices of a bride for him, a family meeting was held in Shanghai to make a choice. When consulted, Li declined to express a preference, leaving the matter for his mother and grandmother to decide between them. Since both clung to their choices, and no other family member expressed a preference, it was decided to draw lots before a Guanyin shrine. The name "Guo" was selected three consecutive times, confirming her as the bride. A spiritually

inclined woman who had suffered from many illnesses during her childhood, she had been initiated into meditation and spirit communications by a healer, learning to read the “heavenly book without words” 無字天書 through worshipping the god Jigong 濟公, and already had a few miracles attributed to her.<sup>24</sup> She was a devoted wife always working alongside Li in his travels and enterprises, and gave birth to four sons.

One of Li Yujie’s friends at that time was Song Ziwen, brother of Song Meilin 宋美齡 (1897–2003) and, through her, brother-in-law of Sun Yat-sen. Song Ziwen helped Sun establish the KMT government in Guangzhou, while Li Yujie stayed in Shanghai, where he became secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce and was given the task by the KMT of eradicating Communist influence in the union movement. This involved smashing the General Trade Union of Shanghai, controlled by then CCP leader Li Lisan 李立三 (1899–1967), and replacing it with the anti-Communist United Commission of Shanghai Trade Unions, and establishing a Labor-Capital Mediation Commission, chaired by Li Yujie himself.<sup>25</sup> Even before the establishment of the Nanjing government, Li Yujie was known for his anti-CCP activism while working for the Beiyang government.<sup>26</sup> Accounts claim that Li was placed on the CCP’s list of political assassination targets, and was provided with two guns for self-defense.

When Song Ziwen was appointed finance minister of the KMT government, he took Li under his protection and entrusted him to build relations between the Shanghai commercial circles, in which he was well connected, and the new government, which had its roots in Guangzhou. In 1928, after the KMT captured Beijing, Li Yujie was put in charge of the files of the national Ministry of Finance, and he drafted the first taxation law and policies of the Nationalist government.

Quickly, the stress of the new job affected Li’s health; he fell ill often, and his vision was impaired. He began to study sitting meditation under Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬 (1873–1958), who had become famous for popularizing his “sitting meditation of Master Yinshi,” which used simple, scientific-sounding language to explain meditation techniques stripped of their archaic and esoteric symbolism.<sup>27</sup> It was a few years later, when he was thirty, that he met Xiao Changming, who gave him further instruction in meditation and, in the words of Li’s eldest son, changed him from a this-worldly official into a seeker willing to give everything up for his spiritual destiny. While his friends from the May Fourth movement ridiculed him for his “anti-revolutionary” religious ideas, he answered that they had seen how sickly he had become, and it was meditation that had restored his



health. Pointing to the empirical reality of his transformation, he resolved to use the scientific method to prove the truth of religion, using his own body as a laboratory.

Not long afterward, in 1933, Li, having adopted the religious name Jichu 極初 (“Ultimate Beginning”), helped Xiao Changming establish the Shanghai branches of the Society for the Study of Religious Philosophy and of the Oriental Spirit Sanatorium 東方精神療養院, which drew its membership among the Shanghai merchant elite, including leading philanthropists such as Wang Yiting 王一亭 (1867–1938),<sup>28</sup> and the chairman of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce, Wang Xiaolai 王曉賴 (dates unknown),<sup>29</sup> as well as the Daoists Cai Yumin 蔡禹民, Ying Yuncong 應雲從, and Sun Peixi 孫佩兮.<sup>30</sup> The founding ceremony of the society was presided by the mayor of Shanghai, Wu Tiecheng 吳鐵城 (1888–1953), and reported in the major Shanghai newspapers.<sup>31</sup> The following year, Xiao invited his brightest disciples and financiers to the society’s headquarters in Nanjing, where each was given a title as one of the “Eighteen Perfected Sovereigns” 十八真君. This was followed by a 100-day meditation workshop in Shanghai, at the conclusion of which each participant received an ordination certificate and was given a specific mission<sup>32</sup> to establish the society in a different city: among others, Zhao Liancheng 趙連城, who had been a leading member of the Dahua Shantang 大化善堂, a charity hall based in Guangzhou, was sent to Hong Kong; while Li Yujie was told to go to Xi’an.

#### LI YUJIE IN THE NORTHWEST

Around the same time, Li’s political patron had lost his position, leaving Li free to leave Nanjing with his family. In preparation for his mission in Xi’an, he secured a position as inspector of finances for Northwest China, including Shaanxi, Shanxi, Ningxia, Gansu, and Qinghai. In Xi’an, Shao Lizi, his former companion in the May Fourth movement, now chairman of Shaanxi and Gansu Provinces and director of propaganda for the KMT, offered him his protection and assistance.<sup>33</sup> He introduced Li to Lu Hefu 路禾父 (1876–1956), a former army commander who had become a devout Buddhist and active philanthropist, was the president of both the Shaanxi Red Swastika Society 紅卍字會<sup>34</sup> and the provincial Rescuing Life Association 濟生會, and a leading member of the provincial Buddhist Association both before and after 1949. Lu mobilized his networks in the Xi’an banking, military, and political establishments to help Li Yujie establish the Shaanxi branch of the Society for the Study of Religious Philosophy, of which he was elected chairman.<sup>35</sup> Lu Hefu offered



the new association usage of the entire premises of the Rescuing Life Association, with the exception of a shrine to Jigong on the second floor and a few offices on the ground floor. Li began to offer training classes in spiritual healing and sitting meditation; he and his disciples also disguised themselves as monks and offered free spiritual healing in the city parks, which caused quite a commotion. He also established the World Red Heart Society 世界紅心字會, a philanthropic organization that provided coffins and burials for victims of war and famine, and a magazine, the *Red Heart Monthly*, devoted to the psychological, ethical, social, political, and economic construction of the nation.

Li's close friendships with the KMT establishment in Xi'an, especially with provincial Chairman Shao Lizi,<sup>36</sup> saved the local branch of Tiandejiao from a ban on the denomination for "propagating superstition," enacted in 1936:<sup>37</sup> according to Tiandejiao accounts, the real reason was that doctors of Chinese medicine, feeling threatened by the healing powers and free treatments offered by Xiao's followers, had influenced the government to have the society banned, on the grounds that they were practicing "superstition" by selling "talismanic water." It is not clear to what extent the ban was enforced, and most branches simply continued operating under the cover of their charitable organizations, which remained legal. In any case, the issue was soon eclipsed by the Japanese occupation, which forced Xiao to flee to Huangshan, where he established his new headquarters, the "Hibiscus Lodge" 芙蓉居, and initiated a series of philanthropic and agricultural development projects.<sup>38</sup> After the Nanjing Massacre of 1937, alongside the Red Swastika Society, members of a Tiandejiao-affiliated charity, the Society for Promoting Morality and Revering Goodness 德育崇善會, buried thousands of corpses.<sup>39</sup>

Another incident in which both Xiao Changming and Li Yujie are said to have played a role is the Xi'an incident of 1936, in which general Zhang Xueliang 張學良 (1901–2001) kidnapped Chiang Kai-shek at Xi'an in order to force him to negotiate with the CCP. During Chiang's captivity, Li Yujie advised some KMT generals on their troop deployments in the area, kept several senior officials (such as the provincial chairman of the KMT and the chief of police) in hiding in his home and on the premises of the Society for the Study of Religious Philosophy, and helped some to escape out of Xi'an by using the plane that was at his disposal as inspector of finances. Meanwhile, Chiang's cousin and Tiandejiao member General Wang Zhennan sent his wife up Huangshan to implore Xiao for help. Xiao assured her that all would be solved, and told her to go back down the mountain. As she reached the bottom, the local people were set-

ting off firecrackers: Chiang had been released. Wang Zhennan then proclaimed that the happy outcome was could be attributed to Xiao's powers and ascended Huangshan himself, together with Mao Zuquan and Yu Youren, then president of the Legislative Yuan, to offer thanks and attend rituals Xiao conducted for Chiang Kai-shek's safety and prosperity.<sup>40</sup>

One day in Xi'an, Li Yujie had a vision of the Daoist immortal Lü Dongbin while meditating with his disciples; he then asked them if there was a temple to Lü in the vicinity and his students responded that he was indeed worshipped at the Baxian gong 八仙宮, the main Daoist temple in Xi'an. Upon which Li decided to set out at once for the temple, where the abbot, standing at the door, asked him, "Is your surname Li?" and then, on receiving an affirmative answer, invited him into a room in the temple, where he brought out a package wrapped in a blue cloth. "Last night," said the abbot, "an old man gave me this package. The old man told me that a man named Li would come to the temple today, and that I should give him this package." Li Yujie then opened the package, which contained the scripture *Transmission of Dao from Zhong Liquan to Lü Dongbin* (鍾呂傳道集), a key text of Daoist inner alchemy.<sup>41</sup>

#### LI YUJIE AT HUASHAN

Li Yujie's followers claim that Xiao Changming had also instructed Li to visit the Cloud Dragon Sage in a cave amid the snowy peaks of Taibaishan in southern Shaanxi province. According to the accounts, the only time of year when the mountain passes were free of snow was in August, but by the time Li had received his instructions from Xiao, the passes were already on the verge of being closed in. Li and his companion got lost in the passes for three days and feared for their lives, when they were found by a disciple of the Cloud Dragon Sage, who brought them to his cave. The Sage gave them a small, semitransparent pill, which instantly relieved their hunger and restored their energy.

The Cloud Dragon Sage told Li that great calamities would soon befall China, and that he should pray ardently for the nation. When Li asked him for guidance on meditation, the Sage, pointing his two fingers to Li's eyes, pronounced the two Chinese characters *zi ran* 自然—spontaneity.<sup>42</sup> Li asked to stay with him as a disciple, but the Sage refused flatly, instructing him that while Xiao Changming was to settle at Huangshan, Li Yujie's mission was to move to the White Cloud Peak on Huashan by the first day of the sixth month of the lunar calendar, in order to guard the nation's Northwest Pass.

Li Yujie, his wife, and his four sons—including the eldest, Li Weisheng, aged twelve—as well as a few disciples, moved to Huashan the same year, where they settled first at the North Peak 北峰 for two years, and for the following six years at the Jade Emperor Grotto 玉皇洞 of the Great Upper Ledge 大上方, on a cliff below the North Peak that is accessible only by a two-hour climb up vertical steps carved into the cliff face. Here was the White Cloud Peak alluded to by the Dragon Cloud Sage—a spot Li only discovered when using spiritual healing to treat two old Daoists from there.<sup>43</sup> According to legend, the famous Daoist masters Chen Xiyi 陳希夷 (?–989), Ma Danyang 馬丹陽 (1123–83) and Sun Bu'er 孫不二 (1119–82) once cultivated in the nine caves at the Great Upper Ledge. At the time, three Daoist monks lived at the ledge with their disciples; through giving them donations, Li was able to secure their welcome and assistance:<sup>44</sup> life at the Ledge was harsh, simple, and dreary, especially for the children. Li's wife occasionally traveled to Xi'an to sell assets they had kept there in order to purchase food and supplies. She also prepared a small box of poison powder for the family to consume in case they were captured by the Japanese.

Li established an altar with a Bright Cloth at the place they stayed, prayed twice a day, and spent the rest of his time reading from two large crates of books he had carried there containing several commentaries on the *Yijing* 易經 and the *Four Classics*; the classic philosophers (Confucius, Mengzi, Laozi, Guanzi, and so on); works on the history of China, Christianity, and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom; works on vitalist philosophy, psychology, spiritualism, physics, and general science; martial arts novels; mythology and foreign fairy tales; poetry and epistles; books on national and international politics, especially concerning China, Japan, Germany, and the USSR; books on nationalist and KMT ideology and organization; more than forty Buddhist and Daoist scriptures and commentaries; the Qur'an; and Tiandejiao scriptures and documents.<sup>45</sup> From his reading of the Daoist works and commentaries on Laozi, according to his eldest son, he understood the meaning of spontaneity 無爲, and progressed from his early cultivation with form 有爲法 to a "formless cultivation" 無爲法. He also taught the classics to his sons, who could not go to school. During his deep meditation, according to Li Weisheng, he communicated spiritually with Lü Dongbin, Chen Tuan 陳搏, and the Cloud Dragon Sage, as well as with many other "earthly Immortals" 地仙 or eremitic cultivators who came to live with them at various times, including the Wandering Man of Dao 游馳道人, the Patriarch of the Essential Void 性空祖師, the Master of Running Waters 流水子, the Lonely Deaf Man of Dao 惛聾道人, and so on.

It was during this period that the *New Thought System of Religious Philosophy* 新宗教哲學思想體系<sup>46</sup> was composed, a work of energy cosmology formulated in scientific sounding language, which would later become the primary scripture of the Heavenly Lord teachings under the new title of *The New Realm* 新境界.<sup>47</sup> This book describes the dynamism of the universe as resulting from the interactions between two types of particles, rendered in an English version as “electropons” 電子 and “harmonons” 和子, corresponding respectively to the material and spiritual dimensions of beings, and in which the higher or lower spiritual state of a being results from the different proportions of electropons and harmonons constituting them.<sup>48</sup> According to Li Weisheng, the book was composed as a collaborative process between Li Yujie, his two disciples Huang and Li, and himself in communication with the formless world. Li Yujie would ask questions or formulate an idea, which would be supplemented by Huang; they would then ask the spirits through planchette writing, and Li would record the answers. Li Weisheng stresses that the book was not a “revelation,” since Li Yujie already had his own ideas, but a book composed through a process of “communication” between man and heaven. This became the basis of the Tiandijiao teachings, which advocate the “equality of the sacred and the profane” 聖凡平等, that is, that all people can potentially reach the spiritual level of the Lord on High, and that unity can be attained between heaven and man 天人大同—an ideal that requires a triple striving: for oneself, for nature, and for heaven. This attitude is said to combine the ascetic methods of Daoism with the this-worldliness of Confucianism—which can be practiced in a noisy and crowded industrial city, contrary to traditional Daoist cultivation, which can only be achieved in retreat from the world.

Li Weisheng also practiced “observing the light” 看光, that is, he would gaze at the Bright Cloth and Chinese characters would appear to him, rolling down as in a movie. He would write the characters down; if he made a mistake while transcribing, the character would “flash” before his eyes until he corrected it. These visions occurred a few times a week during the daytime, for about two years. Initially interested in this phenomenon only out of the curiosity of a bored youth, he could not understand the writings he was recording, but gradually became more deeply interested. The texts recorded by Li Weisheng were messages from the Unborn Holy Mother 無生聖母,<sup>49</sup> the Peerless Supreme Sovereign 無上臺上帝, Imperial Sovereign Guansheng 閔聖帝君, and the Lord of the Three Eras 三期主宰, recorded and transmitted to this world by Li Bai 李白, Yue Fei 岳飛, and Lü Dongbin. Some of these texts, which contain references to world events

and even to the discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus, have been collected together as the scripture *The Precious Supplications of the Assembled Ancestors in Correspondence with the Origin* 三期滙宗應元寶誥,<sup>50</sup> which is recited daily in Tiandijiao rituals today.<sup>51</sup>

Huashan towers over the Tongguan Pass 潼關 at the border between Shaanxi and Shanxi, which marked the limit between the Chinese and Japanese-controlled areas and commanded access to both Sichuan, where the government was based in Chongqing, and to the Hexi Corridor of Gansu, which led toward Soviet Central Asia. The Red Army base at Yan'an was also in the vicinity, only a few hundred kilometers to the North. The survival of China depended on holding onto Tongguan, and Li Yujie, from atop the mountain, is considered by his followers to have used his spiritual powers to keep the Japanese enemy at bay. Several army commanders in the area, including General Hu Zongnan 胡宗南 (1902–62) were Tiandejiao believers and sympathizers, and a stream of officers climbed the mountain to seek guidance and become disciples of Li, who held prayer rituals, offered predictions, and gave very specific advice on troop deployments.<sup>52</sup> Tiandijiao followers recount that during the eight years Li spent at Huashan, the Yellow River, contrary to the usual pattern, did not freeze, slowing or preventing the Japanese advance south and west and saving the country. In another story, some army commanders are said to have ascended Huashan to implore Li Yujie's help, after which a thick fog descended on an area threatened by the Japanese, allowing the Chinese forces to entrench their positions and to stop the enemy advance. These are but a few of the many incidents attributed to Li Yujie as a spiritual guardian who, from his perch atop Huashan, protected China from the invader.<sup>53</sup> Li was firmly opposed to Chiang Kai-shek's plans to cooperate with the CCP,<sup>54</sup> and even wrote to Chiang Kai-shek advising him to act quickly to crush the CCP at Yan'an before it became too deeply entrenched; but Chiang refused his counsel on the grounds of a "complex international situation."<sup>55</sup> Though in deep retreat on an isolated mountain crag, Li remained closely involved with China's military and political destiny.

Xiao Changming died at Huangshan while meditating in 1943, at the young age of forty-eight.<sup>56</sup> According to followers of both Tiandejiao and Tiandijiao, Xiao found it too difficult to save humanity, and so asked to return to the Heavens. He felt that he had taught what he knew and that the burden of saving humanity was too difficult to bear. Within days of his master's death, Li Yujie, through his son Li Weisheng, received spirit communications from the Heavenly Lord and the Unborn Holy Mother, appointing him the patriarch of a new denomination, the Heavenly Human

Teachings 天人教, to succeed the Heavenly Virtue teaching. The genealogy, structure, and basic principles of the teaching were recorded in the *Outline of the Teaching* 教綱, also composed at Huashan, which would later become the basis of the Heavenly Lord Teachings.<sup>57</sup> This outline contains a genealogy of the universe—the *Daotong yanliu* 道統衍流—which lists fifty-five generations of religious patriarchs 教主 and the essence of their respective teachings, including fifty generations of patriarchs having appeared before the creation of the Earth, and beginning on Earth at the fifty-first generation with Pangu 盤古. Li Yujie established the new denomination in Xi'an and traveled to Lanzhou where he taught a course in meditation and established one of the first branches of the new denomination.<sup>58</sup> The Heavenly Human Teachings, while maintaining the fundamental practices and eschatology of Tiandejiao, renewed and modernized its philosophy and organizational structure, answering a need for reform which was felt by some of Li's closest disciples. One of them, for instance, wrote a long memorial to Li, arguing that Tiandejiao's development had been hampered by its "White Lotus" style of feudalistic and superstitious worship, was easily confused in the public's mind with groups such as the Red Swastika Society, and needed a new organization that would be restricted to scientifically trained individuals, taking inspiration from the Christian and Muslim communities and building links with spiritualist societies in Europe and America.<sup>59</sup>

Also that year, the Cloud Dragon Sage reportedly appeared to Li Yujie, warning him that great calamities would fall on China, "changing everything," such that even the "earthly immortals" would have nowhere to hide. The Sage thus refused Li's request to join him in Kunlun, telling that he had a greater mission, that he should pray to the Lord on High 上帝 to avert the apocalypse, and take abode on the Immortals' Isle of Penglai 蓬萊仙島—but Li did not know where this island lay.

#### LI YUJIE AT THE ISLE OF IMMORTALS

Li Yujie and his family thus left Huashan and moved to Shanghai in 1946, where Weisheng studied at Daxia university and is said to have worked as a part-time reporter for the newspaper *Shenbao*. In May 1947, Li was a founding member of the Union of Chinese Religious Believers for Peaceful Nation-Building 中國宗教徒和平建國大同盟, together with the leaders of various religious communities in Shanghai, including the famous Buddhist reformer Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947),<sup>60</sup> the Abbot of Jing'an 敬安 Monastery Chi Song 持松 (1894–1979), the lay Buddhists Jiang Weiqiao

and Ding Fubao 丁福保 (1874–1952), the Daoist Heavenly Master Zhang Enpu 張恩溥 (1904–69),<sup>61</sup> the Muslim reformist educator Da Pusheng 達浦生 (1874–1965), retired general Pan Songfu 樊崧甫 (1894–1979), as well as Wang Yiting and Wang Xiaolai. The union issued a statement calling for an end to the civil war between the KMT and CCP, and for the union of all forces to rebuild the country, but to no avail.<sup>62</sup>

As the Communist takeover of Shanghai approached, Li arranged a merger between the Xi'an Red Heart Society and the underworld Hong Society 洪門,<sup>63</sup> and moved with his family to Taiwan, where he invested in a logging company. His partner swindled him, and he was forced to declare bankruptcy, but he was grateful to have thus made a foothold on the island, and decided to devote himself entirely to cultivating Dao, having realized that the Isle of Penglai referred to by the Cloud Dragon Sage was Taiwan.

With the KMT government on Taiwan in disarray and discredited following the CCP takeover of the mainland, and the population in utter confusion about the future and worried that the CCP would soon conquer the island as well, Li published two statements in 1949, based on spirit messages received by Weisheng, which predicted that the Lord on High would protect Taiwan, which would become a prosperous and free land, and the economic center of the world; and asserted that the Mandate of Heaven remained with Chiang Kai-shek, whose role would be to stabilize the island.<sup>64</sup> With the Korean war distracting CCP attention and leading to American involvement to protect the KMT regime on Taiwan, Li's predictions appeared to be vindicated.

Meanwhile, Li's fourth son, Weigong, had found employment at the newly founded *Zili wanbao* 自立晚報 newspaper. When the KMT authorities closed the newspaper for having published some articles critical of the government, Weigong asked his father to use his connections in the KMT leadership to allow its reopening. The government agreed, but on condition that Li Yujie himself become the publisher of the paper. He accepted the post in 1951, hoping that he could use the newspaper to diffuse some of his religious ideas, and also hoping that he could thus make money for his religious enterprise. But he found himself in the role of a principled defender of free speech, in a context in which, under the one-party political system, the role of supervising and criticizing the government fell on the independent press. Again using his connections in the KMT leadership, Li Yujie lobbied the authorities on behalf of the media sector, which angered the government and led to repeated attempts to close the paper on trivial grounds. In April 1953, the paper was banned for one



month for “revealing state secrets”; half a year later, it was again banned for three months for publishing—inadvertently, according to a Tiandijiao follower—a gossip story seen as disrespectful to Chiang Kai-shek. Hu Shi successfully lobbied for the reopening of the paper, but nonetheless, its daily circulation dropped from 8,000 to 3,000. The *Zili wanbao* gradually came to be known as an opposition paper, and established its position as one of Taiwan’s three main independent newspapers.<sup>65</sup> In 1958, in order to remain faithful to his principles, Li Yujie publicly proclaimed, in a front page announcement, his termination of his membership in the KMT and his independent and “nonpartisan” stance.<sup>66</sup> However, in spite of the privately owned and “independent” status of the *Zili wanbao*, the government pressured Li Yujie to resign his position as publisher by threatening to arrest his son Weisheng, then the editor-in-chief of the paper. Father and son thus left the paper in 1965. According to Li, the Cloud Dragon Sage had revealed to him in a spirit communication that his troubles in the newspaper were divine retribution for having revealed the heavenly secret when he had published his predictions on the future of Taiwan. The *Zili wanbao* folded some years later.

The careers of Li Yujie’s sons, now entering the prime of their lives, began to take off in the 1960s. Weisheng studied and taught with Jiang Weiguo 蔣緯國 (1916–97), Chiang Kai-shek’s son, at the Institute of International Strategy at Danjiang University, where he made many friends in military circles, and would become the “Master Emissary” of Tiandijiao after his father’s passing in 1994. Li Weigong 李維公 came to be acclaimed as one of Taiwan’s best film producers. Li Weiguang 李維光 moved to the United States, where he worked as a reporter for the *New York Times* under the name James Lee; later, after his retirement, he would become the publisher of the overseas Chinese newspaper *World Daily* 世界日報. The fourth son, Li Weigang 李維剛, also became the publisher of a small newspaper.

Li Yujie’s activities from the mid-1960s to the end of the 1970s are hardly mentioned in his followers’ narratives. He appears to have plunged into the world of business, with little success. He is said to have built textile factories, become chairman of the board of a small airline (Taiwan Air), and even opened a circus. In 1968, he was invited to Japan to lecture on his “New Realm” cosmology.

Another aspect of Li Yujie’s life in the first decades of his Taiwan years that is rarely mentioned in believers’ narratives is his involvement in Daoist circles. In 1951, together with Zhang Enpu and a few others, he was a founding member of the Taiwan Provincial Daoist Association 臺灣



省道教會。<sup>67</sup> In the mid-1950s, the KMT government on Taiwan attempted to organize the island's religious communities into a representative corporate body by re-forming the Chinese Federation of Religious Believers 中國宗教徒聯誼會 (which had been first established on the mainland as part of the anti-Japanese war effort in 1943), which would act as an intermediary between the state and religious communities. Li Yujie was appointed to the association's standing committee as a lay Buddhist. Christians, Buddhists, and Muslims were represented in the association, but there were no Daoists. In 1959, Li made a formal proposal to the association's general assembly, to invite Daoists to join the association. The motion was supported by the Buddhist and Muslim representatives, but was rejected by the chairman of the Assembly, Catholic Bishop Yu Bin 于斌, on the grounds that Daoism was not an international religion. Li Yujie was not invited to subsequent meetings of the association. A few years later, in 1966, in a bid to end prejudice against Daoism and to obtain recognition for their religious communities, Li and several other religious leaders established the Daoist Association of the Republic of China 中華民國道教會. Li chaired the founding assembly, which elected the Heavenly Master Zhang Enpu as General Director of the Association, which would become the sole representative Daoist organization in the eyes of the government. In a list of leading members of the association, Li Yujie is listed as a master of Kunlun Daoism and as the head of the "Elixir Cauldron Daoist Academy" 丹鼎道院, alongside several Zhengyi 正一 Daoist priests as well as the leaders of other religious denominations and redemptive societies such as Lijiao 理教, Tiandejiao, Xuanyuan Huangjiao 軒轅皇教, and Yiguandao 一貫道, listed as Zhaijiao 齋教.<sup>68</sup> Li's involvement in the association seems to have gradually diminished, until he stopped participating altogether in the 1970s.<sup>69</sup>

#### LI ESTABLISHES THE HEAVENLY LORD TEACHINGS

In April 1979, after his grandson Li Guangguang 李光光 asked him to share his spiritual experiences on Huashan, Li decided to offer a public course on "Authentic Quiet Sitting" 正宗靜坐, a method based on his attainments at Huashan.<sup>70</sup> He also reestablished the Society for the Study of Religious Philosophy, which organized his courses and began to publish his works.

In the winter of the same year, as the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and the United States appeared poised to go to war to remove the impending threat to middle Eastern oil supplies, bringing the world to the brink

of a nuclear conflict, Li led his students in intensive twenty-four-hour collective prayer sessions, imploring the Heavenly Lord to avert the possibility of nuclear war. A few months later, with the outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq, and the prospects for world peace still gloomy, Li prayed the Lord on High to establish His own religion, since he was unable, as the Patriarch of the Heavenly Human Teachings, to singlehandedly prevent World War III. In September 1980, Li's disciple Lian Guangtong 連光統, who had been trained in spirit communications, received a message from the Heavenly Lord 天帝, authorizing the reestablishment of the Heavenly Lord Teachings on Earth, and appointing Li as patriarch 教主. Feeling unworthy and unable to carry on the burden of being a patriarch, Li petitioned to the Lord that such a role could only be filled by the Lord himself—to which heavenly response was later received, accepting the request and changing Li's title to "First Master Emissary Among Humans" 駐人間首任首席使者.

The last fifteen years of Li's life were devoted to building Tiandijiao, consciously organized as an organized "religion" in the conventional sense of the word, with its own founder, genealogy, symbol, logo, flag, anthem, mission, meditation technique, daily prayers, "striving cards" 奮鬥卡 (similar to traditional ledgers of merits and demerits 功過格),<sup>71</sup> altars, ritual vestments and postures, anniversaries, ceremonies, initiation rites, places of worship, clergy, and institutions.<sup>72</sup> Tiandijiao's organization is considered to be the earthly extension of a celestial organization, which communicates with this world through a modernized system of spirit-writing.<sup>73</sup> The fundamental mission of Tiandijiao is to avert or lessen the effects of the catastrophes of the current world apocalypse, by releasing harmonons through the daily recitation of prayers by thousands of followers. For each apocalyptic incident, followers will expressly hold prayer sessions, until the number of prayers said adds up to the millions.<sup>74</sup>

Worthy of note is the group's strong preoccupation with relations between Taiwan and mainland China. During moments of high cross-strait tensions, Tiandijiao has consistently held large-scale prayer rituals to restore peace, harmony, and the unification of China. When Taiwan held its first democratic elections for the presidency, Li asked his followers to pray twenty-four hours a day for an orderly and successful election, so that the CCP could not use social chaos as a pretext to intervene on the island. Other common themes of prayers have been for world peace, for the upholding of Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People, and for the downfall of the CCP. When Lee Teng-hui 李登輝 became leader of the KMT and president of the Republic of China, Li wrote him to remind him to follow

the tradition of Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo, and not to go along the path toward independence, which would lead to mistrust and chaos. In 1993, he also wrote two open letters to CCP Chairman Deng Xiaoping, urging him to abandon communism, to allow free competition between political parties, and to advance towards China's peaceful unification.<sup>75</sup>

Li Yujie passed away on December 25, 1994. After his death, he is said to have transmitted a message through spirit-writing, revealing that he had sacrificed himself and risen to heaven to protect the safety and order of Taiwan, as Lee Teng-hui's actions in favor of independence were endangering Taiwan. Li Weisheng succeeded him as Master Emissary of the Tiandijiao, and he softened the religion's anti-CCP stance, stating that Li Yujie was as much an anticapitalist as an anticommunist, believing that China's path lay in following its traditional culture.

In 1995, Tiandijiao followers raised a large sum of money to establish a commemorative monument and stele to Li Yujie at Huashan, and a delegation of more than 200 pilgrims led by Li Weisheng went to the mountain for the official inauguration of the monument. But in the meantime, the money had been diverted by the Huashan Tourism Bureau to build an ordinary park on a part of the mountain. The inauguration ceremony was canceled at the last minute and the delegation's ascent of the mountain was closely followed by the police. But a conference on Huashan Daoism was jointly held at Xi'an the next day with the Shaanxi Daoist Association. Li Weisheng attributes the delegation's failure to the tensions with Taiwan caused by Lee Teng-hui's visit to Cornell University, which coincided with the pilgrims' trip to Huashan.

The story of Li Yujie is a fascinating account spanning the entire twentieth century and showing the dense interconnection between religion and the history, politics, and intellectual trends of modern China. A thorough interpretation of its significance must await further research on this theme; in these concluding remarks, I will merely suggest a few hypotheses concerning Tiandijiao in relation to Daoism.

The links between Li Yujie and specific Daoist practitioners, lineages, and networks in Shanghai, Xi'an, Huashan, and Taiwan, only hinted at in the accounts presented here, represent a tantalizing area for future research. The narratives of Li Yujie's spiritual journey, however, do provide us with a picture of the place of Daoism in Tiandijiao identity.

At the level of self-identification, it should be stressed that Tiandijiao does not claim to be a branch of Daoism or an attempt to reform or modernize Daoism as such; nor does it emphasize any of its elements of belief

TABLE 7.1 Liang Shufang's Genealogy of Daoist Lineages and Masters

<i>Lineage</i>	<i>Founder</i>	<i>Period</i>
Southern 南宗	Zhang Boduan 張伯端	Song
Northern 北宗	Wang Chongyang 王重陽	Jin
Central 中派	Li Daochun 李道純	Yuan
Eastern 東派	Lu Xixing 陸西星	Ming
Western 西派	Li Yuanzhi 李元植	Qing
Heavenly Lord 天帝教	Li Yujie 李玉階	Republic

or practice as specifically Daoist: Tiandijiao is understood as the original religion of the Heavenly Lord, restored to the world after millions of years; as such, though the most ancient of all teachings, it presents itself as newly reestablished in relation to the existing religions, which it both recognizes and transcends.<sup>76</sup>

At the same time, however, there is a strong Daoist subtext to the pivotal events in the narrative of Li's life: the Daoist morality books distributed on the river docks by Li in his adolescent years; the figure of the Cloud Dragon Sage and the hermits from the Kunlun Mountains, whom Li meets in person or through spirit communication; the dream of Lü Dongbin and his mysterious initiation into inner alchemy; and the preponderating place of Huashan, with its strong associations as one of China's major centers of Daoist cultivation, as the place where the fundamental teachings and practices of Tiandijiao take form. While the common narrative does not make the Daoist subtext explicit, one Tiandijiao scholar, Liang Shufang, goes further by drawing parallels between Lü Dongbin and Li Yujie, both of whom are said to have received the Tao at Huashan and then disseminated it from the mountain. He also inscribes Tiandijiao in a genealogy of Daoist lineages and masters, each of whom had an encounter with Lü Dongbin, and corresponding to Chinese dynasties and cardinal points (see table 7.1).<sup>77</sup>

Another theme, which is more explicit in all stages of the narrative, is that of nationalism, from Li's involvement in the May Fourth strikes to his purported invisible role on Huashan—with its equally strong connotations as one of the Five Imperial Marchmounts of traditional China—in the anti-Japanese war, to Tiandijiao's ardent promotion of Chinese uni-

fication. Contrary to American Daoists' deterritorialized appropriation of the tradition described by Elijah Siegler in chapter 11 of this volume, Tiandijiao's modern formulation of the Daoist tradition is strongly connected to place. But in contrast to the highly localized cults of the communal religion served by the classical and vernacular Daoist priests described by Lai and Dean in chapters 1 and 10, respectively, Huashan and Taiwan as sacred places of Tiandijiao derive their significance from their place in a broader, more abstract, and modern narrative of the nation.<sup>78</sup> By the end of the twentieth century, the concept of China itself virtually becomes a core element of Tiandijiao belief—but one that, true to the redemptive society tradition, sees a revitalized Chinese civilization as the center of a new humanistic universalism.<sup>79</sup> The conflation of patriotism and universalism, combining Tiandijiao's advocacy of Chinese unification with its mission to promote world peace, is evidenced by one follower's comment that the key to world war or peace lies in the outcome of China-Taiwan relations. In an essay on his religious mission, Li Yujie states that "'man' cannot forget his roots, the [Tiandijiao] even less so": noting that the birthplace of his teachings is Huashan, where he accomplished his first mission of protecting the passes against the Japanese, he stresses that the spirit of Huashan must be connected with the *qi* of Tiandijiao's main retreat center in the hills of central Taiwan, forming a single flow of force to accomplish the new mission of Chinese unification.<sup>80</sup>

Tiandijiao thus represents a case of the religious construction of the nation in modern China. The two themes of Dao and nation come together at each stage of the narrative, climaxing on the peaks of Huashan: it is there that Li Yujie stops the invader and saves the nation with the invisible power of Dao. He then transmits it to his spiritual descendants on Taiwan, giving them the mission of restoring the unity of the Chinese people.

## 8. Transmission and Innovation

### *The Modernization of Daoist Inner Alchemy in Postwar Taiwan*

Lee Fongmao

不分南北仙宗、敢以中心繇道脈  
待續海山奇遇、也將凡骨換神胎

No matter whether it is the Southern or Northern Immortal  
Lineage,  
Dare to grasp the Center to transmit the Daoist legacy.  
The miraculous encounter on the Immortals' Mount in the Sea  
will continue  
And mortal bodies will transform into embryos divine.

The above inscription on Patriarch Lü's portrait was composed by Chen Yingning 陳櫻寧 (1880–1969), the modern lay Daoist master of Immortals' Learning who is the subject of Xun Liu's chapter in this volume. In May 1938, Chen and several of his colleagues established the School of Immortals' Learning (Xianxue yuan 仙學院) in Shanghai, in which he placed a shrine to Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, adorned with this couplet, in the central hall in order to express his commitment to the spread of the Immortals' Learning. There Chen gave regular lectures to a gathered audience composed of practitioners of Daoist inner-chemical meditation. One of his pupils, Yuan Jiegui 袁介圭 (h. Yuanyangzi 虞陽子, 1903–79) later came to Taiwan, and actively promoted the Immortals' Learning at the Taipei Immortals' Learning Center (Taibei xianxue zhongxin 台北仙學中心) from the early 1950s on. Of his accomplished disciples, all recalled Chen's verse on the miraculous encounter on the Immortals' Mount in the Sea (Haishan qiyu 海山奇遇). In his inscription to Chen Yingning's portrait, Master Xi Jiangyue 西江月, a disciple in Taiwan, wrote, "We are committed to continuing the miraculous encounter on the Mount in the Sea, and will perpetuate the warm fragrance for a thousand years." Later, Zhongding zi 中定子, a fellow practitioner and disciple of Yuan Jiegui, composed an inscription to his master's portrait that reads: "At the junction of the Southern

and the Northern lineages, the Three Origins commingle. On the Mount in the Sea, Patriarch Lü Dongbin's Secluded Immortal lineage continues. With predestined affinity, he transmits over the Feng Ying Sea." Despite the lapse of time between these verses, they echoed each other. Did Chen Yingning foresee that his Immortals' Learning would spread eastward to Taiwan when he made his inscription in 1938? Only Yuan Jiegui, Chen's disciple and a successful self-cultivation practitioner, could have known.

Yuan asserted that he was the one who was responsible for transmitting the teachings of Patriarch Lü to Taiwan. As if to substantiate his claim, he used the Patriarch Lü couplet quoted at the beginning of this chapter to initiate all his disciples. All his pupils were interested in finding the underlying meaning of the special encounter on the Mount in the Sea. They believed that the transmission of the School of Eremitic Immortals (Yinxian pai 隱仙派) to Taiwan corresponded well to the image of the Mount in the Sea (Haishan 海山) and the saying "transmitting over the Feng Ying Sea" (*Pengying chuangong* 蓬瀛傳功). In many ways, these claims illustrate how the lay-centered self-cultivation schools developed in Taiwan—an almost legendary story, which truly reflected the great changes within modern Daoism in the past decades in China and Taiwan.

While Daoism and Chen's Immortals' Learning suffered a disastrous setback on the mainland after 1949, its roots and branches were well preserved with the migration of the Republic of China, along with Daoist masters and adepts of various lineages, to Taiwan. Even under martial law in postwar Taiwan, these Daoist migrants on the island continued to maintain their self-cultivation tradition in spite of many hardships. After martial law was lifted in 1987, a bright new page opened in the history of Immortals' Learning, also called the "Way of the Elixir Cauldron" (*danding dao* 丹鼎道) by adepts in Taiwan.

But how did the transmission of Immortals' Learning to Taiwan occur? What transformations can we trace in the process? How did the various groups adapt to a rapidly changing modern society? In this chapter, I will use primarily ethnographic notes and available lineage publications to study and compare the evolution of five *neidan* 內丹 self-cultivation networks or groups: the Eremitic Immortal School, the Yellow Dragon Elixir Academy (Huanglong danyuan 黃龍丹院), the Western School of the Mysterious Gate (Xuanmen xipai 玄門西派), the Kunlun Immortal School (Kunlun xianzong 崑崙仙宗), and the Heavenly Lord Teachings (Tiandijiao 天帝教). I will compare the different groups in terms of their cultivation methods, their genealogical transmission, and how they formed into public, modern-style organizations within the institutional structure of the

nation-state, their varying levels at which they integrated science to explicate the mysteries of traditional *neidan*, and their adaptation of lay forms of practice in an increasingly commercialized and secularized society in post-martial law Taiwan and post-revolutionary mainland China. By tracing their respective histories of transmission and innovation, I hope to illustrate how these groups assumed the burden of preserving the tradition of Daoist self-cultivation, and how they each combined the strengths of both the Southern and Northern schools of inner alchemy to open a new page in the history of Daoism in modern Taiwan.

#### INNER ALCHEMY SCHOOLS UNDER MARTIAL LAW

If we look at contemporary alchemical Daoism in Taiwan through the lens of history, there appeared a remarkable moment when both external and internal factors combined to bring about a breakthrough. In reviewing the history of the development of the skills of nourishing life (*yangsheng gongfa* 養生功法) in Daoist history, we may consider that the first major wave of religious breakthrough came during the Wei-Jin (265–420) and the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589), when self-cultivation practice focused on “Form and Spirit” (*xingshen* 形神) in the body. The dual cultivation of mind and body (*xingming shuangxiu* 性命雙修), which gave concrete form to inner alchemy, gave rise to the Southern and the Northern Immortals’ Schools (Nan Bei xianzong 南北仙宗). The next major wave came during the Jin and Yuan dynasties (1123–1368), when several new schools of self-cultivation practice arose. While interacting with the newly imported Buddhist meditation skills, the Daoist inner alchemy practice and thinking of the Wei-Jin era gradually became systematic. During the Northern Song, it was the Linji 臨濟 school of Chan Buddhism of northern China that came to stimulate and inform Wang Chongyang 王重陽, leading to new innovations in both the practice of mind (*xingong* 性功) and body (*mingong* 命功) in his Complete Perfection (*Quanzhen* 全真) cultivation. The Southern Immortals’ School (*nanzong* 南宗) also occurred at the end of the Northern Song and made notable achievements in self-cultivation practice.

The third wave in Daoist self-cultivation began in the early twentieth century with Chen Yingning and has continued up to the present. The current wave had to confront external factors such as nationalism, social and gender revolutions, and especially science and technology, as well as other forces of modernity. Under these new and evolving challenges and difficulties, various schools of Daoist self-cultivation on both sides of the



Taiwan Straits have found themselves under great pressure to transform and modernize.

The development of Daoist self-cultivation in Taiwan in the immediate postwar years from 1947 to 1949 can be seen as a clear rupture. Within a short period of four to five years, noted adepts of inner alchemy such as Yuan Jiegui came to Taiwan after the fall of the mainland to the Communists, and took it upon themselves to transmit self-cultivation skills to their followers in Taiwan, thus establishing the foundation of inner alchemy there. However, under the Kuomintang 國民黨 (KMT) martial law regime, free assembly and social organizations faced severe restrictions. How could the Daoist self-cultivation groups achieve legality? Though the situation in Taiwan was not as severe as on the mainland, especially during the Cultural Revolution, teaching and practicing Daoist self-cultivation stills posed risk to the practitioners. The KMT relied on the outdated "Temple Management Ordinance" (*simiao guanli tiaoli* 寺廟管理條例) promulgated in the early Republican years to deal with religious practices, and recognized only those state-sanctioned and controlled "popular" religious organizations such as the "Daoist Association" founded by Zhang Enpu 張恩溥 (1904–69), the sixty-third Heavenly Master, and Zhao Jiazhao 趙家焯 (d. 1982).<sup>1</sup> Apart from the altars of the Zhengyi 正一 order and popular temples, the association also admitted as members some self-cultivation groups led by successful teachers. But the legal social space wherein Daoist self-cultivation groups could function remained rather limited under martial law.

To improve the situation, Zhao Jiazhao, a member of the Legislative Yuan and an avid practitioner of inner alchemy, actively recruited talented adepts and leading lay practitioners to the Daoist cause. One such lay practitioner was Li Yujie (1901–94), who was active as a senior leader within in the redemptive society known as the Heavenly Virtue Teachings (Tiande shengjiao 天德聖教), discussed by David Palmer in chapter 7 in this volume. Li later left Zhao's group to set up his movement known as the Heavenly Lord Teachings in 1979.<sup>2</sup> Another was Xiao Tianshi 蕭天石 (1928–86), a Taiwan University professor and a prolific editor and publisher. Xiao edited books on inner alchemy which were highly influential among the practitioners in Taiwan.<sup>3</sup> Jinfeng shanren 金鳳山人 ("The Golden Phoenix Mount Adept") was a close associate of Zhao's group. One of his disciples, Lai Jing 來靜, enjoyed Zhao Jiazhao's support and remained an influential lay practitioner who belonged to the Longmen lineage of the Quanzhen order. He successfully registered the Yellow Dragon Elixir Academy as a legal organization in Taipei.<sup>4</sup> As for the Great Western River

School (Dajiang xipai 大江西派), also called the Western School (Xipai 西派), it was first transmitted by Wu Juncui 吳君礪 to Ma Bingwen 馬炳文 and his brother. The Ma brothers held small gatherings in the Taipei region and developed a close relationship with the Daoist Association. Their close ties earned them appointments as lecturers in the newly established Daoist Academy where they taught courses on inner alchemy and meditation techniques. These three cases show us how early Daoist self-cultivation leaders and adepts sought to develop direct or indirect relationships with the state-controlled Daoist Association and secure legally recognized means to teach and transmit their traditions. They also show how the Daoist Association was able to enlist these lay adepts and talents for the promotion of Daoism. Their joint efforts enabled inner-chemical self-cultivation to acquire equal standing as a mainstream Daoist tradition alongside the Zhengyi liturgical lineages. Later, some new lay-dominated Daoist groups, aiming to attain legal status, also actively cultivated ties with the Daoist Association through the registration process, which was recognized by the Nationalist state's Department of Interior Affairs.

By contrast, some independent groups of Daoist self-cultivation encountered obstacles in their efforts to propagate and expand in Taiwan. Yuan Jiegui and several of his disciples such as Xu Jinzhong 許進忠, Zhongding zi, and Xi Jianguye saw themselves as the inheritors and transmitters of Chen Yingning's Immortals' Learning school of inner alchemy. In keeping with Chen's independent spirit and his emphasis on science, they did not see themselves as part of the Daoist religion. So they did not seek direct contacts with the Daoist Association. Their Immortal' Studies Center (Xianxue zhongxin 仙學中心) was initially not officially registered. But when Chen Yingning was appointed by the PRC government to organize and preside over the China Daoist Association in 1957, the Nationalist government in Taiwan felt compelled to respond in kind by establishing its own "national" Daoist association. As a follower of Chen from the mainland, Yuan found himself in an extremely difficult situation because he was suspected of loyalty to Chen, his old master who was leading the CCP-controlled association on mainland China. Yuan was even arrested and tortured by the police, leading to his death allegedly due to stroke in 1979.<sup>5</sup> Even today, his followers who claim affiliation to the Eremic Immortal lineage continue to refuse registration with the state-sanctioned Daoist Association. However, their "Center of Immortals' Studies" (Xianxue yanjiu zhongxin 仙學研究中心) later followed the trend of opening up, and was incorporated as an association to continue its activities in post-martial law Taiwan.

The problem of legalization was also faced by two other Daoist self-cultivation groups known as the Kunlun Immortal School and the Heavenly Lord Teachings. Liu Peizhong 劉培中 (1883–1975) of the Kunlun school founded the Society for Research on Chinese Social Behavior (Zhongguo shehui xingwei yanjiu she 中國社會行為研究社) in 1963. Several influential people suggested the institutional name in order to avoid close police scrutiny and tight restrictions on its gatherings. Internally, the group was called Kunlun by its members, many of whom came from the upper classes with their influence spreading throughout Taiwan. This shows that in order for the Kunlun self-cultivation groups to hold their popular gatherings, they had to operate under an anodyne and legal-sounding name.

By contrast, the Heavenly Lord Teachings under Li Yujie's leadership chose to register as one of the few religious organizations (*zongjiao tuanti* 宗教團體) under martial law in Taiwan. Before establishing his new religion, which also stressed inner-alchemical self-cultivation, Li Yujie had already begun to publicly transmit the Authentic Quiet Sitting practice (*Zhengzong jingzuo* 正宗靜坐) and had left the Daoist Association as well as the Heavenly Virtue Teachings.<sup>6</sup> After legalization in 1987, his group primarily taught sitting meditation and *qigong* therapy. Li's new religion stressed, in particular, an integration of scientific content in its teaching and the practice of quiet sitting meditation.

These cases show that in the context of postwar Taiwan, the early Daoist self-cultivation groups were all confronted with the difficult problem of how to break free of the Nationalist state's political control. Indeed, the modern Nationalist state inherited the Qing imperial state's will to total power and saw religious gatherings as a threat and severely restricted the organized practice and transmission of Daoist self-cultivation. Nonetheless, powerful individuals and institutions such as the Daoist Association closely affiliated with the state could still provide space for lay individuals and groups to transmit Daoism. Even though Yuan Jiegui was given unjust treatment, it did not bring adverse effects to the development of his Immortals' Studies Center. This period thus represented a key stage in the history of Taiwanese Daoism.

#### FORMS OF LAY-CENTERED TRANSMISSION

In contrast to the more familiar Zhengyi and Quanzhen orders, and other schools and lineages of Daoism,<sup>7</sup> many lay self-cultivators and groups often tended not to identify themselves as "Daoists" in the sense of a tra-

ditional organized religion. Instead, they were more inclined to trace their identity and roots to what they call “Immortals’ Learning” (*xianxue* 仙學, *xianzong* 仙宗), as illustrated by Xun Liu’s study of Chen Yingning in chapter 6 of this volume. Or they would adopt the forms of a new religious movement by taking on a new name. Why do such differences appear? Primarily because “religion” has until recent times been regarded as something backward. During the time of the May Fourth movement, the progressive intellectual elite saw Daoism as an old religion, even a superstition, to be cast out of the new era. As a result, the generation living in and after the May Fourth period tried to reformulate inner alchemy in new terms, such as Chen Yingning’s “Immortal’s Learning” and Li Yujie’s “New Realm” 新境界, both of which aimed to separate alchemical self-cultivation techniques such as meditation out from Daoist liturgy and magical skills and beliefs. This is the reason why many early Daoist self-cultivation groups in Taiwan under the martial law chose not to be regarded as part of the Daoist religion when they first began their operations in Taiwan.

In contrast to such radical ruptures, one master, Jinfeng Shanren, clearly identified himself as belonging to the Quanzhen tradition. But in the Taiwanese religious culture dominated by the Fujian and Cantonese Zhengyi liturgies and village temples, it was not easy for him to set up a Quanzhen temple to transmit the Quanzhen tradition. So Quanzhen self-cultivation had to be taught among laypeople, and its celibate monasticism abandoned. Since there was no Quanzhen institution of public (*shifang conglin* 十方叢林) monasteries in Taiwan, many adopted the so-called predestined affinities, transmissions to lay practitioners. Instead of building temples or shrines, they set up “elixir academies” (*danyuan* 丹院) in the cities. Master Jinfeng Shanren’s disciple, Baihe Shanren 白鶴山人, together with other disciples such as Lai Jing, established the Yellow Dragon Elixir Academy. But later generations of followers claimed affiliation with the “Daoist school” (*Daojia* 道家) rather than “Daoist religion” (*Daojiao* 道教) or “Immortals’ School” (*Xianzong* 仙宗). This situation was more or less the same for the Western School, which had already followed lay transmission since the Ming and Qing dynasties. At that time, though Jin’gaishan 金蓋山 claimed affiliation to the Longmen lineage, it had adapted to the social environment of Jiangnan and taught cultivation skills to lay Daoist adepts. However, generation names were still used to differentiate the order in which adepts were initially enrolled in the lineage.<sup>8</sup>

Through the names they used and the practices they followed, we can

see that these self-cultivation groups had a common tendency, be it conscious or not, of distancing themselves from traditional religious Daoism. Yet in many ways they continued to follow or imitate the institutions and practices of the traditional Daoist religion. As shown above, the tradition of keeping pedigrees through lineage or generation poems continued among most of these early groups in Taiwan. The generational poem (*paishi* 派詩) used by the Longmen Yellow Gate Court was “Yi Yang Lai Fu Ben 一陽來復本.” Jinfeng Shanren belonged to the Yang generation, and was followed by the Lai generation of lay cultivators. Followers after Baihe Shanren and Lai Jing, no matter when they joined the sect, were all regarded as belonging to the Fu generation. As for their use of the name “Shanren” 山人 (Man of the Mountains), it aimed to express the notion that even though they lived in cities of dust, their hearts resided in the mountains of the Immortals. This precisely expressed the lay practitioner’s desire to cultivate the skills of mountain grottos while living at home, and to follow a monastic spiritual path while living a lay family life. In the Jiangnan region, the Longmen scripture *Jingai xindeng* demonstrated this kind of cultivation, which was continued in Taiwan. Indeed, Chen Yingning, whose Quanzhen Longmen lineage name was “Yuandun zi 圓頓子,” knew very well the difference between self-cultivating at home and in celibate monasteries. Even though he studied under two masters from the Northern School (*Beizong* 北宗), Chen also integrated the skills of the Southern School (*Nanzong* 南宗) and the Eremic Immortal School in his practice.<sup>9</sup>

The influence of modern social and cultural conditions can also be seen in the Kunlun Immortal School’s development into an association, and in the development of the Heavenly Lord Teachings into a new religious movement. Before coming to Taiwan, Liu Peizhong and Li Yujie had advocated lay cultivation among their followers, and devoted themselves to charitable and patriotic works. But the new political and social conditions in Taiwan led them to establish social associations. Under the KMT regime (1949–87), Buddhists had gradually evolved a style of “humanistic Buddhism” (*renjian fojiao* 人間佛教). While Buddhist monastic cultivation continued, Buddhist monasteries also promoted lay practice by creating what they termed a “Pure Land among the people” (*renjian jingtu* 人間淨土). Similarly, the inner-chemical tradition also came to stress the notion of “Immortality within this world” (*renjian xianzong* 人間仙宗), which meant the pursuit of self-cultivation for transcendence and immortality while staying engaged with the present world. These two relatively large Daoist organizations under Liu and Li showed that the tra-

ditional lay Daoist practice of Immortals' Learning did exist in Taiwanese society, in competition with the lay-centered Buddhist pursuit of spiritual cultivation. Regardless of whether it was in the form of an association, as in the Kunlun Immortal School, or a registered new "religion," as in the Heavenly Lord Teachings, the ways used to reach the people were Daoist self-cultivation techniques and skills (*daogong* 道功) such as quiet sitting meditation (*jingzuo* 靜坐). These skills helped draw people to pursue the cultivation of "essential matter" (*jing* 精), "vital energy" (*qi* 氣), and "spirit" (*shen* 神)—all of which are fundamental elements of Chinese inner alchemy. Such organized pursuit of self-cultivation not only transformed the Daoist notion of salvation, but it also developed the power of collective organizations based on religious miracles.

But how were these two large Daoist groups able to propagate their salvific message during the period of martial law? Leaving the mainland and moving to Taiwan in 1949, many immigrants and refugees to Taiwan shared a strong sense of fleeing from an epochal crisis, and a feeling of sharing a common fate, interpreting the Communist revolution and persecution on the mainland in the apocalyptic terms of *jie* 劫. Although the word *jie* was originally used to translate the time unit "kalpa" as used in early Buddhist scriptures, its meaning of the "end of the Dharma" (*mofa* 末法) was transformed under Daoist influence, and new terms appeared such as "apocalyptic astrological configurations" (*jieshu* 劫數), "apocalyptic celestial movements" (*jieyun* 劫運), "apocalyptic calamities" (*jienan* 劫難), and "apocalyptic era" (*mojie* 末劫). These terms not only expressed notions of time cycles but also reinforced the idea that the universe would undergo a disaster. These words in Daoist scripture expressed an apocalyptic imaginary (*moshi qishi* 末世啟示) at the end of the world. They were always used to explain the reasons for the onset of apocalypse, and to express the longing for the arrival of a True Lord who would save the world. In practice, the action of salvation would involve the organized gathering of people.<sup>10</sup> These groups could be seen as either rebellions (*fanluan* 反亂) or revolutions (*geming* 革命). The former was usually associated with underground popular movements, while the latter was typically co-opted and used to support the establishment of a new dynasty.<sup>11</sup> Since the idea of ushering in and saving people from the apocalypse presented a fundamental threat, the rulers were deeply terrorized by such thinking and behavior. After its defeat on the mainland in 1949, the KMT learned its lesson and began to sponsor and support different projects for rescuing the nation from the Communist calamity. Therefore, based on their shared experience of defeat, all cooperated in stigmatizing the

Communists as “bandits” with great apocalyptic force. It was the search for paths of national salvation in this post-1949 moral-political-religious apocalyptic context that gave these two lay Daoist groups the legitimacy to thrive under the martial law regime.

The Kunlun School leader Liu Peizhong’s penchant for making political predictions seemed to have been an outgrowth of his early career as a weather forecasting officer. His prediction of a nuclear apocalypse reflected his worries about the nuclear arms race between the United States and the USSR, and his attempt to influence people all over the world to be concerned with the crisis and to inspire religionists to save the world. The most obvious implication was “to defeat the Communist bandits.” But did his predictions become a political myth for his followers? In terms of concrete actions, Liu built the “Cosmic Tower” (Yuzhouta 宇宙塔) on the second floor of the Kunlun Court (Kunlun yuan 崑崙苑). The tower reached the fourth floor and was used for worshipping the three ancestors of the Kunlun school: Hongjun Laozu 鴻鈞老祖, Daozu 道祖, and Jianzu 劍祖. So the tower was the symbol of the gathering of the spirits of all the disciples. Liu acclaimed that the aim of the tower was to “eliminate the harm of the apocalypse.” Liu and his sect’s religious practice would enjoy the approval of the KMT state and its leaders, from Chiang Kai-shek to his son Chiang Ching-kuo, because Liu had predicted that in the propitious Yi Mao 乙卯 year (1975) “the just army will return to the Central Plain”!<sup>12</sup> Clearly such religious predictions appealed to the Chiangs and the Nationalist state’s desire for a successful recapture of the mainland from the Communist regime. As a result, although the Kunlun Immortal School had followers all over Taiwan, not a single one was ever persecuted by the Nationalist government.

A similar case of successful transmission was Li Yujie and his Heavenly Lord Teachings, presented in the previous chapter by Palmer. While still on the mainland, Li had become involved in the Heavenly Virtues Teachings. During the war with Japan, Li lived as a hermit on Huashan, where he developed close ties with Quanzhen Daoists and allegedly read celestial signs to predict the movements of the Japanese troops and ultimately their defeat. Shortly before 1949 he ran a business with the name “Restoring China” (Fuhua 復華). After 1949 he moved to Taiwan, where he remained passionate about his apocalyptic vision and edited the *Zili Evening News* to promote his religious beliefs. Li later left the Heavenly Virtues group and founded a new movement in 1979, which he named the “Heavenly Lord Teachings” whereby he claimed a heavenly mandate to save the world.<sup>13</sup> Thanks to his carefully cultivated ties with powerful KMT offi-



cials, his Heavenly Lord movement was able to secure official registration. Within the group, Li identified himself the “First Chief Emissary” (*shouwei shouxi shizhe* 首位首席使者), a mediator between heaven and humanity, entrusted with the mission of spreading the Heavenly Lord’s message of “averting the kalpa” (*xingjie* 行劫). His mission was to lead his followers as “fellow strivers” (*tongfen* 同奮) in a common struggle to rescue the world once the apocalypse arrived.<sup>14</sup> Though the Heavenly Lord movement presented itself as a new teaching, it still transmitted the beliefs of traditional Daoism: (1) the scriptures they chanted were the products of spirit-writing, and were seen as having the sacred and mysterious quality of “Heavenly Books” (*tianshu* 天書); (2) those who completed the meditation training would be conferred a Daoist name and a mudra during an initiation ceremony at the altar; (3) the belief in the “Three Officers”—The Heavenly Officer (*tiancao* 天曹), the Earth Officer (*dicao* 地曹), and the Human Officer (*rencao* 人曹). They particularly revered the Heavenly Officer and regarded the Lei Li Ah Ritual Space 鐺力阿道場, located in Central Taiwan, as the center for receiving messages from Heaven. Li and his followers actively preached and spread their message about the need for “salvation from the kalpa” throughout Taiwan. Their missions even reached Japan and the United States. The denomination’s well-developed organization was a successful example of a new religious movement, which used meditation to attract followers and preached the salvation of the world from the imminent kalpa as its ideological core. Yet despite their religious fervor and activism, Li and his followers took extreme care to never transgress the Nationalist state ideology and goal of “Uniting China under the Three Principles of the People.”

These various types of Daoist transmission among the five groups achieved varying levels of success in terms of their organizational development, but they were all invariably concerned where the “modernization” of their respective organizations helped to provide a common spiritual goal and solve the problem of social isolation. If we look more closely, we will discover that each group had its own image and identity, which determined the direction of its development. What the Eremitic Immortal School and the Western School focused on was “urban seclusion,” cultivating freely in the city or returning to the countryside. This type of spiritual cultivation was seen as capable of curing the ills of modern living. With improving economic conditions in Taiwan, it was not only possible to meet one’s basic needs, but also to focus on “cultivation at home” to enhance one’s spiritual life. Similarly, the lay practitioners of the Daoist Longmen lineage did not proselytize about their religious ethics. Rather, they stuck to the standard



of self-cultivation in their daily life at home. These groups maintained an appropriate distance from politics and commercialization and remained content with a loose and spontaneous organizational form. This was the secret of the small-scale but steady success of survival for these groups. Conversely, the large-scale expansion of the Kunlun Immortal School and the Heavenly Lord Teachings was much related to their founders' personal vision and goal of rescuing the people from the kalpa's calamities. Their visions and ideals motivated generations of their followers to expand and proselytize the new religious movements. From the sayings of Liu Peizhong and Li Yujie, we can see that besides practicing collective meditation, followers spent most of their time propagating the "worldly way" (*shidao* 世道), that is, a way of life for Taiwan, China, and other parts of the world. Followers believed that chanting and cultivating together could strengthen their salvific power. Therefore, the symbolism of the Cosmic Tower and the Lei Li Ah Ritual Space became a common goal for striving practitioners. This "church"-style organization exemplified the modernity of these groups; the success of their propagation and collective cultivation had a certain influence on the *qigong* groups that appeared later, demonstrating that in post-martial law Taiwan, collective cultivation organizations could exist and flourish.

After the war, when the Republic of China controlled only the islands of Taiwan, Jinmen, and Mazu, the external environment had a severe impact on teachers of Daoist self-cultivation. Communist control over the Chinese mainland and the Cold War standoff between the United States and the USSR inspired spiritually sensitive cultivators to choose their own ways to prevent worldwide calamity. Like the desire to proselytize and transmit the Way embodied in the Haishan Encounter, the adepts of inner alchemy in postwar Taiwan hoped that the transmission of Daoism would transcend the politics of their times.

Their strong faith in transmission constituted the essence of religion itself, and it expresses the indigenous millenarianism within Chinese religion. Regardless of whether the transmission was violently repressed or accommodated by state power, it showed the religious intuition and spirit of the Daoist adepts. The leading Daoist adepts in Taiwan in the early decades after 1949 took on themselves the responsibility for the lives of the masses of Chinese, putting their own lives at risk. Under the pervasive political oppression and violence during the martial-law period, how could they reduce the feeling of insecurity of those in power, and prevent them from exterminating the religious?<sup>15</sup> Their collective strategy of flexibility and accommodation derived from experience and wisdom proved to be the

key to their survival and success. As they faced the modern state system, the self-cultivation groups chose to employ either modern forms of organization in order to openly teach their skills, or to adopt low-key methods of spontaneous transmission to continue their transmission of the Way among their committed followers.

#### FORMS OF PRACTICE

Once inner alchemy arrived in Taiwan, just like culinary culture, it changed its style to fit local realities and evolved a new form of practice that integrated elements of both the Southern and Northern Daoist schools. After inner alchemy came to Taiwan after 1949, its adepts sought to adjust and adapt its practice to the existing local culture and the modern realities there. But at the same time, such accommodation had its limits. The cultivation groups insisted on retaining their own styles in order to preserve their respective identities. It was only more recently, through the rise of new religious phenomena, that the fusion of both the Northern and the Southern styles of cultivation took place. As in the early periods of the history of inner alchemy, the coexistence of many different practice traditions in such a short period of time occurred only in situations and times of political instability and chaos. Only through the determination of the Daoist transmitters to preserve the uniqueness of their cultivation methods could their groups acquire notoriety. Practically speaking, the purity of a method is often regarded as the secret of their cultivation practice, so that one cannot shift from one lineage to another at will.

There is an old saying among the masters of Daoist cultivation: "There are thousands of cultivation methods, but they all share the same root." Such an axiom can be understood at several different levels. First, all the cultivation methods shared the same cultural foundation. For example, a cosmology of *qi* transformations and of the correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm; the principles of psycho-physiological practice are based on a view of the body as made up of essential matter, *qi* and spirit; and on the connections between form and spirit (*xing yu shen* 形與神) and between mind and body (*xing yu ming* 性與命). The key was that all cultivating processes were based on the same notion of "transforming essential matter into *qi* [*lian jing hua qi* 煉精化氣], *qi* into spirit [*lian qi hua shen* 煉氣化神], and spirit back into the Void [*lian shen huan xu* 煉神還虛]." While they were deeply rooted in the early Chinese medical and immortality traditions, Daoist adepts of inner alchemy were later inspired by Buddhism, especially Chan meditation practice (*chanzuo* 禪

坐). However, they retained their strong focus on the body and on body-centered practice rather than on the purely spiritual cultivation of those who stressed spiritual nature and morality. Because of this shared worldview and psychosomatic medical experience, the Elixir Cauldron tradition developed its own Daoist self-cultivation skills. Each school and lineage of the tradition relied on its respective unique mysteries and skills to build its own religious charisma, further enhancing the different practices and styles among their followers.

In the transmission of Daoist self-cultivation in post-1949 Taiwan, charismatic masters were the key to success, and they shared some common characteristics.<sup>16</sup> First, the methods of cultivation transmitted within the group were seen as authoritative. The larger the group, the more prestigious its transmitter was. The reason that their transmitted methods were strongly believed in within the group is related to the secret nature of inner-chemical transmission. All of these groups published some books on Daoist inner alchemy. Some were written by their ancestral masters, while others were written by themselves with the purpose of expressing their respect for their long-adored founders. For example, the "Immortalist Studies" group read Huang Yuanji's 黃元吉 "The Written Records of Lectures in the Hall of Blissful Learning" (*Leyutang yulu* 樂育堂語錄) and Chen Yingning's "Twenty-Four Elixir Formulae for the Most Supreme Integrated Cultivation of Mind and Body" (*Zuishang yi cheng xingming shuangxiu ershi shou danjue chuanshu* 最上一乘性命雙修二十四首丹訣串述). However, these are only regarded as public reading materials, while much of the practice still depends on oral instruction by the adept. This is typical in the case of transmission among small circles of disciples.<sup>17</sup> Even for the more widely disseminated methods like the "Authentic Quiet Sitting" (*zhengzong jingzuo*) of the Heavenly Lord Teachings, there are some components that can only be imparted orally and in secret at the Bright Altar. It is stipulated that no taking of notes is allowed.<sup>18</sup> There are many reasons for the secret transmission of oral formulas, especially in the case of Immortals' Learning, and that of the yin-yang dual cultivation method (*yinyang shuangxiu fa* 陰陽雙修法) of the Great Western River School of inner alchemy. Both are extremely careful in selecting disciples to teach and transmit to. As the transmitting masters must have a certain level of achievement, their secret transmission often generates a mysterious air among their followers. But the key is that the transmitted oral secrets are regarded as the sole property of each group, and not to be appropriated by others. This is also the reason why historically, books on inner alchemy typically explain some general principles but seldom

clearly describe the underlying secret techniques. From the perspective of the transmission of trade secrets, all professions stress the importance of personal oral instruction. The transmission of Daoist alchemical secrets among the groups is the same.

The techniques taught by the masters of the five Daoist groups each have their own secret formulas for the transformation of *jing*, *qi* and *shen*, which are crucial for bringing the novice practitioner to a higher state. At the level of practice, the Alchemical Daoist adepts employed the terminology of external alchemy to describe metaphorically the “medicine” produced through the refinement of bodily energies and the vital breath. The reason for this is not merely because external alchemy historically preceded internal alchemy, but because the metaphors of the Elixir Cauldron are transferable. The goal is to refine the essence and the vital breath into the new regenerative vitalities known as the “elixir” (*dan* 丹). From the early medicinal sprout to the perfected elixir in the body, the internal alchemist ingeniously draws on the refining and transformative processes of external alchemy in achieving his or her goal. For example, what procedures to follow, how to regulate the time and heat of the firing in the furnace? In practice, an experienced master is required to provide the appropriate initiations and guidance by observing the actual conditions of the student. In the case of inner alchemy, the “workshop” where the refining processes and methods are applied inside the various parts of the practitioner’s body is often figuratively referred to as the cauldron or furnace (*dinglu* 鼎爐). The purpose is to “reverse” (*nifan* 逆反) the flow of essential *qi*, which, when following its normal course, generates the human being but when reversed can be refined into an extraordinary generative energy known as the “elixir.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, each school of inner alchemy has acquired its own experience. For example, the Quanzhen order originally stressed the renunciation of family to practice solo pure cultivation by using one’s own *jing*, *qi*, and *shen* as the substance for yin-yang refinement. But married lay disciples of the Quanzhen Longmen lineage adjusted the traditional Longmen monastic practice to their social realities of living and practicing at home. In the Great Western River school, in adapting to a married and lay following, they began to downplay their traditional dual sexual cultivation technique and stressed instead on the solo Tranquil Cultivation Skills (*qingjing xiufa* 清靜修法). The Kunlun Immortal School and the Heavenly Lord Teachings, owing to their emphasis on mass transmission, now advocated the idea of “continence” instead of “chastity”—adopting an approach that accommodated the demand of the practitioner’s social reproduction and marriage first, and stressed the pursuit of “revers-

ing" the natural course only later in the practitioner's life, in order to meet the goal of public salvation and needs of mass practitioners.

The traditional phrase "Reversion leads to immortality" (*ni ze chengxian* 逆則成仙) encapsulates the life orientation of the Way of the Immortals (*xiandao* 仙道). The rich meanings behind this phrase can be interpreted in many ways. While each school held to its own understanding, all aspired to "attaining immortality" (*chengxian* 成仙) as their common goal. Just as Confucianism and Buddhism each regard "becoming a sage" (*chengsheng* 成聖) and "becoming a Buddha" (*chengfo* 成佛) as their ultimate ideal, they do not have to doubt each other about the methods leading to the goal. The reason the inner alchemy tradition also called itself "Immortals' Studies" is that it developed a path of "reversion" of the natural course of life; the difference between practitioners mainly lies in whether they have renounced their family or not, so that they have different approaches to the integrated cultivation of mind and body (*xingming shuangxiu* 性命雙修)—whether to cultivate mind before body, or vice versa. The cultivation of mind bases itself on the philosophies of Laozi and Zhuangzi and absorbs the teachings of Buddhism about the nature of mind; it cannot be criticized for an exclusive reliance on the outward performance of technical skills. But in the work of the body, all schools of inner alchemy believe in the principle of "Reversion leads to immortality." How can the reversion of the vital essence become the foundation of cultivating immortality? The answer needs to be sought in the context of the practitioner's religious commitment: to remain single or marry?<sup>20</sup> The methods of the Daoist Northern School, also known as Quanzhen Daoism, are designed for monks and nuns who have renounced their families, as discussed in Herrou's chapter in this volume. But these traditional and monastically based skills must be adjusted to suit disciples living a secular life in modern society, such as those of the Yellow Dragon Elixir Institute. For the "Immortals' Learning" of the Southern School such as the Great Western River School, their methods need to be adjusted as a function of "wealth," "companions," and "land,"<sup>21</sup> so that practitioners can choose between "dual cultivation between husband and wife" (*fuqi shuangxiu* 夫妻雙修) and the "complementary cultivation and replenishment between man and woman" (*nannü caibu* 男女採補) on the one hand, and the "cultivation of yin and yang energies within one's self" (*zija wei yinyang* 自家為陰陽) on the other. To reach the goals of widespread transmission, the Kunlun Immortal School and the Heavenly Lord Teachings need to institutionally encourage husbands and wives to join the group, and cultivate together in order to satisfy their natural instincts.

Going against the natural biology of begetting to continue the family line in a Confucian society raises a key ethical issue to which the inner alchemy practitioners attach great importance. From a comparative religious perspective, their insistence on the refinement of *jing* and *qi* on the basis of spiritual cultivation truly manifests the unique character of Daoist inner alchemy. Through the long-term process of practice and accumulation, each of the schools has generated its own system of metaphors and symbols to embody their respective special skills and techniques. For instance, the Quanzhen order had to contend with the natural human sexual desire of its practitioners. Their frequently employed self-cultivation method to control and sublimate sexual energies is known as “Five Dragons Cupping the Sage,” which alludes to the self-massaging technique of using the five fingers to hold the testes and pressing on acupressure points such as the *yinqiao* 陰蹻 point and the *huiyin* 會陰 point, while simultaneously conducting the regulated inhaling known as ascending the yang fire (*jin yanghuo* 進陽火) and the exhaling known as descending the yin fire (*tui yinfu* 退陰符). The goal is to gain control of the rhythm of inhaling and exhaling and to effectively transform and refine the *jing* and the *qi* into the “shoots of the Elixir” (*danyao zhi miao* 丹藥之苗). At the same time, such practice also helps Daoist renunciates and other solo practitioners to avoid the mistake of using spiritual cultivation alone to either sublimate or suppress natural sexual desire.<sup>22</sup>

In contrast, practitioners of the Southern Lineage and the Western Lineage of inner alchemy did not leave home to become monastic renunciates. Many, such as Zhang Ziyang, had to engage themselves in the practice of the Immortals’ Way with a “sexually leaking body” (*yi lou zhi shen* 已漏之身), an allusion to the sexually active body. So the alchemical scriptures and oral secrets they transmitted are to be interpreted from the perspective of the reciprocal benefit between yin and yang (*yinyang xianghu buyi* 陰陽互相補益). Many of their secretly circulated metaphors, such as “knocking the bamboo to induce the turtle” (*qiao zhu huan gui* 敲竹喚龜) and “plucking the zither to call upon the phoenix” (*gu qing zhao feng* 鼓琴招鳳), allude to the various techniques adopted by married couples or unmarried men and women to increase and maintain the regenerative vitalities by training and manipulating their genitalia. Originating probably from the early bedchamber arts (*fangzhong shu* 房中術), these metaphors can also be seen as semantic icons for analogical associations for the practitioners. For instance, the bamboo and the turtle are metaphors of the male reproductive organs: the penis and the testes. They refer to a practice that begins with spiritual cultivation, followed by a regulated regime

of exhaling and inhaling at certain times, and accompanied by genital manipulation of massage and tapping. These techniques, which have been partially adopted and used by modern urology in treating male impotence, have long been unique training methods employed by various sects to prevent seminal emission and to restore or replenish the *jing* and the *qi*. Additionally, depending on the male or female body, the focal points in meditation practice can be either on the Lower Elixir Field (*xia dantian* 下丹田) in the male practitioners, or on the *ruxi* 乳竅 point between the breasts in a woman. Meditation on these points or rotating the focal consciousness to the left or right are both seen as the preliminary technique of “refining the *jing* into *qi*” before the more advanced practice of “refining the *qi* into *shen*.” The unique character of the metaphoric language is its capacity to conceal and manifest the technique at the same time. Having undergone initiation and the practice of forging the foundation (*rumen zhuji* 入門築基), a practitioner will then receive from the master individually tailored oral instructions and explanations about these metaphors depending on his or her level. Otherwise, they remain a largely ambiguous and obtuse language of an alchemical scripture which defies comprehension and utility for practice.

The method of “reversion” in the germination, refining, and transportation of the elixir is what truly distinguished the five groups discussed here from the rest in the practice of *qi* circulation and spiritual refinement. Viewed from a macro perspective of the history of inner alchemy, the reality is that the various schools share the same origin. But the superior skills and experience of each of the schools will manifest through their own subtle and nuanced techniques in such practice as circulating and refining the Perfected Breath and the Elixir. The Heavenly Orbit circulation (*zhou-tian yunxing* 周天運行) stressed by the Northern School focuses on moving the *qi* along the *ren* 任 and *du* 督 channels on the front and at the back of the body, and dispersing gradually to other meridians and loci of the body. It progresses from the Minor Heavenly Orbit to the Major Heavenly Orbit. The concretized image of the practice is found in the “Illustration of the Internal Channels” (*Neijing tu* 內經圖).<sup>23</sup>

After the “integration of the Southern School with the Northern School,” the Eremitic Immortal School adjusted the practice of married practitioners by relocating the circulatory path away from the channels to course through the Upper and the Lower Bone Marrow (*shangxia gusui* 上下骨髓). In terms of the starting place for the practice, it attaches great importance to the refining and firing of the reproductive organs. By accompanying the regenerative firing and refining with regulated breathing and



by rendering the Heart and the Mind mutually reliant (*xinsi xiangyi* 心  
思相依), the practice then controls the inner contemplation and circula-  
tion of *qi* and spreads it throughout the body by way of the bone mar-  
rows so as to avert the leakage and loss of *qi* through the channels and the  
Elixir Fields, and to ensure safety and efficiency. Another example is the  
emphasis laid on the Meridian Wheel (*mailun* 脈輪) and the Bright Point  
(*mingdian* 明點) along the Central Meridian of the practitioner's body by  
a minor school of the Immortals' Lineage. It is very similar to the Tantric  
method of the Penetration through the Yellow Center (*Zhonghuang zhi-  
tou* 中黃直透), which circulates the *qi* along the meridian of the Yellow  
Center (*huangzhong* 黃中) directly from the Bottom of the Sea (*haidi* 海  
底) located near the perineum up through to the Hundred Confluences  
(*baihui* 百會) in the head. In its focused contemplation on the breath, the  
practitioner then repeatedly concentrates the perfected fire on the Bright  
Point so as to achieve the inner power of a thoroughly illuminated key  
spot inside the body. All circulated *qi* must return to the Nine Palaces (*jiu-  
gong* 九宮) of the brain before entering the phase of "refining the Spirit  
to return to the Void." As to the complex and intractable mystery of pro-  
gressing from the "*qigong* state" into the "state of Great Stillness" inside  
the brain, various schools have developed their own unique concentrative  
skills and techniques. Before modern neurological science offered veri-  
fiable analyses of the brain, Daoist inner alchemists could only rely on  
their experiences and methods to achieve concentration and mental con-  
trol so as to stimulate and unlock the remarkable powers of the brain. How  
can one proceed from the state of "Refining the Breath into the Spirit" to  
that of "Refining the Spirit into the Void," and finally achieve the state  
of "Returning to the Void and Entering the Way," which was the ulti-  
mate goal of "Being coeval with the Way" (*yu Dao hezhen* 與道合真), as  
recorded in the early Daoist scriptures? The "breakthrough" achieved in  
paradigmatic thinking by the Second Wave of inner alchemy was its put-  
ting forth of the concepts of atemporality (*xiantian* 先天) and temporality  
(*houtian* 後天) by using traditional alchemical language. By then match-  
ing these two concepts with the iconographic hexagrams of the Book of  
Changes, various alchemical sects offered their own expositions on how  
to return from the Temporal to the Atemporal, and then from the Great  
Ultimate (*taiji* 太極) to the Infinite (*wuji* 無極).<sup>24</sup> Regardless of their sec-  
tarian affiliation, inner alchemists all developed their respective interpre-  
tations and their own wondrous skills and techniques through practice.<sup>25</sup>

The sequence and steps of the self-cultivation for reversing the Tem-  
poral and returning to the Atemporal are the basics of the practice, and



they remain indistinguishable between the Northern and the Southern Lineages. But “Authentic Quiet Sitting” as promoted by the Heavenly Lord Teachings has already undergone a change from the transmission by Xiao Changming 蕭昌明 (1895–1943) to that by Li Yujie. After pioneering and adopting “Tiandi” 天帝 as the name for the group, another change took place as it transitioned from its early phase to its later phase. The key change is the proposition of the “Instantaneous Perfection” approach (*jidun famen* 急頓法門) to replace the “Graduated Cultivation” approach (*jianxiu famen* 漸修法門) that proceeded from the transformation of the *jing* to that of the *qi* and then to that of the *shen*. This innovative self-cultivation practice has now been embraced by the movement’s followers, and has been directly applied in the practice of “Quiet Sitting with a Tranquil Heart” (*jingxin jingzuo* 靜心靜坐), and the practice of “Heaven and Human *qigong*” (*Tianren qigong* 天人炁功). It was viewed as having fundamentally replaced the time-consuming Graduated Cultivation approach to self-transformation. Evocative of the “direct refining” (*zhixiu* 直修) of the Supreme Way of the Direct Transformation of the Empty Void of the Fahua Buddhist Polar Heaven (*Fahua shang cheng haotian zhixiu xuwu dadao* 法華上乘昊天直修虛無大道), this practice directly uses the focal consciousness to bring the *qi* of the “Empty Void” via the “Hundred Confluences” straight down into the “Vital Gate” (*mingmen* 命門). Leaving it at the “Vital Palace” (*minggong* 命宮), the practitioner then contemplates on it in a detached fashion so as to quickly open up the “Gate of Wisdom,” which separates man and Heaven. In contrast to the Graduated Cultivation of other schools, this practice is viewed by the Heavenly Lord Teaching followers as the “orthodox” approach to Instantaneous Perfection, as it skips the stages of refining the Essence and the Breath and directly engages the refining of the Spirit by concentrating the Spirit of the Empty Void into the brain, thus offering a rapid shortcut entry into the “state of Stillness,” and ensuring an expeditious way out of worldly catastrophes. The Heavenly Lord Teachings has developed successfully in a brief period of time to become a new religious movement with the largest and the most diversely distributed following of the five self-cultivation groups compared in this chapter. Its success lies in its open promotion of this simple and easily accessible method of practice, which has also resulted in the rapid expansion of the lineage through the use of generational verses first established by the Heavenly Lord Teachings. This is also its distinct difference from the conservative Longmen tradition of lineage transmission from one generation to the next.

The five groups all have their respective achievements, either through

tradition or autonomous developments. But the real reason for this is not only because of their respective sense of superiority in lineage or organization. Rather, it is because prior to their coming to Taiwan, all five groups except the Heavenly Lord Teachings had already formalized the norms of their respective practices and methods. Only the Heavenly Lord Teachings members have stressed their discovery of the Instantaneous Perfection method. Their experience as emigrants gave rise to their distinct style of active transmission. Each of their lineage masters continued to extend the group's transmission based on their sense of missionary drive. They all exhibited unique characters, styles, and achievements in their own self-cultivation practice. As the masters were in possession of a religious or parareligious charisma, and were driven by the sacred and mysterious sense of (trans)mission, they each could attract a following and form a mass organization through their respective use of oral instructions or written transmission. The result of their proselytizing depended on the ability of each transmitter, and his or her choices of transmission approach which can be either open or secret. Another factor that determines the size of the subjects or groups is whether the transmitted practice secrets and methods are simple or complex.

#### ALCHEMICAL DAOISM, SCIENTISM, AND SCIENTISTS.

Additionally, whether the adopted language in transmission is "modern" or not, whether the interpretative framework is "scientific" or not, are also determinants of the outcome. As Taiwanese society and culture rapidly advanced toward modern science, members of the five groups from their founders to the second and third generation masters were all confronted with the challenge of how to accommodate the scientific and technological knowledge familiar to and used by all modern people. Their varied responses show which among them had truly chosen the "innovative" path of modern interpretation. How each of the various Instantaneous Perfection or Graduated Cultivation methods account for the recent discoveries of the mysteries within the human body has not only determined the scale and style of the sects' development, but it has also stimulated other self-cultivation groups, resulting in the emergence of many new thriving inner alchemy or *qigong* schools in Taiwan.<sup>26</sup>

In recent comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophies, *qi* studies has been recognized as an indigenous system with its own characteristics.<sup>27</sup> It used to be criticized as a set of old ideas that were incompatible with Western philosophy. The inner-chemical practice and *qigong*

practice, which are based on the theories of *qi* transformation (*qihua lun* 氣化論), were also regarded as unscientific and irrational. However, in recent Chinese and Western clinical studies, the practice has again and again been proven to be beneficial to health and well-being. This phenomenon is true in both Taiwan and the mainland. But the five groups' collaboration with science did not begin with a wave of *qigong* studies on the mainland in the post-Mao period, as discussed by Lü Xichen in chapter 9 of this volume.<sup>28</sup> As early as the May Fourth era, with its rising new "science" and "democracy" discourse, many self-cultivation groups had already begun to advocate the *qi*-centric practice of the body as a means for forging a new cultural identity as well as pursuing health and spirituality, as chapters 6 and 7 by Liu and Palmer show. Whether these early attempts truly accorded with science or not is not really that important, but they reflected these masters' new mentality and their commitment to solving the mysteries involved. The scientific development in the past five or six decades has since accelerated these groups' inclination toward a "scientific" interpretation of their practice. This phenomenon also reflects the self-imposed sense of mission among the masters. Further, the modern scientific education these masters received also manifests itself in the form of the modern knowledge and the modern terminology that they naturally employ in their transmissions and studies. This increasing inclination toward science also triggered the Third Wave in the history of inner alchemy.

The irony that drove this spiritual or religious revitalization came from a reflection of and response to modern education, especially from the emulation of Western education, and further stimulated an awareness of the limits of science. As religious education and scholarship suffered from long-term neglect, and modern sports and recreation became excessively Westernized, the early Republican intellectual elite in control of the national education system such as Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 had actively promoted their secularizing education philosophy: "to replace religion with aesthetics." In the New Culture movement from the 1920s to the 1930s, they exclusively drew upon the Confucian classics as the "fundamental textbooks of Chinese culture." Under the framework of nationalism and Confucian ethics, the scientization, rationalization, and secularization implicit in "modernization" came to dominate nearly all modern educational resources from elementary and high schools to universities and research institutes. All curricula and disciplinary designs for modern education institutions almost completely excluded the knowledge and techniques of old religious and spiritual traditions such as inner alchemy, *qigong*, and Chan Buddhism, relegating them to merely extracurricular

activities outside formal school instruction. Driven by the cultural consensus for strengthening the nation, Confucian ethics was employed and treated as a common goal for cultural and national revival. It was thus easily “internalized” through the early Republican educational system to shape the national character. Yet with rapid post–World War II economic development, a wide proliferation of knowledge, and the emergence of a middle class, the younger generations in Taiwan were naturally given to critical reflection on the shortcomings of the existing education system established and transplanted from the mainland. As they experienced the pressure and dispersion of the processes of modernization, they began to react by turning to the alternative and old religious and spiritual traditions of Daoist self-cultivation, quiet-sitting, and Chan meditation practices. This fundamental new direction in thinking stimulated modern intellectuals to “rediscover” inner alchemy and quiet-sitting practices, and triggered new efforts at reaffirming the traditional experiences of inner alchemical meditation with scientific knowledge.<sup>29</sup> This also prompted many middle-class people to choose to participate in the self-cultivating practices of the five groups, and to take on new responsibilities to reinterpret these traditional skills based on their own experience and professional and scientific education and backgrounds. Their strong sense of mission and timely involvement gave rise to the rebirth and development of the Daoist groups, and paralleled the thriving phenomenon of *qigong* on the mainland in the 1980s, resulting in the coming of the “Third Wave” in the history of alchemical Daoism.

In comparison, the first generation lineage masters’ scientific knowledge reflected the simple positivist knowledge of the sciences in the 1930s and 1940s. As shown in Xun Liu’s chapter in this volume, Chen Yingning was exposed to Western science in the form of school textbooks and tracts translated by the Jiangnan Arsenal during late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, while his wife Wu Yizhu 吳彝珠 was a doctor of Western medicine by training. Yuan Jiegui studied at the Suzhou Industrial School and worked as a senior specialist of the Civil Construction Bureau of the Taichung city government. In their efforts to scientize inner alchemy, they borrowed basic concepts and notions such as atoms, electrons, cells, and particles from physics, chemistry, and biology to reinterpret the traditional alchemical cosmology and body construct. Their scientific knowledge clearly reflects a positivist streak, which is embodied by the tenets of their “Immortals’ Learning.”<sup>30</sup> Another more concrete example is the young Li Yujie, who used the term “New Realm” to refer to “radiation” (*leiqi* 鐳氣), as well as “harmonons” (*hezi* 和子), in his book.<sup>31</sup> Additionally,

he also accepted into the Heavenly Lord Teachings many disciples with scientific backgrounds. Regardless of which scientific or engineering disciplines the disciples were trained in, many adopted the terms of Li's "radiation" system. But without deep exposure to the teachings and committed fellowship, it is difficult to understand the true meanings behind those terms. Meanwhile, under this system of symbols, many disciples with scientific and technological backgrounds have also begun to reinterpret the terminology and the system of the New Realm by drawing on their respective specialties. As it absorbs modern astronomical knowledge, inner alchemy no longer interprets the absorption of the Essence of the Sun and the Moon in terms of the traditional *qi* cosmology. Rather, it attempts to link up with all the extraterrestrial information of the whole universe. This is what is "new" about the new religious movements. Similarly, Liu Peizhong, the former imperial astrological official, concretized the new astronomical knowledge into his "Cosmic Tower." He believed that the tower could emit invisible electrical energy. He integrates the traditional cosmology with modern electronics, arguing that "Yin and yang combine to form the Dao, electricity and energy combine to form the Sword. The changes between Heaven and Earth are endless, and the only way to control them is through the integration of the Dao and the Sword." He further used the negative and positive electrical charges to interpret the union of yin and yang. Together with the practice of the Taiji Sword (*taiji jian* 太極劍) and Taiji Boxing (*taiji quan* 太極拳), he held that those practices with the sword and boxing could help the practitioner absorb the numinous matter (*lingzhi* 靈質) of the Sun and the Moon, and transform and regenerate it into the electrical energy inside human bodies. Such terms as "radioactivity" and "electrical energy" are all borrowed or derived from the scientific knowledge of the early period to explain how and why the micro and macro cosmos can "correspond" (*ganying* 感應) with each other.

This strong quest for new knowledge is most concretely exemplified in the Yellow Dragon Elixir Institute. Master Lai Jing himself perused various alchemical scriptures. Moreover, in order to uncover the secrets of the practice transmitted by Jinfeng Shanren, Baihe Shanren combined electrostatic therapy with the study of the main and collateral channels, and used topical herbal patches and inhalant medicine to regulate the magnetic field in the body. In contrast, Lai Jing directly chose individuals with a scientific background as his disciples, and he established the Golden Elixir Society (Jindan she 金丹社) at the National Chiao Tung University and the National Taiwan University. There they first combined their traditional alchemical self-cultivation practice with modern theories of mag-

netic fields. Members of the Society often drew on their different specialties in science and applied scientific interpretations to their practice. The practice of Building the Foundation transmitted at the Yellow Dragon Elixir Institute is based on the first five characters in the Nine-Character Secrets (*jiuzi jue* 九字訣), namely pinch, twist, wind, tap, and touch, which refers to the use of the Sword Fingers (*jianzhi* 劍指, the index and the middle fingers combined) to open up the key loci in the body: the navel and the middle of the brows, so as to trigger off the Atemporal *qi* and induce the practitioner to go into the “state of *qigong*,” and then carry out the practice of the Nine Cycles (*jiuzhuan fa* 九轉法) and the Five Phase Steps (*Wuxing bu* 五行步). After these practices trigger a spontaneous reaction in the body, practitioners become extremely sensitive to the north and south magnetic poles of the Earth. Their direct and intuitive responses to the traditional Eight Trigram positions often lead scientifically trained disciples to attempt scientific explanations of the practice.<sup>32</sup>

This close integration of the practice of refining the Elixir with scientific research was further deepened when the disciples went abroad for studies in America, Japan and other parts of the world. These disciples already began to conduct experiments to corroborate by controlled experiments various induced responses in the body based on their respective research topics. They also managed to set up associations, established research groups, and participate in corroborative research at foreign research centers. Can this scientifically oriented approach explain the secrets of the body that were discovered and experienced in the practice? As scientific corroboration demands evidential rigor, sufficient funds, comprehensive equipment, and repeatable verification over time, many of the phenomena will take a long time for full corroboration. So the current efforts to verify the experiential knowledge of the practice through empirical knowledge are still in progress. But this cautious and scientific attitude in seeking the truth has reflected the trend within modern inner alchemy and its modern scientific orientation, which seeks truth through evidentiary corroboration. As more and more disciples of the Elixir Institute gradually take up positions at academic research institutes, they demonstrate that the traditional practice has merged deeply with the daily life and the research topics of some scientists, and clearly shows a new direction taking root in inner alchemy.

Using the five groups as an example, there is no lack of scientists and high-tech professionals among the second and third generation lineage masters. Their own experience of practice often inspired them to seek scientific corroboration. Beginning in the mid-1980s, many leading main-

land state leaders and scientists, such as Qian Xuesen 錢學森 (1911–2009), the father of China's ballistic missile program and a former professor at the California Institute of Technology, had actively promoted scientific research on the "paranormal powers" of *qigong*.<sup>33</sup> Such state-sanctioned research had also since been channeled through many Chinese universities and research institutes. Around the same time, similar research was also first started in Taiwan during the tenure of Chan Lü'an 陳履安 as the director of the National Science Council. Subsequently, research teams led by Li Sichen 李嗣涔, Cui Jiu 崔玖, and other scientists continued steadfastly in conducting their corroborative research for a long time. This experience can be viewed as an attempt by the scientific communities in Taiwan to confront the claimed paranormal powers of *qigong* and inner alchemy. Although this research was inconclusive, they involved extensive cooperation with those self-cultivation groups. In the interactively dynamic process of being subject to corroborative experiments, attempts were made to use instruments to observe and record the brain waves of practitioners who entered the *qigong* state, or the state of stillness. These experiments did produce some scientifically objective "verification" of the subjective experience of the practitioners.<sup>34</sup> In the cases of Authentic Quiet Sitting by the Heavenly Lord Teachings, and the Nine Cycle Practice of the Dragon Gate lineage, disciples need first to go through the training of corroborated practice and the practice of Building the Foundation before they can engage in scientific research based on their respective fields of specialization. Through the integration of self-cultivation of body and spirit with modern scientific research methods, contemporary Daoist self-cultivation groups have trained a group of researchers who are both competent in and committed to the scientific study of their practices. Their achievements in the future will bridge the gap between the circle of inner alchemy practitioners and the scientific community, and facilitate their dialogue.

#### DAOIST SELF-CULTIVATION GROUPS IN TAIWAN AND THE MAINLAND QIGONG MOVEMENT

The five veteran self-cultivation groups are all faced with a society that has become highly commercialized and secularized. These trends have facilitated the emergence of new *qigong* groups, causing several controversial "qigong incidents" through their commercialized operations. But generally speaking, because of their deep roots in tradition, the veteran Daoist groups described here not only offer practical techniques that induce novices into joining the group, but they also provide a spiritual self-cultivation



path to further enhance and advance the practitioner's spiritual growth. Though there are those who wish to profit through the groups, they are subject to the self-regulating rules established within the group. This is the main reason why these groups can continue on with their respective rules under the increasingly secularized social trends. This is also what separates them from other new *qigong* groups. So when we observe the multifaceted *qigong* phenomenon from a sociological perspective, we must avoid indiscriminate generalization. Otherwise, it is impossible to understand that the "inheriting and transmitting" and "innovation" are basic ways of how Daoist self-cultivation schools have adapted to change throughout history. Before the KMT martial law was lifted in Taiwan, these groups were capable of cautiously dealing with interference by the ROC state and KMT. After martial law was dissolved, they had to confront the new situation where numerous *qigong* and other self-cultivation groups mushroomed. Yet they steadfastly held onto their respective traditions, and refused to yield completely to the process of secularization. Indeed, these groups had passed from the first to the second generation of lineage masters. Because of their relative pattern of stability achieved through their lineage tradition or organizational structure, they are less prone to the fluctuations induced by the social upheavals of post-martial law Taiwanese society.

On the mainland, especially after the reform and opening-up policies of the early 1980s, *qigong* culture fluctuated between the masses and the state. This caused the Daoist self-cultivation groups in Taiwan to be cautious and distant, despite their desire to search for their lineage roots there. The drastic political changes of the postwar era have become a bitter memory for many lineage masters in their transmission experiences. This experience, mixed with memories of catastrophes, often made it difficult for the first generation of lineage masters to go back to the mainland to trace their roots there. But the more proactive among the second generation lineage masters, such as the leaders within the Heavenly Lord Teachings, have always maintained a close and intimate contact with the relevant institutions on the mainland. Yet while both the Eremic Immortals school and the Yellow Dragon Elixir Institute maintain certain ties, they have so far remained cautiously distant, and neither has hurried in making their positions open. By comparison, the various *qigong* groups have proven to be proactive and complex in their rivalry to introduce practice methods and techniques from the mainland. In this respect, they differ from those sects in their insistent use of the traditional terminologies of inner alchemy. The cultural and historical significance of Daoist



self-cultivation in Taiwan is that it represents a chapter in the “overseas diasporic transmission” (*haiwai chuangong* 海外傳功) in the history of Chinese inner alchemy, as discussed by Siegler in chapter 11 of this volume in relation to its dissemination to America. The lineage traditions and styles the Taiwanese groups have held and preserved are basically the rules that have conserved and perpetuated the various traditions’ transmission. They have not changed their internal system as a result of their “innovative” modern reinterpretations.

In the history of transmission of the Elixir Cauldron tradition, the Eremitic Immortals school, and the Heavenly Lord Teachings have interpreted its narratives about the phenomenon of the “eastern transmission through the magical encounter at the sea mount” (*haishan qiyu*), and the prophetic story of “Reviving China” (*fuxing Zhonghua* 復興中華), as described by David Palmer in the conclusion to chapter 7 of this book. Though other sects may not have chosen such interpretations, this valuable experience of “salvation by fate” undoubtedly represents an important chapter in the history of Chinese Immortals’ Learning. The unique phenomenon of all the traditions and lineages gathering in the city of Taipei is an extraordinary situation occasioned by the particular political conditions of post-1949 Taiwan. Prior to this period, the traditions of the Southern and the Northern schools were scattered across the Yangzi River and the Yellow River. But now they are now concentrated in one city much like the various cuisines, resulting in the recent phenomenon of the “harmonization of the Northern and Southern schools” (*Nan Bei he* 南北和). This is also the reason for the recent flourishing of various *qigong* groups in Taiwan. Only those schools with an independent streak can still hold on to their original style and allow their lineage masters to determine the direction of their “transmission and innovation.” They also fully understand the impact of modern thinking brought on by the Third Wave. While science has subjected inner alchemy to rigorous scrutiny and verification, it has also inspired those who are deeply committed to the practice to accumulate the experience of adaptation and accommodation with science over a long period. This new vitality has also infused Daoist self-cultivation with new meanings and values for modern life. As many practitioners from these groups have been long exposed to the scientific and rationalist “enlightenment” in academia, each school thus has empiricist practitioners (*shixiu* 實修) who adopt modern language and terminology to interpret and explain the obscure references and processes in the alchemical scriptures and clas-

sical quotations. Further, the current open and multifaceted Taiwanese society also stimulates the various lineage masters to adjust their mentalities and means of organization for their transmission. This way, the perennial problems of “law, fortune, companionship, and locale” (*fa cai lü di* 法財侶地) for practice can be solved all at once, resulting in a new pattern of natural rise and fall, competition and succession among the various self-cultivation groups.

The new situation faced by all the traditional schools within the Elixir Cauldron tradition is no longer pressure or temptations from the state. Rather, they all are confronted with the mechanism of markets and commercialization, which, as mentioned by Vincent Goossaert in chapter 5, already existed in the late imperial and Republican periods but now has become even more intense: the strong competition from newly emerging *qigong* groups, the “eastward transmission” of practice techniques from the mainland, and the search for scientific interpretations of “paranormal powers” have all compelled Daoist inner alchemy groups to demonstrate their renewed modes of adaptation. The impact of the Third Wave is so strong and lasting that it will make the transmission of lineages even more open and more institutionalized in decades to come. Current Taiwanese laws and regulations on religion and social corporate bodies, which were promulgated after the lifting of martial law, may also induce many self-cultivation groups to return to rejoin the ranks of new religions and Daoist organizations. But they may also choose to continue to transmit their lineages independently through their networks alone. But a common trend has already appeared: it is no longer easy for religious organizations and social associations to produce individuals with the leadership charisma needed for establishing new sects or groups. Their routine and stable persistence are precisely the main reason that these Daoist self-cultivation groups can continue to exist. Indeed, the tried and true practice methods, the stable and substantial supply of funding, the well-organized and managed fellowship, and the dual focus on both urban and rural sites for practice have been their achievements through modernization and openness. Needless to say, the transmission of some of the key practice secrets is still bound by certain sectarian rules. With adequate supply of resources and persistent practice integrated with science, new interpretations that satisfy the needs of modern society will appear, resulting in the successful transformation of modern inner alchemy under the Third Wave. In this respect, Taiwan offers an excellent case study for understanding the transmission and transformation of Daoism in the Chinese world. Under the impact of modernization, inner alchemy, like many other traditions and cultures,

will prove that it is not only a local knowledge, but also a universal experience common and accessible to all. It can not only nourish life but also cultivate and bring forth the full human potential. Thus, it will contribute, with Yoga, Zen meditation, and other forms of the Eastern experience, to a universal knowledge and culture of the body and the mind.

## APPENDIX: COMPARATIVE CHART OF FIVE ALCHEMICAL GROUPS IN POSTWAR TAIWAN

	<i>Eremitic Immortal School</i> ( <i>Yinxian pai</i> 隱仙派)	<i>Yellow Dragon Elixir Academy</i> ( <i>Huanglong danyuan</i> 黃龍丹院)
Lineage	Integration of the Southern and Northern schools; Shanghai Immortal Studies Center (上海仙學中心)	Northern School; Dragon Gate (Longmen 龍門) lineage
Genealogy	Chen Yingning 陳櫻寧; Huang Suizhi 黃邃之; Yuan Jiegui 袁介圭	Jinfeng Shanren 金鳳山人; Lai Jing 來靜
Organization	Taipei Immortal Studies Centre (台北仙學中心); Immortal Studies Magazine (仙學雜誌社).	Taipei Elixir Daoism Research Society (台北丹道研究會); Elixir Daoist Culture Foundation (丹道文化基金會); Elixir Culture Press (丹道文化出版社).
Mode of transmission	Semi-public	Semi-public
Number of followers	Low (200–300)	Medium (2000–3000)
Political attitude	Conservative	Neutral
Attitude toward science	Hesitant	Cooperative
Techniques and texts	“Interdependence of mind and breath” (心息相依); “Holding to the One and Keeping to the Middle” (抱一守中); “Sayings from the Hall of Blissful Learning” (樂育堂語錄); “Therapy through quiet sitting” (靜功療法).	“Nine Cycle Golden Elixir” (九還金丹); “Elixir Formulas of the Dragon Gate” (龍門丹訣).

Western School of the Mysterious Gate (Xuanmen xipai 玄門西派)	Kunlun Immortal School (Kunlun xianzong 崑崙仙宗)	Heavenly Lord Teachings (Tiandijiao 天帝教)
Western School; Great Western River School (Da jiang xi pai 大江西派)	Mysterious Gate (Xuanmen 玄門)	The Heavenly Virtues Teachings (Tiande shengjiao 天德聖教)
Wu Juncui 吳君碓; Ma Heyang 馬合陽	Kunlun Laodao 崑崙老道; Liang Zhongming 梁仲銘; Liu Peizhong 劉培中	Xiao Changming 蕭昌明; Li Yujie 李玉階
	Chinese Social Behaviour Research Institute (中國社會行為研究社); China Kunlun Court Foundation (中華崑崙道院基金會); Kunlun Culture Press (崑崙文化出版社); Daogong Magazine (道功期刊社).	Institute for the Study of Religious Philosophy (宗教哲學研究社); Heavenly Lord Teachings Press (帝教出版社).
Semi-public	Public	Public
Low (100–200)	Large (30,000)	Large (300,000)
Accommodating	Cooperative	Cooperative
Conservative	Hesitant	Cooperative
“Pure and Tranquil Meditation” (清靜功法); “Essentials of spiritual nature and bodily life of Tidao Shanren” (體道山人性命要旨); “The transmission of Dao by Haiyin Shanren” (海印山人傳道集).	“Daoist Boxing” (道功拳); “Taiji fencing” (太極劍); “12 Postures for Longevity” (長壽十二式); “Lectures on the Immortals’ School” (仙宗要義講記); “Records of the Immortals’ School” (仙宗錄); “The Collected Talks of Liu Peizhong” (劉培中講道集成).	“Authentic Quiet Sitting” (正宗靜坐); “Heavenly human qigong” (天人炁功); the “Authentic Twenty Characters” (廿字真言); the “New Realm” (新境界).

## 9. Yuanjidao

### *From Daoist Lineage to Prisoner Reform in Post-Mao China*

Lü Xichen

The 1980s witnessed an unprecedented development of *qigong* 氣功 practices in China. At that time, both traditional forms and self-invented modern forms such as Yan Xin Qigong 嚴新氣功, Wild Goose Qigong (*Dayan qigong* 大雁功), Intelligence Qigong (*Zhineng qigong* 智能氣功), Fragrant Qigong (*Xianggong* 香功), and Chinese Qigong for Nurturing Health and Stimulating Intelligence (*Zhonghua yangsheng yizhigong* 中華養生益智功) appeared in rapid succession, causing an unprecedented upsurge of learning *qigong* and seeking paranormal powers, at all levels of society and throughout the country, with tens of millions of practitioners.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter focuses on Yuanjidao 元極道—the “Way of the Ultimate Origin”—one of the larger *qigong* groups on the mainland in the post-Mao period until it was banned by the central government in 2000. Yuanjidao claimed an explicitly Daoist genealogy while striving to transform self-cultivation traditions into a comprehensive modern scientific system with multiple applications. I will focus on the modern innovations brought to the Daoist tradition by the patriarch of Yuanjidao, Zhang Zhixiang 張志祥, looking at its theoretical system, its transmission method, its organizational form, and its applications in the domains of scientific research, psychotherapy, and the reform of criminals. Indeed, Zhang Zhixiang tried to integrate traditional cosmology and body cultivation techniques with modern science, and made a series of reforms so as to demonstrate the value of Daoist cultivation in modern days and its adaptability into modern social life.

The post-Mao *qigong* wave created an effervescent social context for the dissemination of Daoist ideas and practices through Yuanjidao. In mainland China, with the exception of the local branches of the official China Daoist Association, no other Daoist movements were legal, while spreading religious teachings in places other than officially designated places of worship

remains illegal. Thus, in contemporary society, Daoist cultivation methods could be propagated only outside of a religious framework, through merging them with lay life and finding ways to serve the broader society through contributing to public health and to the cultivation of moral character. In the context of the popularity of the *qigong* movement, Zhang Zhixiang went public in 1987 as a *qigong* master and publicly inaugurated “Yuanji Qigong” 元極氣功 as a method for cultivating one’s body and spiritual nature.

Yuanji Qigong appeared later than other popular *qigong* practices such as Wild Goose Qigong and Intelligence Qigong.<sup>2</sup> At first, Zhang Zhixiang organized classes and correspondence courses for the transmission of skills in a manner similar to other *qigong* denominations. Students of Yuanji Qigong across the country found it effective and its reputation grew day by day. Within four to five years, it had developed rapidly and become a large-scale *qigong* organization which claimed over two million practitioners.

The rapid growth of Yuanji Qigong can be understood from many angles. From the perspective of social development in China, the main reasons are as follows. First, the huge rural population, which enjoyed limited access to medical care, and the city dwellers with limited economic ability needed effective methods that were easy to learn to improve their health and cure diseases. They were attracted by *qigong*’s reputed effects in this regard. Second, the 1980s was a period during which peoples’ minds were more open in China. Freed from the ideological control of the Maoist era, Chinese people were unprecedentedly enthusiastic about exploring new things. Independent thinking and the spirit of seeking the truth were pursued by all social classes for the first time.<sup>3</sup> In this context, paranormal abilities claimed by *qigong* practitioners attracted people to explore it. Third, after political idols and personality worship (the cult of Mao) were destroyed in peoples’ hearts, emptiness arose in their mental world. Many people encountered a crisis of faith and needed to find spiritual crutches. Therefore, the trend of diversified development of beliefs emerged. But owing to many complex reasons, traditional religious groups could not satisfy peoples’ spiritual needs. *Qigong* denominations such as Yuanji Qigong, which had profound relations with Buddhism and Daoism but were not considered to be religions, became spiritual shelters.

#### CLAIMING A HISTORICAL GENEALOGY

Like many *qigong* movements, Yuanji Qigong claimed an ancient pedigree connecting it to the ancient sources of Chinese self-cultivation traditions. While some groups purported to transmit an archaic wisdom that predated

the appearance of religious forms, and others claimed Buddhist affiliations or vague connections to the essence of Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Chinese medicine, and the martial arts, Yuanji Qigong traced its genealogy to a very specific Daoist lineage, the Way of Supreme Oneness (*Taiyi dao* 太一道). This movement was founded during the Tianjuan period (1138–1140) of the reign of Emperor Xizong 熙宗 of the Jin dynasty, by Xiao Baozhen 宵抱珍, a native of Weizhou 衛州 (now Ji County 汲縣, Henan Province).<sup>4</sup>

Yuanji Qigong scholar-practitioners have attempted to uncover historical connections between the medieval Way of Supreme Oneness with the contemporary Yuanji Qigong, although they admit that significant gaps remain in the narrative. However, the group's deployment of a Daoist genealogy demonstrates the importance of a Daoist identity for its master and followers, as well as its will to ground the source of its *qi*-based scientific cosmology and *qigong* practice within a rich Daoist lineage. The reconstructed historical narrative, repeated in many documents and statements of followers, goes as follows:

The name "Way of Supreme Oneness" originated from its transmission of the "Triple-Origin Magic Registers of the Supreme Oneness" (*Taiyi sanyuan falu* 太一三元法錄) as part of its practice of talismans, registers, and ritual arts. It advocated cultivating oneself with the teachings of Laozi and aiding the people with magical arts. The teachings spread across Henan and Hebei. Its fifth-generation patriarch, Xiao Jushou 宵居壽, was appointed by the Yuan court a number of times to hold *zhai* 齋 and *jiao* 醮 rituals. Highly appreciated by the court, he was conferred the title of "Loyal and Virtuous Perfect Man in the Transformation of Supreme Oneness" (*Taiyi yanhua zhenchang zhenren* 太一演化貞常真人) and received countless treasures such as jade statues, jewel swords, dragon canes, and gold and silver utensils.<sup>5</sup> After the downfall of the Yuan regime, the Way of Supreme Oneness spread among the common people and declined after the seventh-generation patriarch. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the tradition declined in the north and shifted to the south, with transmission focused in Hubei. The content of the teachings at the time cannot be traced back nowadays, but we can assume that, similar to other Daoist traditions, the practices were primarily centered on ritual arts for curing diseases, strengthening the body, removing ill fortune, and praying for luck and longevity.

It is known that integration of the Three Doctrines (Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism) was a noticeable development in Chinese religion during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. When the Supreme Oneness Teachings spread in the Jiangnan area, they were taught to



a Buddhist monk called Master Pushan 普善禪師. He incorporated the aim of cultivation of the Supreme Oneness Doctrine with the Buddhist teachings of refining one's spiritual nature. He also practiced the essence of the Way of Supreme Oneness—the Wordless Perfect Book of the Supreme Oneness (*Taiyi wuzi zhenjing* 太一無字真經)—and composed the Triple-Origin Secret Register (*Sanyuan milu* 三元秘錄). He also modified the “Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate” (*Taijitu* 太極圖) into the “Diagram of the Ultimate Origin” (*Yuanjitu* 元極圖).<sup>6</sup> Zhang Zhixiang's ancestor, living in Zhangshi village in Ezhou, was a disciple of Wang, who secretly imparted to him the Diagram of the Ultimate Origin and the Triple-Origin Secret Register. Yuanjidao was then transmitted within the Zhang family for three generations and was handed down to Zhang Zhixiang, who is now its contemporary patriarch.

Like many other Daoist inner alchemy traditions, Yuanjidao was traditionally supposed to be secretly handed down and not passed to outsiders. Its ancestors laid down precepts stating that “skills and formulae should not be transmitted except to a predestined person of great virtue” and “should a teacher rashly accept villains as disciples, he will forfeit his own skills and lose the light.” Zhang's family carefully obeyed the precepts generation after generation and dared not go against them.

However, in order to satisfy the needs of modern society and make Yuanjidao acceptable to contemporary people, Zhang Zhixiang concluded that old rules should be broken and mysterious outer garments should be torn off. Realizing that it was not easy for modern society to understand and accept Yuanjidao under such a name—it might even drive people away as they might wrongly relate it with “reactionary secret societies” (*huidaomen* 會道門) such as Yiguandao 一貫道,<sup>7</sup> Zhang, following the wave of *qigong* at that time, renamed it Yuanji Qigong and presented it to the world.<sup>8</sup>

Though specific in the details of its references to historical instances of Daoist tradition and transmission, the Yuanji Qigong story is an example of the narrative of “coming out of the mountains” (*chushan* 出山) common to most post-Mao *qigong* movements. In these narratives, the master, who has inherited techniques handed down secretly over the generations and remained in seclusion to practice and master them, now decides to reveal them (or some of them) to the public, out of a sense of mission to benefit or even to save mankind. But since the techniques are often esoteric and difficult to understand and learn, the master decides to streamline them in order to make them accessible to the masses, and to reformulate the cosmological theories in order to make them compatible with a scientific worldview. The “coming out of the mountains” is thus a key concept in the

foundation of *qigong* groups, uniting the mystery and traditional legitimacy of an ancient secret lineage with the innovations, mass orientation, and scientific legitimacy of a modern *qigong* organization.<sup>9</sup> Such types of innovations were important factors in the rapid growth of Yuanji Qigong. These include developing Yuanjidao into “Yuanji studies” 元極學, modernizing the theoretical content of the teachings, reforming the means of transmission, reorganizing the administrative structure, and integrating with modern science.

#### FROM YUANJI QIGONG TO YUANJI STUDIES

In the late 1980s, *Oriental Qigong* (*Dongfang qigong* 東方氣功), a national *qigong* magazine, published articles introducing Yuanji Qigong in several consecutive issues. The magazine presented Yuanji Qigong as a profound and comprehensive theory and a meticulous cultivation method. Following its public dissemination, Yuanji Qigong triggered a huge response across the country. Thousands of people became pupils of Zhang Zhixiang and started learning Yuanji Qigong through correspondence courses. Practitioners across the country soon found the practice effective and its reputation grew day by day.

By the late 1980s, the development of *qigong* reached its peak. *Qigong* masters from different denominations appeared one after another. Profiteers mixed with accomplished masters in the *qigong* circle, harming the healthy development of *qigong*. Zhang Zhixiang thus decided to stay away from the *qigong* milieu, and to develop his denomination from a *qigong* “method” (*gong* 功) into an academic system of “studies” (*xue* 學). In addition to transmission of Yuanji Qigong, then, he planned to build up and develop Yuanji studies. In the process of transmission of self-cultivation skills, elucidation of the basic theory of Yuanji was now emphasized. “Theory” (*li* 理) and “method” (*fa* 法) are linked to all parts of the transmission. Zhang emphasized the Buddhist notion of “enlightenment of mind and realization of spiritual nature” (*mingxin jianxing* 明心見性) as the basis of his theory, the Daoist idea of “cultivation of perfection and refinement of spiritual nature” (*xiuzhen lianxing* 修真練性) as the foundation of cultivation, and the Confucian concept of “nourishment of virtue and fulfillment of spiritual nature” (*yangde jinxing* 養德僅性) as the fundamental criterion. This conceptual system, which incorporated different doctrines in order to satisfy the needs of modern society, was presented in Zhang’s book *Chinese Yuanji Qigong*, a teaching material published by the Hubei Science and Technology Press in 1988, for readers to explore the practice<sup>10</sup>.

The systematic philosophical structure of Yuanji Qigong was the foundation for its development into Yuanji studies. However, there were other, deeper motivations for Zhang Zhixiang to develop Yuanji Qigong into Yuanji studies. Zhang, coming from a family of Buddhist and Daoist background, had often been accused of promoting superstition, causing him much hardship. Therefore, to get rid of this burden, he especially needed to draw a clear line between himself and "religion" or "superstition." At the same time, under the ideology of scientism prevalent in modern Chinese society, science had become the highest value against which all other values were judged. Under such conditions, only by attaching Yuanji Qigong to modern science, and even incorporating it with modern science and interpreting it with modern knowledge and language, was it possible to legitimate the practice and to strengthen its diffusion. In order to achieve this goal, the first step was to make Yuanji an academic subject so that it could be regarded as science. Zhang emphasized that only through using the theories and methods of natural science could Yuanji conform to the times, and that only by following the path of science could traditional culture benefit modern society. Although several scholars at the time considered that Yuanji studies included both the natural and social sciences, Zhang Zhixiang insisted on striving to make Yuanji studies find its place within the "temple" of natural science.

The systematic theory of Yuanji studies, incorporating the Three Doctrines (Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism) and modern science, attracted the interest of many intellectuals. It was praised by senior political leaders for curing various chronic and complex diseases, raising practitioners' general level of health, and enhancing moral standards. Senior officials of the Ministry of State Security, the CCP Central Propaganda Department, the CCP Central Organization Department, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the Hubei Provincial Party Committee wrote inscriptions praising Yuanji.

Yuanji followers finally realized their dream in 1993. After verification and approval by the relevant government departments, the Chinese Society for Yuanji studies (Zhongguo Yuanjixue yanjiuhui 中國元極學研究會) was officially established, symbolizing the modern transformation of Yuanjidao. Yuanji followers hoped that Yuanji studies could be thus be regarded as part of the modern scientific community. However, Yuanjidao's shedding of religion and its modern transformation turned out to be a much more arduous process than anticipated.

Hoping to affiliate Yuanji Qigong with "science," Zhang Zhixiang contacted Science Press, a national publisher representing the highest level of

scientific authority in China, and transferred the rights to publish *Chinese Yuanji Qigong* away from the Hubei Science and Technology Press. In a context of a relatively open policy in regard to publishing *qigong*-related materials,<sup>11</sup> and motivated by the significant economic profits to be made from sales, the press published volumes 1–3 of *Chinese Yuanji Qigong* from 1989 to 1998. The first volume was reprinted eleven times, with a total print run of over one million, bringing huge profits to the Press. Nevertheless, critics in China's scientific circle would not give recognition to this "alternative" system of learning. In 1998, the *Science and Technology Daily* included the book in its list of "Representative Works of Pseudoscience in China from the Past 20 Years (1978–1998)." Other works receiving this dubious "honor" included two works by the popular author Ke Yunlu 柯雲路, *The Great Qigong Master*, a best-selling novel, and *The Discovery of the Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor*, a sensationalist tale of a miracle worker.<sup>12</sup> Compared with such works, *Chinese Yuanji Qigong* was teaching manual written in an academic style, which tried genuinely to bring modern science into an ancient method of cultivation. But critics of *qigong* "pseudoscience" (*wei kexue* 偽科學) rejected Yuanjidao's attempts to shed religion and attach itself to science. This case showed the power of scientism in the minds of Chinese people: everything should be judged by science; everything is expected to find a reasonable basis in science.<sup>13</sup>

#### RATIONALIZING YUANJIDAO

Zhang Zhixiang carried out comprehensive reforms to Yuanjidao in order to make it adapt to the development of modern society. Here, we will elaborate on the reforms in terms of its basic theory, methods of transmission, and organization.

##### *Reforming Yuanji Theory*

Yuanji theory was formed by integrating the Daoist foundations of the *Yuanji Secret Register* with modern scientific theories. The theory uses the Yuanji Diagram as its core, the Holistic View of Man and Heaven as its foundation, the Transformation between Non-Being and Being (*wuyou lianhua* 無有運化) as its matrix, and the cultivation of virtue and morality as its guiding principle, in its exploration of the laws of achieving the Oneness of Heaven and Man, attaining harmony, and returning to authenticity. Yuanji studies was among the more academic, theoretical, and systematic of the many *qigong* schools and denominations popular

in China at the time.<sup>14</sup> This can be partly attributed to Zhang Zhixiang's conscious attempts to develop it into a scientific system.<sup>15</sup> The following briefly explains Yuanji theory.

The Yuanji Holistic View of Man and Heaven draws on the traditional Chinese notions of the Oneness of Heaven and Man (*tianren heyi* 天人合一), Original Vital Breath (*yuanqi* 元氣), and the Supreme Ultimate (*taiji* 太極). It considers that Dao is the basic principle of existence and Virtue (*de* 德) is the nature of Dao. Therefore, Dao and Virtue are a unity. Heaven and Earth follow the law of Dao and generate all beings. Yuanji interprets the notion of "Three" in Laozi's statement "the Three generates the myriad beings" 三生萬物 as Original Breath (*yuanqi* 元氣), Original Light (*yuanguang* 元光), and Original Sound (*yuanyin* 元音). They are the primordial substances constituting Heaven, Earth, and Man. Man and everything in Heaven and Earth all follow the law of generation and transformation of Original Breath, Original Light, and Original Sound, constantly developing, changing, intercommunicating and interlinking, forming a single totality.

In order to make it easier for modern people to understand Yuanji theory, Zhang Zhixiang used the scientific terms of "substance" (*wuzhi* 物質), "energy" (*nengliang* 能量), and "information" (*xinxi* 信息) to explain the concepts of Original Breath, Original Light, and Original Sound. The Triple Origin (*sanyuan* 三元) is not only the original *substance* of Heaven, Earth, and all beings, it also possesses *energy* and *information*. It neither comes into being nor extinguishes itself, neither grows nor shrinks, and is of extreme subtlety. Heaven and Earth are the fully formed expression of the Three Origins; it is the macrocosmos, while Man is the microcosmos. Heaven, Earth and Man communicate with and respond to one another, forming the entire system of Man and Heaven. Yuanji has summarized the relationship between Man and Heaven: "everyone is of one body with me; everything is of one root with me; Heaven and Earth are of one origin with me. Therefore, all beings should love one another." In the words of Zhang Zhixiang,

The purpose of Yuanji cultivation is to gather the Triple Origin of Heaven and Earth. When the Original Breath, Original Light, and Original Sound inside the human body are cultivated and gathered, and gradually linked with the Triple Origin of all beings in Heaven and Earth, the original potential of the human body is stimulated, it is connected with its atemporal (*xiantian* 先天) essence while its temporal (*houtian* 後天) composition is purified. The Oneness of Heaven and Man is attained, health and longevity are achieved, and spirituality is manifested. Potential energy is developed, thoroughly changing the con-

straints of the natural world on the human body, so that it becomes possible to master one's life, attain enlightenment to one's original essence, achieve the Oneness of Heaven and Man, and master the Universe.<sup>16</sup>

Yuanji Qigong developed the Daoist tradition of integrating the nourishment of health and virtue, using the material basis of the Three Origins to elucidate the intimate relationship between virtue and physical and mental health. In Yuanji studies, virtue is not only a social ideology but has a material foundation. In the *Yuanji Secret Register*, the highest state of harmony achieved through the movement and transformations of the Three Origins is called "Virtue." Yuanji Qigong pursues the harmony of human body and mind (*xingming shuangxiu* 性命雙修), of man and society, and of man and nature. If disharmony of the Three Origins occurs in Heaven, Earth, or the human body, disasters and illnesses will arise. In order to have a good living environment and to maintain physical and mental health, we should try hard to cultivate our mind, spiritual nature, and virtue. Therefore, nourishment of virtue is not only an external social need, it is also needed to guarantee individual physical and mental health. For example, students are required to have pure thoughts, to hold to awakening to truth, and to follow the upright Law during cultivation and refinement. They should seek after good, expel evil, commune with all beings, empathize with all people, and nourish an awe-inspiring righteousness. These ideas become the basis of a kind of self-suggestion for practitioners, as signals that permeate from the level of consciousness into the subconscious, producing positive effects on the development of personality. More concretely in their social behavior, Yuanji practitioners are constantly reminded to abide by the following precepts: "Obey the orders of the government. Do not violate laws and discipline. Take benefiting mankind as your own responsibility. Respect teachers and elders. Treasure life and all things. Do not indulge in drink or lust. Do not steal or gamble. Do not speak or act arrogantly. Do not become extravagant nor lazy. Do not disobey parents or act unfilial. Do not outwardly obey orders but secretly ignore them. Do not act perfidiously. Do not get infatuated with unknown things."

### *Reforming the Means of Transmission*

Zhang Zhixiang, in his concern for keeping pace with the times, carried out many reforms of the means of transmission of the teachings. Originally, Yuanjigong forbade any disclosure of its norms for nourishing virtue. But Zhang broke the rule and revealed the secrets. He abolished the custom

of “buying Dao with gold” (obtaining secret initiations in exchange for generous donations to masters), sharing the teachings with anyone willing to learn Yuanji Qigong. In addition, he changed the means of transmission from one-on-one teaching to classes of dozens, hundreds, or even thousands. Yuanjigong practice originally required lighting candles and burning incense. However, these rites caused Zhang much trouble over the years and he was accused of promoting religious superstition. Thus, he abolished them, even though they had been transmitted for several hundred years, and replaced the traditions of burning incense and immersion in water with sitting in meditation. Traditionally, Yuanjigong emphasized the hierarchical distinctions between master and disciples: when a disciple saw his master, he had to kneel on the ground and kowtow. Zhang abolished the rule of kowtow as well.

### *Reforming Management and Organizational Forms*

Accomplished Daoists in past generations regarded saving the people and serving society as their mission and ideal in life. In order to achieve these ideals, they established systems of precepts and institutions for temple management. This was the foundation of the survival and development of Daoism. In this regard, Zhang Zhixiang emphasized the integrated cultivation of techniques and meritorious deeds, in order to adapt and contribute to society.

The administration of the Yuanji headquarters always ostentatiously followed the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Every opening ceremony of Yuanji training classes began with the song *No Communist Party, No New China* (*Meiyou Gongchandang jiu meiyou xin Zhongguo* 沒有共產黨就沒有新中國), while the national anthem of the People's Republic of China was played at every closing ceremony. Zhang Zhixiang himself always wore a Mao suit.

Although Zhang Zhixiang was not a member of a political party, the Yuanji headquarters had a fully developed CCP organization. From the Party Committee to small Party groups at the grassroots, activities were regularly held at each level. The secretary of the Party Committee took part in decision making and management of the headquarters. Zhang followed the leadership of the Party secretary, invited the secretary to make speeches at every important function, and reported to him after returning from trips. All of this occurred at least in form.

The management of the Yuanji headquarters was carried out by the Chinese Society for Yuanji Studies in a modern managerial style; it established a commercial enterprise, the Lianhuashan 蓮花山 Group, which ran



a hospital, a trade company, a construction company, a martial arts academy, a school of calligraphy, a travel agency, a factory, and an audiovisual production company, with a total of more than 1,200 employees.

Provincial and municipal Yuanji studies societies organized training sessions all over the country. These branches were not administratively subordinate to the headquarters; rather, in a manner akin to a franchise, they maintained technical and financial links. Headquarters provided branches with technical guidance, and in return they paid a proportion of the tuition fees collected from Yuanjigong classes to the headquarters.

Yuanji organizations, connected in this way, were no longer religious organizations but became academically or technically professional ones. In contrast to normal academic organizations, however, there was a stronger connection between participants at the spiritual level, with more mutual recognition among students in the pursuit of learning and moral integrity.

At the opening and closing ceremonies of Yuanji Qigong classes, senior Yuanji practitioners were typically invited to talk about their experience in practice. Their testimonies were devout and enthusiastic. On these occasions, they spoke excitedly about what they considered to be the most impressive Yuanji concept or about what they felt during *qi*-emitting sessions or *guanding* 貫頂 rites during the class. Many students reported feeling their minds connected to one another and their spirits sublimated. Under mutual inspiration and influence, the effectiveness of Yuanji Qigong was praised and even exaggerated by the students. The most commonly reported effects were curing diseases, notable improvements in health, harmonization of emotional disturbances and interpersonal conflicts, and so on. In this process, intimacy and mutual trust grew among the students, forming an atmosphere of strong spiritual support and even making them into intimate friends.

### *The Marriage of Yuanji and Modern Science*

Launching scientific research on Yuanji to affiliate it with modern science was an important step in the modern transformation of Yuanjidao and in the attempt to build up Yuanji studies. Zhang Zhixiang not only cooperated with researchers from Japan, the United States, and other countries, but he also took part in scientific research on Yuanji medicine himself.

In 1990, the First Yuanji Theory Symposium was held at Lianhuashan, where 194 representatives from more than 70 research institutes, colleges, and universities across the country came to discuss Yuanji studies from three angles—traditional culture, modern science, and scientific experimentation. The meeting was a milestone in the development of Yuanji



studies: Zhang presented the “Basic Principle of Yuanji Studies” at the meeting and formally proposed the idea of Yuanji studies and its theoretical framework. The proposed research focus was the laws of transformation of the formed and formless in Heaven, Earth, and all beings. Nearly 100 papers submitted by scholars of different disciplines tried to link Yuanji studies with different academic fields.

Thereafter, the Second and Third Yuanji Theory Symposia were held in 1991 and 1995.<sup>17</sup> Zhang Zhixiang presented the *Theory of Harmony* (*helun* 和論) at the Second Symposium. In his paper, he integrated the essence of Chinese culture with the contents of the *Yuanji Secret Register* and described the concept, origin, laws, application, and polarization of “harmony” based on his own insights through cultivation. The maxim he composed based on the *Yuanji Secret Register*—“harmony of mind and body brings life; harmony of Man and matter brings intimacy; harmony of Man and Heaven brings spiritual efficacy”—was engraved on a huge stone tablet bearing the Chinese character for “harmony” (*he* 和) and became the most inspiring and influential saying of Yuanji theory.

The Chinese Society for Yuanji Studies also invested a considerable amount of capital in subsidizing researchers from colleges, universities, and research institutes across the country to carry out scientific research on Yuanji. Zhang established the journal *Scientific Studies of Man and Heaven* (*Rentian kexue yanjiu* 人天科學研究) in 1992 as a platform for publishing the results of this research. After two years, this journal was recognized by the State Education Commission as a national-level scientific journal. By 1998, more than twenty volumes of research papers had been published.

In just a few years, the Chinese Society for Yuanji Studies was thus able to mobilize scientific resources to a degree rarely surpassed by other *qigong* denominations. Between 1987 and 1997, the society cooperated with experts and professors in more than thirty local and overseas universities and more than fifty research institutes, and conducted nearly one hundred Yuanji research projects. Disciplines represented included philosophy, medicine, agriculture, mathematics, psychology, management, biology, anthropology, eugenics, physics, education, and music education. Research was also conducted on the growth of crop production like wheat, cotton, and paddy rice, as well as the treatment of diseases such as fractures, cancers, hypertension, and deafness. Researchers included members of the China Academy of Sciences, professors, researchers, associate professors, doctors, attending physicians, engineers, and lecturers. The researchers came from colleges, universities, and research institutes across

the country, such as the China Academy of Sciences, China Pharmaceutical University, Wuhan University, Wuhan Transportation University, Tongji Medical University, Dongbei University of Finance and Economics, Liaoning Normal University, Dalian University, Dalian University of Technology, Dalian Institute of Light Industry, Beihang University, Zhangjiakou Communication College, Hubei Medical University, Hubei Provincial TCM Research Institute, Central South University, Hainan University, Shandong University, and the Shanxi Provincial Plant Protection Research Institute. There were also researchers who came from industrial firms such as the Wuhan Iron and Steel Cold Rolling Plant and the Hubei Xishui Towel Manufacturing Plant. In addition, rear service and medical service personnel in the army participated, such as members of the Logistics Laboratory of the Jinan Military Area Command, the Science and Technology Committee of the Second Artillery Force, and the Shenyang Military Area Command.<sup>18</sup> Foreigners were also present as well, such as Professor Suzuki of the University of Electro-Communications in Japan and Dr. Li Hongqi of Ohio State University.

Most of these researchers were themselves Yuanji practitioners, but they had a variety of motives for launching Yuanji research, which can be divided into the following major categories: First, there were those who, because of their enthusiasm for exploring unknown scientific domains and their personal interest in Yuanji studies, hoped to further explore the mystery of Yuanji studies and its effects through scientific research. This was in the context of the explosion of popular and scientific interest in paranormal abilities in the 1980s.<sup>19</sup> Some people were curious about these phenomena as observed in relation to Yuanjigong, which could not be explained or illustrated by modern scientific theories. They believed that a breakthrough in the development of science could be reached through this research. They also believed that Yuanji studies was superior to conventional modern science, and that the former could not be judged or assessed by the latter. Others hoped to make new breakthroughs or find new insights in their own areas of specialization. Second, some of the researchers or their families had personally benefited physically or psychologically from Yuanji Qigong or Zhang Zhixiang. For example, their chronic diseases had been cured or improved, their family conflicts were solved, or their personality had improved. Others had discovered the practical effects of Yuanji Qigong or Yuanji music, such as accidentally finding unexpected gains in agriculture. And finally, a number launched the research solely for the sake of getting research funding.

In order to enhance the level of the scientific research and to strengthen the applied value of Yuanji studies, Zhang Zhixiang was eager to invite influential experts to participate in the research, such as Wang Jisheng 王極盛, a renowned psychologist in the Chinese Academy of Sciences and researcher on *qigong* psychology, and Zhang Guangxue 張廣學, a well-known entomologist in the Chinese Academy of Sciences. These only accounted for a small minority of the researchers, but their influence was considerable.

It should be noted that research topics were set with the hope of gaining recognition based on the standards of modern science, according to the classification of modern academic subjects and their theoretical models. Among the projects, the results of sixteen projects, including "Research on the Biomedical Effects of Yuanji Qigong," "Research on the Composite Geology of Lianhuashan" and "Research on the Breeding of SL2-111 Fungus with the Yuanji Magnetic Field (*Yuanji chang* 元極場) and Physical Agents" passed municipal, provincial, and national verifications for scientific and technological achievements. In Yongxing County, Hunan, a new species of paddy rice nurtured with the use of the Triple Origin energy passed the verification and was specifically designated for promotion. The germination rate and the disease-resistant performance of the rice were claimed to have increased remarkably and its production also increased by 10 percent on average. The research on SL2-111 fungus conducted by Shandong University was tested in the factory production process and it was claimed that the economic benefits were significantly enhanced.

According to data presented at the Yuanji Medical Research Conference held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing in December 1997, the overall rate of effectiveness of Yuanji medicine in curing different kinds of diseases such as late-stage cancers, paralyses, and cardiovascular diseases was claimed to reach 77.76 percent. Over five years, more than 1,300 late-stage cancer patients, with a total of 21 kinds of cancers, were treated and the rate of effectiveness was claimed to be an average of 56.30 percent. Remarkable effects were claimed in relieving pain and improving mental states. Among the patients, many had been diagnosed as "hopelessly incurable" by different large hospitals, but Yuanji medicine gave them hope. Therefore, Chen Youbang 陳佑邦, Vice Chairman of the China Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine, acknowledged the special medical effects of Yuanji medicine and stressed that Yuanji deserved to be researched using modern science and theories of traditional Chinese medicine.

## APPLYING YUANJIGONG TO REFORM PRISONERS

One of the notable examples of applying Yuanji Qigong in modern society was in the field of correctional education given to criminals.<sup>20</sup> In 1991, Master Zhang Zhixiang gave a talk on Yuanji Qigong to criminals in the Shandong Provincial Correctional Services Department, with promising results. It was claimed that some were moved to tears and said, "If I had been able to listen to that before, I would not have committed crimes." From then on, Yuanji Research Groups at the Central South University and Tongji Medical University conducted Yuanji studies workshops for prisoners in Changsha Prison and Wuhan Womens' Prison.<sup>21</sup>

In July 1994, the Yuanji Research Group of Central South University began a cooperation with the Hunan Prisons Bureau and Changsha Prison to test the application of Yuanjigong as a physical and mental therapy for prisoners. The number of subjects totaled forty-one: twenty-two male, nineteen female. Following the format of Yuanjigong courses, instructors imparted theories, performed static and dynamic *qigong* training, and used *qi* emission techniques to adjust prisoners' physical and mental states. Meanwhile, an extra course was set up that was adapted for the prisoners, in which they studied the connotation and relationship among psychology, morality, and *qigong*. The instructors expounded self-education and self-rectification, lectured on the relationship between physical and mental health and morality, and discussed the harmful effects of immoral behavior. They explained the significance of spiritual training from the perspective of both social and personal needs. Finally, by means of *guan-ding* initiation rites, the teachers infused Triple-Origin *qi* into the students to improve their mental and physical quality.

During the week-long training and therapy sessions, the prisoners showed the following reactions:

*First day.* In the morning, the students were very suspicious and hostile to the instructors. Many expressed antipathy to Yuanji music. The overall atmosphere was extremely tense. In the afternoon, the teachers explained the theory of the Yuanji Diagram, and then emitted *qi* energy into the room. Some female prisoners, who listened carefully and earnestly received the *qi*, said that they began to suffer from pain, tingles, itching, nausea, and headaches. Many male prisoners, however, could hardly feel anything. The instructors asserted that this was because they were not receptive to absorbing the *qi* according to their instructions.

*Second day.* The teacher lectured on the theory and practice of static

*qigong*, imparted a mantra to the students, and infused *qi* into the field. The suspicious attitude of the students was reduced, and more began to say that they were feeling the *qi*. Their somatic reactions were exactly the same as the previous day. Three female students who had committed malignant crimes suffered not only physical pain such as headaches, but also showed psychological discomfort through tears.

*Third day.* The teacher lectured on dynamic *qigong*, and the somatic reactions of the students were similar to the previous day. Some individuals had even more intense reactions. However, as the course contents deepened, some symptoms such as nausea and headaches gradually disappeared. Four students felt as if there was a warm torrent running through their body, which made them light-hearted and comfortable.

*Fourth day.* The teacher lectured on the theory of psychology, morality, and *qigong* theory, and then performed "psychological therapy" on the prisoners. This involved "direct treatment of psychological disorders" and "adjusting the students' bodies and minds" by emitting "gentle Triple-Origin energy," after which several entered into convulsions. From then on, their suspicion and hostility were largely eliminated, and almost every student entered a more reflective state. Some prisoners who had been convicted for murders and other serious crimes began to self-reflect.

*Fifth day.* The teacher performed *guanding* initiations on every student. He "infused gentle Triple-Origin energy into their bodies," "adjusted their minds and bodies through the energy," and thus claimed to "eliminate illness from both their corporal and spiritual systems." More than half of the students stated that they could see the "Original Light" (a kind of aura) emitted by the teacher, or expressed feelings of warmth and comfort.

*Sixth day.* An experience-sharing session was held, followed by a graduation ceremony. Eleven students volunteered to describe their experience. One woman who had committed murder and was on death row said, "I used to feel tired all over. On the first day of the class, I suffered headaches, nausea, and tiredness. Later on, I felt better and better. Finally, I felt strong all over, and my melancholy was transformed." A male student sentenced to six years' imprisonment said, "Since learning Yuanjigong, I feel more energetic than ever before. My insomnia has improved. I now profoundly understand how to become an upright person. I used to be irascible, but I have been gradually straightening up as I learn Yuanjigong. I am more open than before." The students appreciated the teachers for helping them rediscover their confidence. They even felt that they were taller and they could see farther. Many were in tears. Some even lowered their heads

and sobbed. The atmosphere became very emotional among prisoners and instructors alike.

Drawing on this experience, Dr. Wu Hanrong 吳漢榮 of Tongji Medical University and the renowned Chinese psychologist Wang Jisheng of the Institute of Psychology of the China Academy of Sciences, continued cooperation with the Wuhan Womens' Prison and the China Society for Yuanji studies. They held Yuanji classes in the Wuhan prison in 1995 and 1996 and repeated the sessions with female prisoners. Finally, they reached the conclusion that "Triple-Origin energy" could notably ameliorate the disruptive attitude and behavior of prisoners, improve their level of health, and alleviate their physical pain and hostility.

### *The Mechanism of Yuanji Psychotherapy*

Just as in the Daoist theory of inner alchemy, Yuanjigong considers spiritual training to combine moral cultivation and the maintenance of our "atemporal" (*xiantian*) essence, which exists in our bodies and dominates all our activities with unlimited potential. Our "temporal" (*houtian*) characteristics refer to the acquired vices of human beings. Temporal and atemporal characteristics coexist in our bodies. They ebb and flow according to the movement of the universe and our own activity. If our life system conforms to the laws of the cosmos, we will be very healthy. Otherwise, the Triple-Origin energy in our life system will become maladjusted, which will lead to pathological changes.

In our temporal lives, our atemporal essence gradually becomes obscure and "temporal characteristics" increase incessantly as a result of passion and desire. We become greedy, fatuous, and fractious, and then our "temporal characteristics" dominate the atemporal essence. Yuanji generalizes "wine, lechery, money, and smoking" as demons that injure the kidney, liver, lung, heart, and spleen, and thus cause turbulence among them. The maladjustment of both atemporal and temporal energies will lead to evil words and deeds and does harm to our spiritual and physical systems. As a result, we may suffer diseases.

Practicing Yuanjigong and silently reciting Yuanji mantras is a method for eliminating "temporal characteristics." If we maintain Triple-Origin energy in the body and absorb it from the universe, and then regulate our body to achieve the state of harmony, our troubles will disappear and happiness will be around us.

From the perspective of Yuanji studies, prisoners' psychological difficulties lead to severe disharmony of the Triple-Origin energy field in

their bodies, which results in maladjustment and turbulence of their spiritual system. Making students learn and practice Yuanjigong and infusing Triple-Origin energy into their bodies is a way to adjust their spiritual and corporeal systems. It maintains the Triple-Origin energy in their bodies and helps them to absorb Triple-Origin energy from the universe, so that the corresponding point of the body will change. Therefore, we could achieve the aim of treating disease as well as spiritual and physical training.

As we saw, during the process of infusing energy, some female prisoners who listened and earnestly received the energy began to suffer from pain, tingling, itching, nausea, and headaches. Many male students could hardly feel anything. As we progressed in the class their discomfort gradually disappeared and their physical and mental state also appeared to improve.

The Yuanji instructors explained the results as follows: first, the extreme disharmony of the Triple Origin field in the bodies of criminals resulted in the maladjustment and turbulence of their “information system” (spiritual system). When the Triple-Origin energy was infused into their bodies, it clashed drastically with the original disharmonious spiritual system. Therefore the criminals suffered severe discomfort—as exemplified by the fact that the three convicted murderers manifested the strongest reactions. The pathology in their spiritual system took the form of physical reactions. With the infusion of Yuanjigong and the reinforcement of Triple Origin energy, the turbulence and disharmony in their bodies was ameliorated. The inner conflict was also relieved and the disorganized mentality became well-regulated. Therefore, their physical symptoms were alleviated to some extent.

Second, Yuanjigong requires the practitioner to be gentle and mild, to pursue kindness and get rid of evil. Then the Triple-Origin energy in the body will be well regulated and we can achieve the harmony of body and mind, the harmony of all the systems in bodies, and the harmony of society and nature. For example, in the seventh stage of the Yuanjigong method, the practitioner should imagine himself standing firm between heaven and earth, with an indomitable spirit in his body. He should also reflect that he is linked to everything on earth, sharing the same origin with nature. This notion serves the function of moral orientation. It enhances the emotion and consciousness that we are in harmony with others and the universe in the process of practicing Yuanjigong. It also helps us realize the essential relationship between self and nature: being in harmony with the cosmos arises instinctually, not out of compulsion. Through practicing Yuanjigong



still meditation, one can relax the body and mind and then achieve a tranquil state of mind, thus cultivating the habit of introspection. This replaces greed and anger with the virtues of mercy and tranquility.

Third, Yuanji theory, which combines moral cultivation and health preservation, exerts a strong influence on the prisoners. It expounds the importance of moral cultivation from the angle of humans' basic need to be physically and mentally healthy: moral reflection is a prerequisite of mental and physical health. Moral cultivation serves the function of revealing one's "atemporal essence" and eliminating temporal characteristics. Therefore, we need to reflect on our faults, wipe out our desires, and eliminate negative external influences according to the rule of moral cultivation. Only through arousing our nature and eliminating chaotic thoughts can we keep the harmony and health of the body and mind. Besides, moral reflection serves the function of tranquilizing our minds, wiping out vexations, and leading to insights. Our atemporal wisdom and talent will express themselves when we reflect on our words and deeds, and align them with the rule of "harmony."

Therefore, moral cultivation is the inner need of individuals, filling our hearts with joy and peace, releasing people from vexations, and obtaining freedom. This combines the lower needs of physical health and the higher needs of moral consummation, and lays a solid foundation for prisoners to self-consciously perform moral cultivation and reflection. With the deepening of moral reflection, moral feelings such as tolerance, sympathy and love, and the corresponding behavior, will appear.

#### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE YUANJI HEADQUARTERS

In 1987, wishing to promote the economic development of their county, the officials of Ezhou 鄂州, Zhang Zhixiang's hometown, invited him to start a business there. The officials also permitted him to choose a suitable location as the base for the transmission of Yuanji Qigong, and as a center for therapy and scientific research. At last, Zhang chose Lianhuashan, which is located near Lake Yanglan, as the site for his headquarters.

Yuanji Hall (Yuanjitang 元極堂) is the first representative building in Yuanji's base. Some research reports have claimed that Yuanji Hall possesses special magnetic powers. Followers also say that the crop yield of seeds planted inside the Hall doubles that of ordinary seeds, and that food there stays fresh for a longer period of time. Yuanji practitioners could be seen sitting in meditation inside the hall, or walking around the building. They believed doing so could strengthen their body, cure their illnesses,



or comfort their mind. They even tried every means to put food or appliances inside the hall, hoping to absorb the Triple-Origin energy released by the Yuanji magnetic field. All sorts of stories circulated about purported paranormal phenomena associated with the hall. For example, in 1993, at the activities held at the hall during the Dragon Boat festival, participants reported seeing a strange mist above the golden roof of the hall, lingering in the air and dancing with the breeze. It looked like mist or fog, but on closer examination, it was actually neither of them. It did not clear and the sight lasted for forty minutes. The golden roof of the hall is an airtight spherical structure, so why and how does mist appear around it? Some people asked Zhang about this and he replied that the mist was in fact a cloud of flies. Followers speculated that the flies could also sense the special magnetic field of the golden roof of the hall and were attracted by its magnetic effects.

By 1992, the gross floor area of Yuanji's base reached 30,000 square meters and the total land area reached 264 acres. Its facilities included Yuanji Hospital, the Forest of Steles (*Beilin* 碑林)—a collection of inscribed stone tablets—and Yuanming Tower. By 2000, its fixed assets amounted to 400 million *yuan* and its capital reached over 7 million *yuan*.

Zhang Zhixiang considered that only by closely linking Yuanji studies with the achievements of traditional Chinese culture could a sound foundation for its survival and development in modern society be established; and only by constructing the Yuanji headquarters as a rallying place for the essence of human civilization could it gain a foothold in Ezhou and, at the same time, link up with the world. The Lianhuashan Forest of Steles was an important means to attain such objectives.

Among the various scenic spots on Lianhuashan, the Forest of Steles is the most striking. It aims to incorporate the essence of both Chinese and foreign, ancient and modern cultures. With a total land area of 30,000 square meters, it is built in harmony with the mountain. It consists of around 10,000 inscribed stone tablets—more than three times as many as the Xi'an *beilin*, the most famous collection in China. In the construction process, thousands of inscribed stone tablets, scripts of historical records, books, and paintings were collected from donations of local and overseas intellectuals of various social backgrounds. This shows the rallying power of Zhang as the advocate and designer of the Forest of Steles.

Yuanji's base was regarded as "the home of the heart" by its students. I went to Lianhuashan to carry out on-the-spot investigation at the Yuanji festival (which occurs on the same date as the popular Dragon Boat festival) when the largest number of Yuanji students would gather together, and

during the Lunar New Year. Every time, the number of students reached around 20,000. Boarding and lodging conditions and other resources were rather limited, and sometimes even full when a bed had to be shared between two students. However, they still got along in harmony and delight, and they showed a high consciousness of keeping order and protecting the environment.

Yuanji studies straddled traditional culture and modern science, and incorporated mainstream political ideology and the achievements of modern science into its own theoretical system. It is a significant case of reforms of Daoism in modern society.

PART III

Daoism, Chinese Diasporas,  
and Globalization



## 10. Daoism, Local Religious Movements, and Transnational Chinese Society

*The Circulation of Daoist Priests, Three-in-One Self-Cultivators, and Spirit Mediums between Fujian and Southeast Asia*

Kenneth Dean

Three vibrant ritual traditions active in contemporary Putian 莆田 County in coastal Fujian Province, and which have spread to Southeast Asia, speak to the relevance of Daoism to contemporary life and issues of modernity and globalization in China today.<sup>1</sup> These are the Daoist liturgical tradition, the self-cultivation methods of the Three-in-One 三一教 religious movement, and the training of spirit mediums by the Tanban 壇班 (Altar associations). The first two ritual traditions can be found throughout Putian and Xianyou 仙游 counties, while the third is found only in the northern Putian coastal alluvial plain. All three ritual traditions will be briefly discussed below in the context of their interrelated local and transnational history. Each contributed to the building up of the multiple layers of networks of religious expression currently found in Putian. The multilayered range of spatial relationships to local place, created via different kinds of ritual action, fold in and extend outward to a broad range of transnational flows of people, capital, ideas, and images. In this process, paradoxically, Daoist-certified ritual specialists and spirit mediums become global citizens.

The construction over different historical eras of multiple planes of religious expression by these ritual traditions results today in many different, overlapping, intertwined, and multilayered cultural resources that are all accessible within the open system of contemporary Putian religion. Daoist ritual, Three-in-One self-cultivation, and spirit possession each fundamentally transform time in distinct ways, generating worlds of difference within ritual-events in the Putian plains. Daoist liturgy works to reverse the flow of time, returning the officiant to the undifferentiated Dao, while also accelerating cosmic cycles through the revelation of sacred talismans and texts and manipulation of cosmic forces. Three-in-One Daoist inner

alchemy enables any initiated individual practitioner to transform their body into a crucible of immortalization, all the while insisting on the vital role of morality and Confucian virtue in everyday life. Spirit mediums possessed by the gods enter into a mythic time-space marked by rhythmic chants and choreographic patterns of group dance that trace the shape of sacred symbols. Many of these spirit mediums are now receiving training thanks to Overseas Chinese funding provided by wealthy Indonesian, Malaysian, and Singapore businessmen, most of whom are themselves also spirit mediums in their home temples.

At first glance one might describe Daoist liturgy, which formed over many centuries, as reflecting a traditional cosmological worldview, and the Three in One, founded in the sixteenth century by Lin Zhao'en 林兆恩 (1517–79), with its discourse of individual self-transformation and its recent use of scientific terminology, as representative of a more modern worldview.<sup>2</sup> The ritual tradition of the spirit mediums of northern coastal Putian, which dates back only to the mid-nineteenth century,<sup>3</sup> has been revived over the past twenty-five years through the actions of Southeast Asian Overseas Chinese emigrants. This could be seen as strangely post-modern instance of a reinvented ritual tradition, in which a reconstructed cultural and spiritual tradition actively confronts the impacts of capitalism and modernity.

Rather than portray these three traditions in terms of a typical modernization schema of traditional, modern, and postmodern, this chapter argues that the interpenetration of these ritual traditions within the syncretic field of Chinese ritual in contemporary Putian and diasporic communities completely breaks down the modernization schema, enabling one to instead reconsider the role of ritual as a site for the active and creative negotiation of modernity. These ritual traditions interact with forces of the state and of capital, as well as with the cosmic forces they themselves mobilize, generating impossible worlds (worlds that should not be able to coexist but do so nonetheless) within the ritual events of contemporary Fujian and Southeast Asia.

This chapter begins with a brief presentation of the three traditions as they developed in Putian in imperial China, spread through migration to Southeast Asia, and revived in the mainland in the post-Mao period. Then, I focus on the circulation of memories, religious specialists, and discourses of authenticity between Putian and Singapore, through the cases of the Jiulidong 九鯉洞 Temple in the Shiting 石庭 area of Putian and its branches in Southeast Asia, and the *pudu* 普度 (rite of Universal Deliverance) as held in Singapore and Putian. What we can observe is that while all three

traditions continue to play a structuring role in the religious life of both native and diasporic communities, the spirit-writing traditions of the mediums, which offer direct access to the gods, have played a greater role in the Putian diaspora than the Daoist priests, who are much more associated with local memory. It is thus primarily through the spirit mediums and their temples that Overseas Chinese have reimported traditional religion to Putian. At the same time, religious circulation between the mainland and diasporic communities has led to a transformation of traditional hierarchies between ancestral and branch temples into a mirror relationship, in which each is invoked as a source of legitimacy by the other.

#### LOCAL DAOIST RITUAL TRADITIONS IN PUTIAN

Daoist ritual traditions in the Putian area have a long history, reaching back to the Han dynasty, when the Nine Immortal He 何九仙 brothers are said to have stayed by a lake with a waterfall known as the Nine Carp Lake (Jiulihu 九鯉湖). The caves and temples around Nine Carp Lake are still a key site for dream divination in the Xinghua 興化 region. The great Shangqing 上清 Daoist Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 visited Fujian in search of cavern heavens and alchemical ingredients. The first recorded Daoist temple was built in the Putian area in 628, not long after the founding of Putian District in 568. Daoism in Putian likely flourished in the Five Dynasties period (907–60), when the Daoist Master Chen Shouyuan 陳守元 (fl. 930–33) built Daoist temples for the Kings of Min in the Fuzhou 福州 area, and Daoist Master Tan Zixiao 譚紫霄 (fl. 936–76) was active in the Quanzhou 泉州 area.<sup>4</sup> Tan Zixiao is reputed to be the founder of the Tianxin Zhengfa 天心正法 (Orthodox Way of the Heart of Heaven), while Chen Shouyuan is linked in legends to the Lüshanpai 閩山派 ritual tradition of the goddess Chen Jinggu 陳靖姑. Both these ritual traditions have left strong traces in the local cults and ritual traditions of Putian. Daoist temples were built or restored in Putian in 1009, 1119, and 1296. In 1314 Salt and Iron Commissioner Fang Guangweng 方廣翁 donated land in Putian city for the construction of the Wanshougong 萬壽宮. The magnificent Sanqingdian 三清殿 (Hall of the Three Pure Ones), still standing in Putian city, dates to the Yuan as well, and is considered an architectural treasure of China.

By the Ming dynasty, Daoist masters were based in the Chenghuang miao 城隍廟 (City God Temple) of Putian (built in 1370), where they operated within a double hierarchy. On the one hand they performed rites for the state, and on the other they stood at the head of a loose hierarchy of

all the temples dedicated to popular gods in each city.<sup>5</sup> A pillar dated 1631 in the remains of the old Putian City God Temple is inscribed as follows: “Daoist Masters Yang Daguan 楊大琯, Huang Zhen 黃鎮, Chen Zhenyuan, Guo Wei, and Zheng Xuan 鄭璇 together raised funds and built the temple” 道士楊大琯, 黃鎮, 陳貞元, 郭稷, 鄭璇, 仝募捐. 崇禎四年歲次辛未季秋吉旦. This suggests that Daoist Masters were active in the City God Temple throughout the Ming. The City God Temple of Putian, which is currently being rebuilt, used to take its god on procession around the entire city, displaying the god’s powers to other temples and communities.

Although lack of space prevents us from treating this topic in detail, it is clear that by the mid-Ming a system of regional ritual temple alliances was beginning to take shape in the irrigated Putian plain, and invited Daoist ritual masters were playing a key role in the ritual-events of this evolving local network.

Over the past ten years, I have conducted a survey of ritual activities in the irrigated Putian plain (roughly 440 km<sup>2</sup>).<sup>6</sup> So far I have gathered information on over 2,500 temples found in 724 villages of the Putian plain. These temples have on average 3 to 4 gods, but some have over 30. Not all of the 1,200 different gods we have located in this region demand birthday rituals, but the most important in each temple do. The village temples of the alluvial plain of Putian are arranged into 153 ritual alliances. In order to be a full member of such an alliance, each natural village must have its own independent *she* 社 (Altar of the Soil and the Grain). Each regional ritual alliance, known locally as a *qijing* 七境 (seven-fold ritual territorial alliance) has a main temple, and several *qijing* join together to celebrate in even higher order temples, such as the Dongyue Guan 東嶽觀 (Belvedere of the Eastern Peak) Temple in Jiangkou 江口, where week-long processions are held each year at the Yuanxiao 元宵 festival in the first lunar month. The gods of the Dongyueguan periodically go on a major procession themselves to all the ninety villages of the Jiangkou Nananbi irrigation system, traditionally once every sixty years, thus in the 1930s and again in 1993, but more recently in 2003 as well. Daoist rituals are usually performed during these processions and communal ritual-events.

Each region of Putian supports a range of Daoist ritual troupes, from the most skilled and famous to more average troupes who perform simpler rites for lesser fees. Putian Daoist masters practice primarily Zhengyi 正一 rites with a mix of certain localized ritual traditions.<sup>7</sup> Daoist masters maintain home altars to Lord Lao and keep a collection of liturgical manuscripts and scriptures and a set of paintings of Daoist deities for use in ritual performances.<sup>8</sup> They perform a wide range of communal rites (*jiao*



醮), requiem services (*gongde* 功德), and minor rites (*xiaofa* 小法).<sup>9</sup> These rites can be performed at different scales of length and complexity (and cost) by one to nine (or more) priests. Daoist ritual masters are invited to perform *jiao* communal offering services at temples dedicated to local gods during the Yuanxiao festival period and on the birthdates of the local gods and occasionally for a special communal celebration. Daoist masters maintain a ritual troupe of disciples and acolytes to assist in the performance of these rites, although some rites are performed by a single individual. Daoist ritual troupes work with groups of musicians (the Daoist masters themselves usually are also skilled musicians, drummers, singers, dancers, and instrumentalists). Each region of Putian supports a range of Daoist ritual services.

For example, there are five Daoist troupes in the Jiangkou region of northern Putian. The troupe under the direction of Daoist Master Wu Jiutao 吳九濤 of Shiting is the best known. This is the troupe regularly invited to lead the *saigonghui* 師公會 Daoist rites at the Dongyueguan, the main temple for the entire Jiangkou region, during the Yuanxiao celebrations. Daoist Master Wu and his two sons, along with the other members of his troupe, have twice been invited to perform rites in Singapore at Jiulidong (Nine Carp Cavern) Temple during the decennial *fengjia pudu* 逢甲普渡 (a festival of universal salvation held every ten years to commemorate the deliverance of Singapore from the Japanese at the end of World War II), in 1994 and 2004. The other Daoist troupes of the Jiangkou region, including that controlled by Master Wu of Jiangkou Township and that of Master Chen of Wuxing 五星 village, are kept very busy working for the many temples and families in the area. In this area of some ninety villages, it is possible to attend opera performances linked to ritual events 250 days out of the year, so there is a great demand for Daoist ritual. The result has been the simplification of many rites to very brief performances, usually lasting only a few hours and involving only a one or two priests. Only major rites, such as the *saigonghui* mentioned above, involve groups of up to nine Daoist ritual masters in more lengthy and involved ritual performances. Rituals are spread out over the entire Yuanxiao period, lasting over a month to allow smaller villages a chance to hold processions and Daoist rites. The birthdays of some of the more popular deities in the area, such as the Lord of the Mysterious Heaven (Xuantian Shangdi 玄天上帝), also sometimes have to be spread over several days to allow each temple to perform its rites. During these rites, Daoist masters set up portable altars within the village temples and carry out rites based on their liturgical manuscripts, including the recitation of scriptures.

The liturgical manuscripts and scriptures of the Putian Daoist Masters are signed each time they are copied with the name of their home altar (*tan* 壇), the source of their transmission, and with the name of their Daoist spiritual territory (*jing* 靖). The Daoist *tan* and *jing* are spiritual and spatial notions. Daoist Ritual Masters usually keep a list of temples and gods' birthdates at which they regularly officiate. This list delineates a network of sites linked to a particular Daoist *tan* (altar). In an inscription still standing in Hui'an 惠安 city and dated 1909 one finds a discussion of the hereditary rights of particular Daoist priests over Daoist rituals in the Leshan ward of the city.<sup>10</sup> In this case, a group of literati had decided to hire another Daoist ritual master instead of the one who claimed territorial rights to the area. The stele records the decision of the Hui'an district magistrate in favor of the literati coalition, who claimed that the Daoist master had merely purchased the rights to conduct rituals in the city ward for fifty ounces of silver, rather than having inherited the rights from his ancestors or having established a strong claim through a long personal relationship with the ward temples. This stele suggests both that long term ritual territorial claims were common in Fujian Daoism, and that they could be bought and sold. Daoism thus had a range of spatial and territorial relations to local networks of temples.

There is not enough space within this chapter to trace further the historical evolution of the spatial relationships of Putian Daoism with local temple networks, but there appears to have been at the very least a strong link and perhaps a fundamental contribution on the part of Daoism to the evolution of the regional ritual system of the Putian plains. Early Heavenly Masters Daoism divided Sichuan into twenty-four *zhi* 治 (dioceses), and in medieval systems this spatial division was expanded to cover all of China.<sup>11</sup> Other Daoist spatial systems also operated at an empire-wide scale, such as the *Dongtian fudi* 洞天福地 (Cavern Heavens and Blessed Lands), which linked China together via an underground network of passageways through which Daoist adepts could move at impossible speed.

A final example of Daoist transformations of space can be seen in the establishment of portable altars within popular god temples during Daoist rituals. These rituals involve the sacralization and transformation of space. The ritual space is charged with energy through the setting up of a highly symbolically structured, over-coded altar. Various cosmic forces (deities, vectors of force, planes of spiritual powers) are then brought into this space through invocations, ritual actions, and visualizations. Daoist masters work the different cosmic forces into their own layered microcosmic bod-

ies. After visualizing the recycling and purifying of these forces within themselves, they send them out again into the ritual space and the surrounding community. One might envision this in terms of Möbius strips connecting the spaces and forces of the outer cosmos through an almost imperceptible twist into the inside of the microcosmic body. Daoist ritual manipulations of time include the reversal of time in the return to the undifferentiated, the acceleration of cosmic cycles of revelation, and the evasion of obstructions of fate by slipping through cracks in time. Daoist ritual activates spatiotemporal continua outside the normal realm of everyday experience.

In the long process of the evolution of the local pantheon of the Putian plain one can also chart the rise of many different classes of deities at different historical periods. Many of these cults received assistance from Daoist ritual masters and later from Three in One scripture masters in composing a written record.<sup>12</sup> Such records range from invocational chants to liturgies devoted to particular deities to scriptures glorifying the same gods, and often identifying them as avatars of a higher Daoist astral deity. Much as these written texts seek to contain and shape the forces of popular religious expression, the multiple mythological time-spaces of many of these deities is continually and continuously reanimated and extended in the utterances of the spirit mediums of the Putian plains. Rather than claiming a unique territory to themselves in the manner of the gods and demons of the *Xiyouji* 西游記 (Journey to the West), the deities of the popular temples of the Putian plains are distributed in a dense, multistranded brocade across the region, with certain circuits and features rising to the surface.

The relationship between Daoist ritual and the broader communal ritual events of the Putian plains remains a contested topic. Clearly, Daoist ritual is still considered a crucial and central aspect of communal ritual in contemporary Putian. Nonetheless, the presence of many different liturgical frameworks within any one ritual event means that we must adopt a multifaceted historical approach to the analysis of contemporary Chinese rural religion. Such a perspective allows for a deeper appreciation of the paradoxes of ritual and modernity in contemporary China.

#### THE THREE IN ONE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

The *Sanyijiao* Three in One religious movement in the Xinghua region constructed yet another plane or layer of religious expression for interested individuals who voluntarily sought initiation into the movement.<sup>13</sup> The

Three in One movement is a direct result of scholar-literati Lin Zhao'en 林兆恩 taking certain potentialities of Wang Yangming 王陽明 neo-Confucianism to the masses, and then merging it with Buddhist meditation and Daoist inner alchemy. His followers developed a parallel ritual tradition modeled on that of local Daoist and Buddhist ritual specialists, writing scriptures and liturgies for Lin Zhao'en, apotheosized as the god Xiawuni 夏午尼, as well as for many local gods, and opening up space for individuals interested in self-cultivation as well as in those interested in the expression of moral and spiritual attainment through ritual practice. To this day, the Jiuxu xinfa 九序心法 (Nine Stage Heart Method) developed by Lin Zhao'en and his disciples is practiced in group and solitary meditation by half a million adherents of the Three in One religious movement in over 1,000 temples in Putian, Xianyou, Singapore, Malaysia, and Taiwan. Over fifty Three in One ritual troupes perform a wide range of liturgical services for Three in One temples and communities as well as temples dedicated to other popular deities. These ritual troupes also have established networks and ritual territories, and can also enter into new areas upon invitation and for a fee (usually less than that charged by Daoist or Buddhist troupes).

In the late Qing and through the Republican period, the Three in One developed compassionate societies that provided many basic social services in the context of a dissolving state, while at the same time extending its appeal to literati and popular circles via spirit-writing societies that extended the dialogue with divine forces by planchette writing. In the 1930s and once again in the 1980s and onward, this tradition developed substantial discursive links with science and modern life and education, often in the context of an expanded conception of Chinese medicine.<sup>14</sup> In all these aspects, the Three in One tradition paralleled developments within Daoism as a whole. Currently, the Three in One has gained quasi-official recognition by the Putian Religious Affairs Bureau after presenting itself as a modern method of moral and spiritual self-cultivation with a broad communal basis and widespread local organization.

Like the Putian Daoist ritual troupes, but at a far more popular participatory level, the Three in One religious movement has also developed into a complex network of temples distributed throughout Putian and Xianyou Counties. All these temples periodically present incense (*jinxiang* 進香) at the Zongkongtang 宗孔堂 (Hall for the Reverencing of Confucius) on Dongshan in Putian City or at the gravesite of Lin Zhao'en in Huating. This is a concentric network focusing on one or two central points. However, there are many smaller, active localized subsystems within this broader network. For example, there is a series of *lanpen pudu* 蘭盆普渡 (rites of

Universal Deliverance) ritual performances performed in the Jiangkou area, to which the different Three in One Halls are invited to send delegates. A similar but separate subsystem exists in the Hanjiang area. In recent years, the Three in One networks have become more and more active, sponsoring *jiangjing* 講經 (explication of the scripture) seminars and group meditations. There is no contradiction between participating in village ritual and also participating in Three in One ritual worship. This is simply yet another plane of religious expression that initiates can construct through their efforts at self-cultivation and ritual performance.

Generally speaking, one can see the Three in One as a movement that popularized Confucian self-cultivation, Buddhist meditation, and Daoist inner alchemy by developing a local institutional network of temples in the late Ming and early Qing, and again with great vigor in the late Qing and Republican period. Beyond the institutional network aspect of the Three in One, it is important to mention the extraordinary range of spatiotemporal experiences generated within sustained self-cultivation through inner alchemical methods and Buddhist inspired visualizations of the Nine Stage Heart Method. In this form of practice, one also finds fundamental transformation of space and time. Three in One ritual mobilizes these methods of visualization and self-transformation while outwardly mirroring Daoist and Buddhist liturgy.

#### THE TANBAN OF THE NORTHERN IRRIGATED PLAIN

Among the liturgical manuscripts of Daoist ritual masters in the northern Putian irrigated plain one finds a set of texts related to the transmission of precepts and Daoist diplomas to spirit mediums and their altar associates known locally as the Tanban (Altar Association). The earliest texts relating to this tradition located so far date to the 1840s. This is a spirit possession and spirit-writing tradition active up to the present throughout the northern irrigated Putian plain (containing some 200 villages) in which young boys and adolescents are confined in their village temple for three periods of training, lasting a week to ten days each. During this time they are taught chants invoking the gods of the temple, group line dances, and trance techniques. Those who are capable of dreaming of the gods are given special training as spirit mediums. They will be dressed as the gods of the temple in future ritual-events. At the end of the training, referred to locally as *guanjie* 關戒—confinement (within the temple) for reception of the precepts—the new Tanban troupe is divided into *shentong* 神童 (spirit mediums) and *futong* 扶童 (assistant lads) and each receives precepts and

an ordination diploma (*diewen* 牒文) from a Daoist priest, in the name of either the Lushan Dafayuan 廬山大法院 (Great Ritual Court of Mount Lu) or a more recent local ritual tradition, the Jinlun 金輪 (Golden Wheel).<sup>15</sup> These certificates are kept in small wooden boxes within the temple, in which small statuettes of gods of the temple are sometimes also housed. After undergoing a number of training sessions, the Tanban may undergo a *yuxiu* 預修 ritual (a preparatory cultivation rite—in effect a pre-death funeral or purification ritual that transforms the participants into living immortals). The Tanban are called upon to protect the boundaries of the village during the Yuanxiao rituals. They also serve as ritual assistants during funerals, since they are impervious to death pollution, and play major roles in other village ritual events. Tanban keep active throughout the year by spirit-writing with planchette in response to individual queries directed to the gods by villagers.

A number of extent stelae located in temples in the Jiangkou region of northern Putian, dating to the early Republican period, and usually labeled *Lidai gutan* 歷代古壇—Ancient Altar of the Generations (of Spirit Mediums)—also relate to the Tanban tradition. These stelae bear lists of former generations of Tanban, and serve as an altar for spirit medium possession and planchette writing.<sup>16</sup> Many recent (post-1980s) stelae have been carved, listing the names of newly initiated members of the *Lidai gutan*. Local legend claims that Chen Shouyuan, the Daoist Master and husband of Chen Jinggu, established 360 altars in the Putian plains in the Tang Dynasty. However, the earliest texts found relating to this tradition are from the late Qing reign of the Daoguang 道光 Emperor (1820–50). The most likely historical hypothesis would be that this ritual tradition developed its local network of spirit possession and spirit-writing *dong* 洞 (caverns) in the late Qing, perhaps in response to the decline of the state and the rise of intervillage feuding, referred to locally as the *wubaiqi xiedou* 烏白旗械斗 (intervillage feuding between black and white banner alliances). This local ritual tradition added yet another layer of religious expression into the open-ended Putian religious system.

There are several sets of sources on the Tanban ritual tradition, in addition to the stelae, the Daoist liturgies and the certificates issued by the leaders of the Tanban. These sources include the pronouncements of the gods made during spirit-writing séances during the *guanjie* training. These texts are written often in red ink on yellow sheets of paper, and preserved and displayed in the temples long after the ceremony has been completed. Yet another kind of source is the numerous red posted sheets

bearing temple accounts for particular ritual-events referring to the costs of the *guanjie* rites. As these training sessions must be performed three times, the communal expense involved is considerable. On the occasion of the third *guanjie*, the mediums and altar associates climb a ladder of swords, which is kept in a side room of the temple for future use.

Traditionally, training would take place once in every generation, but as a recent posted flyer pointed out, young men frequently leave the villages for work in the cities or factories when they reach their early twenties. Thus it has proven necessary to conduct up to three separate training sessions in some villages since the early 1980s, creating three generations of spirit mediums within a single generation. Young men in these communities take pride in their initiations and their knowledge of the worlds of the gods. The *shentong* play an active role in communicating with the gods through planchette writing sessions and through invocatory chant, possession, spontaneous trance, dance, song, and inspired speech. Spirit possession marks the irruption of multiple mythological times and temporalities into everyday time. The insistence of the god and the urgency of communication via the possessed *shentong* replaces the quest for origins or any gradual narration of historical change.

Some temples in the Jiangkou area now maintain more or less continuous spirit-medium training centers for their surrounding villages. An initiation ceremony is the occasion for the reassertion of a local network of temples. Many neighboring village temples send delegations and gifts to support the costs of the ceremonies. Regular ties between temple networks are reaffirmed by annual *caihua* 採花 (plucking of fireworks) multivillage processions, in which the mediums from each temple attempt to outdo one another by enduring feats of pain including breathing in the jet of sparks from massive Roman Candle fireworks. In some areas, spirit mediums are chosen at random by the gods, and there is no specialized *guanjie* training. In these areas, there is sometimes a greater emphasis on feats of pain, such as self-flagellating with a mace, causing considerable but controlled bloodshed.

Much of the impetus for the revival of spirit medium training in the Jiangkou area came from active groups of temple leaders who had been trained as Tanban spirit mediums in Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia, who began to return to China for the first time in a generation in the early 1980s. In fact, as is described below, there is so much mirroring of traditions back and forth between Southeast Asia and Putian that the origins of many aspects of the tradition are difficult to determine.



## THE JIULIDONG (NINE CARP CAVERN) OF SHITING

One of the most important of the spirit medium training centers in the Jiangkou area today is the Jiulidong (Nine Carp Cavern) Temple, located in Shiting village. But this temple was a late comer to Shiting. The Shiting area is a cluster of fifteen villages with an overall population of over 10,000, which have grown physically contiguous over the past two decades. Originally founded by the Huang lineage in the Yuan dynasty, Shiting is still primarily inhabited by its descendants. A great lineage hall of the Huangs recalls their noble ancestors, and provides a map of Shiting, showing where various branches of the Huang lineage have settled. A recently edited lineage genealogy of the Putian Huang nonetheless places the Shiting Huang in a subordinate position, after the earlier branch of the lineage based in Huangxiang nearer to Hanjiang, which boasted among its early ancestors the Buddhist monk Miaoxiang, said to have become a living Buddha under the Tang dynasty. A closer examination of some of the branch genealogies of the Huang lineage of Shiting reveals an interesting pattern. Over and over, Huang descendants from this area were sent off to Southeast Asia, starting in the late Qing. Some are reported to have prospered, a few returned to reestablish links with their relatives, but many are simply lost to the records. What is more, many of the “descendants” are in actuality adopted-in sons, perhaps considered to be more expendable in the risky business of overseas expansion. For expansion is precisely what the lineage had in mind, sending emissaries over and over in the hope that some would gain a foothold in Southeast Asian society. This marked a transformation of the lineage form as it took on a transnational reach.<sup>17</sup> The resulting return flow of Overseas Chinese funding and people can be seen in the substantial mansions built in the hybrid Overseas Chinese Neocolonial style of Singapore or Malaysia in the Jiangkou area beginning in the 1920s. More recent evidence of the second wave of Overseas Chinese return investment beginning in the 1980s can be seen in everything from new factories to rebuilt temples.

As for the territorial temples of Shiting, an official *shejitan* 社稷壇 (altar to the soil and the harvest) had been established in the early Ming dynasty at the center of the cluster of villages of Shiting, in Shangfang 上方 village. Known as the Fuxingshe 福興社, this altar was at first an outdoor altar in the archaic style, with a stone altar on a mound of earth beneath a tree. Not long after its founding, however, the altar of the soil and the harvest was absorbed into and merged with a temple of the village of Shangfang, the Shangfanggong 上方宮, into a joint form one could call



a *she-miao* 社廟 (popular god temple with side altar to the god of the soil and the harvest).<sup>18</sup> Once a village had established a *she-miao*, it was eligible to participate as a full member in a local ritual alliance known as a *qijing* (seven-fold ritual territory). The member villages of this ritual alliance would first hold a Daoist communal *jiao* in their main village temple at the Lunar Lantern (Shangyuan 上元) Festival and then hold a procession of the village gods around the borders of their village lands. Next they would join in a group procession and move around the boundaries of the entire alliance of associated villages. The Shangfanggong came over time to be the main temple (*zonggong* 總宮) of the ritual territory of Shiting. Finally, the allied villagers would participate in a great procession of the entire cluster of ritual territories in a higher level temple. In the case of Shiting, this was the grand procession of the Dongyueguan of Jiangkou mentioned above.

To return to the village temple of Shiting, by the mid-Ming the god of the soil and the harvest had come to be represented iconographically as an elderly deity in official costume, and known locally as Shegong 社公 (Lord of the Altar of the Soil), also referred to as Zunzhu Mingwang 尊主明王 (Revered Lord, King of Brightness). This deity was escorted by his wife, the Shema 社媽, also known as Houtu furen 后土夫人, and worshipped on a side altar of the Shangfanggong main temple. The Shangfang temple was probably built in the Qianlong 乾隆 period of the Qing (see below) and was restored in 1914.

This temple was not the only center of religious or ritual activity in the Shiting area, however. Several other temples to other local deities were built over the Ming and Qing, as each of the villages of the area established ritual independence.

New temples continued to develop in Shiting in the late Qing and early Republican eras. Spirit-writing associations became very active in the late Qing throughout southern China, as seen in the sudden production of a vast literature by planchette.<sup>19</sup> In Shiting, different spirit-writing groups established a number of sects within the emerging Tanban tradition such as the Qiongyaopai 瓊瑤派 (Rosegem), the Jinlunpai 金輪派 (Golden Wheel), and the Lüshanpai. All these groups worshipped the Immortal Lu Shiyuan 盧士元, and a group of three other Immortals. They differentiated themselves by the different deities they included in their pantheon alongside the four Immortals. These spirit-writing groups organized themselves into small temples called *dong* 洞 (caverns). At some point in the 1920s or 1930s a Xiansheng lou 仙聖樓 (Tower of the Immortal Sage) was built, which later changed its name to the Jiulidong (Nine Carp Cavern). The temple's

name recalls the Cavern of Dreams at the Jiulihu (Nine Carp Lake) in Xianyou, dedicated to the Seven He brothers, Daoist Immortals who are said to have stayed there in the Han dynasty. However, the exact date of the construction of the Shiting Jiulidong is obscure, due to the mirroring of claims to origin in Singapore and Putian.

The situation in Putian in the 1930s was extremely confusing. According to a stone inscription in the Jiuli fendong 九鯉分洞 (Nine Carp Subsidiary Cavern) in Dingjiucuo 頂舊厝,<sup>20</sup> dated 1999, after the Japanese invasion in 1937, many Xinghua people fled to Southeast Asia, and the god statues of the dilapidated Shangfanggong and the Nine Carp Cavern side hall were moved into a Fang surname ancestral home in Dingjiucuo village by the remaining Shangfang Temple spirit mediums Fang Yuansheng 方元生 and Fang Wenying 方文英, a father and son originally from the village of Dingjiucuo. This was done, the stele claims, with the approval of the Spirit Medium Management Committee members. The statues were worshipped continuously in Dingjiucuo village for over sixty years. They were kept despite all difficulties in the Fang ancestral home there for forty-seven years. Finally in 1984, Singapore and Indonesian Overseas Chinese and others from Hong Kong and Macao raised 50,000 *yuan* to build the Subsidiary Nine Carp Temple in a new location. The stele goes on to list a continuous flow of major contributions from Overseas Chinese in 1992, 1997, 1998, and 1999. The stele concludes by claiming that the temple complex has achieved the “traditional style of Song Yuan Ming Qing Daoist architecture,” whatever that may mean. Clearly the Shangfanggong Temple and the Nine Carp Cavern was in great disrepair during the 1930s. It would seem that the gods moved to Singapore or to Dingjiucuo, or to both places at once, during this period.

The recent situation of the different temples in Shiting continues to change. The main Jiulidong temple has been rebuilt three times, first in the early 1980s, and then again in 2002 with funds from the Singapore Jiulidong, and again in 2008 with support from the Indonesian Jiulidong temples. What is more, the original Shangfanggong Zongmiao, the main temple of the Shiting regional ritual alliance, has now completely disappeared, and the Fuxingshe altar to the soil and the harvest it had housed since the mid-Ming has been moved into the newly rebuilt Jiulidong temple. Thus a spirit-writing association spread overseas, redoubled in strength, and returned to transform local understandings of place, time, and community. Their temple has gone from being a small spirit-writing altar to become the main temple of the village, absorbing other nearby temples, including the original temple to the god of the locality.

Nowadays the texts of the invocational chants that are taught during the *guanjie* ceremonies in Shiting and throughout the Jiangkou area are provided by the Singapore and Indonesian branch temples, along with funding and support for the revival of the Tanban spirit-writing tradition. The production of messages from the gods by the Tanban is an effort to manufacture transparency and erase mediation, which repeatedly reveals its own complicity in this process. The original utterances of the gods stand in the place of origins, which is clouded by the ritualized processes of translation.<sup>21</sup>

I would even venture so far as to say that in this process of manufacturing an unmediated transparency of (concealed) origins we can also see reflection of the transformation and mutation of the lineage form itself. One can imagine a very flexible strategy for transforming a lineage into a transnational organization that merges with local spirit-writing associations on the one hand, while simultaneously claiming a separate status vis-à-vis other lineage organizations in Southeast Asia.

#### SPIRIT MEDIUMS AS GLOBAL CITIZENS: THE JIULIDONG IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The primary vector of transmission and return retransmission of the Tanban traditions into and back from Southeast Asia was the spread of emigrants from the Xinghua region. Of these, emigrants from the northern Putian plain made up a large proportion. Emigration began in earnest late in the Qing, with Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia as the principal destinations. The Xinghua immigrants in Southeast Asia concentrated their efforts in the transportation sector of the economy, specializing first in bicycles and their spare parts, and then later in automobiles and their spare parts and later public buses. Many Xinghua temples had their start as shrines in the back rooms of Xinghua native-place associations. Major deities often found in the Xinghua temples in Southeast China are Tianhou 天后 (Mazu 妈祖, whose home island is off the coast of Putian), Lin Longjiang 林龍江 (founder of the Three in One), Zhuo Wanchun 卓晚春 (the Daoist friend of Lin Longjiang), and the four Immortals of the Tanban tradition.

One major subset of northern Putian émigrés was the members of the Huang lineage of Shiting. Currently, there are over 10,000 Huang lineage members in the 15 or so natural villages of the Shiting *qijing* (regional alliances), while there are over 20,000 Huang lineage members in Southeast Asia. Members of the Huang lineage played a key role in establishing the

four independent branch temples of the Jiulidong in Southeast Asia. The first branch temple was established in Singapore in the 1930s.<sup>22</sup> A spirit-medium from Putian active in the Singapore temple later spread the tradition to Tebintinggi<sup>23</sup> in Sumatra, Indonesia, in the 1950s. From there temples spread to Medan and to Kisaran,<sup>24</sup> also on Sumatra, in the 1960s. Finally, following the flow of Huang surname immigrants, a fourth Jiulidong was established in Jakarta in the 1970s. Of course, other Huang lineage members had immigrated to Malaysia, where they founded a number of temples in Serembang and Ipoh. The Dongtiangong 東天宮 (one side of which is also called the Jiulidong—other names include Shitinggong and Mingandian) in Serembang was built in 1951. Beyond the Huang lineage, other Putian lineages are also represented on the temple committees, but they are in smaller numbers.

When the Xinghua immigrants first moved to Singapore in the mid-nineteenth century, they determined that they could not move their *sheji-tan* altars of the soil and harvest with them, as these were too closely linked to specific regions in Putian, and perhaps also because they were connected historically with the Ming local sub-administration and the evolution of the local *qijing* regional ritual alliances as well.<sup>25</sup> The first Singapore Xinghua native place association (*tongxianghui* 同鄉會) was established in 1920. Temples to widely shared gods, such as Tianhou (Mazu) were established later.<sup>26</sup>

Spirit-writing associations, however, such as the Qiongyao Fajiao cult of the four Immortals (Immortal Lu Shiyuan, Immortals Xie, Wang, and Chen) found it easy to establish themselves in Singapore and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. The cult was transmitted to the Singapore Jiulidong Temple either by Huang Wenjing, who brought a statue of Immortal Lu Shiyuan with him to Singapore in 1934, or, according to another version, directly from the Jiulidong temple in 1927 at the behest of a local spirit-writing group.

These conflicting stories of the origins of the Singapore Jiulidong recall the ambiguity of the history of the Shiting Jiulidong. According to a stele dated 1948 at the Singapore Jiulidong, the temple was not completed until 1945. The 1954 stele repeats this claim.<sup>27</sup> However, an inscription from the 1980s gives a more complicated account of origins.

The Jiulidong (Nine Carp Cavern) is the most important Xinghua temple in Singapore. The temple moved to its current location on Upper Thompson Road in 1975. This temple has divided incense to found two other branch temples on Singapore, and three more in Indonesia (in Medan and Sumatra). Wolfgang Franke has provided translations of the two ste-

les in the Jiulidong in Singapore dating from 1948 and 1954 respectively.<sup>28</sup> Both steles remark on features unique to popular religion in Xinghua, such as the cult of the Nine Immortal He brothers at Nine Carp Lake. The inscriptions also make mention of Tianhou, Zhuo Wanchun, and Lin Longjiang (Lin Zhao'en). The 1948 stele notes that "On an island [sic] in the sea to the southeast [of Putian city] is [the fortified city] Puxi. There lived the Elder Holy Immortal Lu [Shiyuan], and the masters Xie [Yuanhui], Wang [Chengguang], and Chen [Shande]. They together cultivated the Chiongyao xiandao [Immortal Way of Rosegem Jade]." It is significant that a spirit-medium in Singapore was in the mid-1980s able to identify (in a dream) the birthplace of Immortal Lu Shiyuan near Puxi fortified city, and a new temple has been built there with Singapore funding at a cost of over U.S.\$100,000. The 1948 stele goes on to note that "Then when in the autumn of 1945, at the time the Anti-Japanese War was won, the Cavern [Temple] was completed, and it was decided to hold a *pudu* every ten years (each *jia* year) in order to commemorate these events."

A more recent inscription, entitled *Chongjian libei* 重建立碑 (The setting up of a stele to commemorate the reconstruction [of the temple]) and dating from the 1980s, provides further information, but only serves to complicate the narrative of origins:

These immortal sages have been recorded in the Register of Sacrifices, and temples [dedicated to them] have been built throughout Southeast Asia. Later [these cults] were transmitted into Shiting, and the former sages within the village decided to propagate and spread the teachings and so they first established the Shangfang Temple. Then they raised funds and built a Cavern temple across from the Shangfang Temple which they called the Nine Carp Cavern. The ritual method of Qiongyao (Rosegem Jade) worships the Great Realized Immortals Lu, Xie, Wang, and Chen, the Nine elderly immortal He brothers, the Realized Being Zhuo (Wanchun), and the arrayed saints, both civil and military. The [spirit-writing] planchette saves the world and its awesome spiritual power manifests miraculously. These saints, the incense burner, and the supernatural planchette, were first brought south to the temple by Huang Wenjing in 1934 when he worshipped and received the palanquin of these gods from a boat from back home. Now they have spread their ritual method all over Indonesia.

The wording of the inscription is ambiguous. Did the cult first flourish in Southeast Asia, and only later build a temple in Shiting? This inscription supports the claims to transmission via Huang Wenjing, most likely a member of the Shiting Huang lineage. As these various accounts reveal, the origins of the Shiting Jiulidong temple are rather unclear.

## THE FENGJIAPUDU IN SINGAPORE

The Xinghua community of Singapore has held a major *pudu* (rite of Universal Deliverance) every ten years at the Jiulidong temple since the liberation of Singapore from the Japanese at the end of World War Two. The first *fengjia pudu* was held in 1944. Tanaka Issei has provided a meticulous, detailed account of the fourth *fengjia pudu*, held at the Jiulidong (Nine Carp Cavern) in 1984.<sup>29</sup> I was fortunate to attend the fifth *fengjia pudu*, held at the Jiulidong in June 1994. In the previous four rituals, the various ritual specialists, including Buddhist monks, Daoist priests, and spirit-writing acolytes associated with the temple, along with the Mulian ritual opera performers, all were local members of the Xinghua immigrant population. The ritual opera performers were mostly younger local amateurs who trained for months prior to the event for the performance. But in the fifth *fengjia pudu*, all of these ritual performers and actors, with the exception of the spirit-writing acolytes, were invited from Fujian, in particular from Shiting, in Putian. This was also the case in the sixth *fengjia pudu* held in 2005.

Given the thoroughness of Tanaka Issei's description of the fourth *fengjia pudu* of 1984, there is little need for another exhaustive account of the organization and proceeding of the 1994 ritual, which was closely modeled on the earlier performance.<sup>30</sup> At this point, I would only like to single out certain moments of blurring of boundaries between ritual and opera which explain the vital importance of the "Mulian Saves His Mother" ritual opera performance to the success of the overall ritual-event.

The Mulian ritual opera included all of the intensely dramatic, horrifying scenes singled out in David Johnson's 1989 book chapter "Actions Speak Louder Than Words," including the hanging ghost, the White Giant and Black Dwarf of the Underworld, the seizure and torture of Liu Jia 劉假 (Mulian's evil uncle) and Liu Shizhen 劉世真 (Mulian's mother), and the descent from the stage at a run into the audience of the soldiers with painted faces of King Yama of the Underworld. The latter troupe, led by King Yama, made sacrifices at the main temple altar before returning to the stage. The underworld soldiers took their time, loitering about in front of the stage, drinking beer and acting surly. But the most profound moment of merging of opera and ritual came toward the end, when the Buddhist monk Mulian figure had broken the gates of the ten levels of hell and was releasing souls from the Underworld. He did this with a kind of fishing pole, reeling ghostly figures across the stage while singing the same song for hours on end, while local ritual specialists stood at the front of the

stage, and received over 400 spirit tablets and incense presented by family members standing in a long line. This went on for over three hours, after which the opera rapidly reached its conclusion. The spirit tablets later that evening were passed along a long white sheet by the Buddhist monks later that night, before being burnt in a large paper boat, sent off by the monks.

A second set of rituals crucial to the success of the overall ritual were the activities of the spirit-writing association, who produced several texts from the gods commenting on the progress of the ritual. Based on a cult of the Immortal Lu Shiyuan, this group has for several generations actively maintained the *guanjie* initiation rituals and Tanban traditions. As mentioned above, this group has been very active in helping to restore the *guanjie* ritual tradition back in Putian.

The Daoists invited from Shiting for the fifth *fengjia pudu* were led by Daoist Master Wu Jiutao 吳九濤, a highly respected, elderly Daoist, then in his early seventies. Master Wu began his life as a marionettist, and he can still recite marionette scripts from memory. This ability would come in handy, as we will see below. His personal collection of Daoist liturgical manuscripts includes all of the texts necessary for Zhengyi *jiao*, *gongde*, and minor rites. He also has liturgies for the initiation of spirit-writing acolytes, following the *guanjie* training. Interestingly, amongst his manuscripts is a copy of the *Huangtingjing* 黃庭經 (Scripture of the Yellow Chamber, a classic Daoist inner-alchemical text), and although he stated that he did not rely on this text for personal meditation, he did say that he had consulted the text frequently. Another set of formularies composed by his father (he claims over seven generations of Daoist ancestors) provides fascinating insights into local society and religious groupings. There are, for example, special prayers (memorials) for the sea-salt gathering householders, who make special supplication for propitious weather conditions essential to their occupation. A list of temples regularly visited, along with the deities worshipped within them, and their dates of celebration, provides a sense of the network of generational relations linking a set of temples within a particular territory and the Huang Daoists of Shiting. Wu Jiutao's two sons, Wu Wengui 吳文貴 and Wu Wenrong 吳文榮, performed as the principal Daoist ritualists in the Singapore *fengjia pudu*. They were supported by seven other Daoist ritualists. As I had met Master Wu in Putian, and visited his home in Shiting, he graciously allowed me to stay with the Daoists in their quarters in the temple during the week long ritual. The Buddhist troupe was also invited from the Putian area, as were the Mulian ritual opera performers, who were mostly from the Shiting area.



The irony of this situation was that the Mulian plays had not been performed in Fujian by human actors for over forty years since the bans on *guixi* 鬼戲 (demonic theater) in the 1950s. A few marionette troupes had begun to perform Mulian plays during the *Xiayuan pudu* 下元普渡 (Lower Prime Rite of Universal Deliverance), conducted in the Putian area on the fifteenth day of the tenth lunar month, rather than on the standard date of the *Zhongyuanjie* 中元節 (Middle Prime), or fifteenth of the seventh lunar month. Thus the ostensibly more traditional theatrical troupe brought from the mainland was no more familiar with the play than the locally trained troupes would have been. In fact, the script used was the same script employed in the 1984 *fengjia pudu*, which has been partially reproduced by Tanaka Issei.<sup>31</sup> The Singapore marionettist Chen Jinshui again played a major role in coordinating and partially directing the opera. He also played the role of the White Giant of the Underworld in the play and in processions. But the organizers of the fifth *fengjia pudu* could point to the fact that a famous Puxian theater troupe, the Fenghuang Puxian xiban 鳳凰莆仙戲班 (Phoenix Puxian Opera troupe) had toured in the Singapore and Malaysia area in the 1940s. In this way, they could claim that the performers and ritualists were more authentic, original, and traditional than their own Singapore-trained troupes. At the same time, as some pointed out to me, they could also manage to save money on the entire ritual-event because the mainlanders required so little salary beyond their airfare.

Several of the Putian actors confided to me that they were in fact marionettists, who “just had to learn how to move on stage” and “memorize the stage lines.” These marionettists later went on a tour of Xinghua native place associations in Malaysia to raise funds and to defray the costs of their trip. The actor who performed the role of Mulian, Huang Jinlong 黃金龍, aged thirty-eight, did have a background in Puxian theater. The director of the Shiting based Fuxingban 福興班 (Rising Fortune Opera Troupe) was Chen Jinxing. Liu Jia was portrayed by Huang Qiqian, a man whose parents had died at age ten, and who had been a marionettist since age fifteen. Eleven of the performers were from Putian. They were assisted by seven local performers, especially for roles such as the White Giant and the Black Dwarf of the Underworld, and the soldiers of King Yama. The actors were accompanied by five musicians. Wu Jiutao, the senior Daoist priest, led the orchestra while playing the drums and singing the entire libretto throughout the play, just in case the actors forgot their lines. Several of the actors did appear awkward on stage and sometimes bumped into each other, especially the Liu Shizhen performer. Wu Jiutao’s important role as



drummer and kibitzer for the opera explains why his sons were conducting the simultaneous set of Daoist rituals.

In an additional ironic twist, this troupe, upon returning to Putian, became recognized as the bearers of an authentic tradition, certified by their acceptance in Singapore and Malaysia by Overseas Chinese community leaders. Soon the major temples of the Putian irrigated plains were making plans for the performance of full-scaled Mulian opera with human actors, and invited members of the Fuxingban to perform. As far as I am aware, the first of these productions took place at the Beichengong 北辰宮 in 1995. A posted record of accounts in that temple noted that the cost of the performance was a staggering 50,000 RMB, far more than the usual fee of approximately 1,000 RMB per night for a standard Puxianxi performance. This performance required a much larger cast than usual opera performances, and also included a long ritual sequence for the deliverance of the souls of the dead of the area. It should be noted that the Beichengong is, along with the Guchenggong 谷城宮, at the head of a nested hierarchy of temples in the Huangshi 黃石 area that includes the 24 wards of the Huangshi area, thus involving over 30 villages and over 60,000 people.

The second large-scale performance of Mulian opera in Putian for which I have evidence also took place in 1995 shortly after the return of the troupe, this time at the Linshangong 麟山宮 Temple in Fengting 楓亭. This temple also stands at the head of a regional alliance of some 38 villages, and thus too represents almost 50,000 people. The temple "performed the 109 scenes of the Mulian opera . . . and conducted *lanpen shenghui* 蘭盆盛會 (rites of universal deliverance) for three years in succession."<sup>32</sup>

A second source for the revival of Mulian opera in the Putian area must also be mentioned. This is the effort of the Theatrical Research Institute of Fujian and Putian, and the official theater troupes of the counties of Putian and Xianyou, to revive the Mulian operas for purposes of "cultural preservation" in the early 1990s.<sup>33</sup> Command performances of the Mulian opera, first by the Putian troupe, and then, far more successfully, by the Xianyou troupe, were given to audiences of theater historians and specialists in 1990, in coordination with a conference on Nanxi and Mulian opera. In Putian, the combination of internal revival and the external mirroring of tradition and performance between Jiangkou and Singapore and Malaysia provided the means for the renewed performance of Mulian opera in central temple settings. Of course, underlying the ability of the temples to sponsor the performances of these ritual operas was the growth of local autonomy of the temple committees and regional ritual networks of the Puxian and greater coastal Fujian region. Here too the impact of

Overseas Chinese cannot be denied. In this mirroring of tradition, the origins become obscured, and the issue becomes more the negotiation of modernity through the performance of ritual and ritual opera. This constant mirroring has led to extraordinary transformations in the nature of the lineage and the nature of regional religious community as well.

The revival of the Mulian ritual opera is particularly significant. First of all, the Mulian ritual opera and the corresponding *pudu* rites of universal deliverance form a structural counterpoint to the rites of the New Year, which involve the sending off and the return of the gods to the local temples, followed by their processions around their territories at the Upper Prime/Lantern Festival. The *pudu* (normally performed midway through the year, but in Putian at the Lower Prime on the fifteenth day of the tenth lunar month) is by contrast addressed to all the souls of the dead who are released from hell and delivered, ritually moved safely out of the underworld and then away from the community. These rites and celebrations had been banned in China since the early 1960s. Thus the restoration of the Mulian ritual opera to its rightful place at the center of the *pudu* rites could be interpreted as the re-establishment of the complete ritual cycle of Xinghua traditional culture. The restoration of this ritual cycle of time opens time itself up to powerful forces of internal self-differentiation.<sup>34</sup>

In this brief overview of the interrelated history of Daoist, Three in One, and Tanban ritual traditions, we have noted the spread of Daoist ritual in the mid-Ming into the evolving network of regional ritual alliances (which may have been inspired in part by Daoist notions of ritual territory). Aspects of Daoist inner alchemy and ritual were later popularized and spread throughout Putian in the late Ming and early Qing by the Three in One religious tradition. This tradition also attempted to adapt certain aspects of modernist discourse in the Republican period by incorporating some scientific terminology and stressing the role of individual self-cultivation under conditions of increasing secularization. In the late Qing and Republican period, localized traditions of Daoist ordained spirit mediums developed in the northern Putian plain, only to spread overseas to Southeast Asia with the rise of emigration and the Japanese invasion. Over the past twenty-five years, leaders of the branch temples of the Jiulidong in Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia have returned to Shiting and elsewhere in Putian to sponsor anew spirit medium training sessions and *yuxiu* rites of preparatory cultivation. They have reinvented a nearly lost local tradition.

But the spirit mediums were not the only global citizens. Daoist ritual

specialists of every major regional cultural group can be found in Singapore, be they Hokkien, Cantonese, Hainanese, Hakka, or even Pu-Xian Daoists. The Three in One also has established a strong network of temples and ritual specialists in Singapore and Malaysia.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, all three ritual traditions can and do combine in single ritual events in Putian today.<sup>36</sup> All these traditions remain important today as ways to produce ever new worlds of ritual experience.

Ritual-events in contemporary Putian as in Singapore are sites for the negotiation of modernity. This negotiation is conducted by temple managers, Daoist ritual masters, Three in One practitioners, and spirit mediums, along with all the village participants, for whom ritual-events cannot be framed merely as a conflict between tradition and modernity (or between eternity and modernity). Instead, these groups work to simultaneously divert and fold into the ritual-event forces of nationalism, capitalism, and narratives of modernization. By performing rites which in the same event mobilize and transform multiple layers/planes of space, and which bring into play multiple temporalities, they help shape new impossible yet coeval worlds of ritual difference. These worlds have different spatiotemporal continuums; each builds its own forms of space-time relations out of its own twisting of space through the construction of planes of religious expression and its own reversals, accelerations, and loopings of time in an infinite mirroring in the place of origins.

The generation of worlds of difference in the ritual-events of contemporary Putian takes place by means of Daoist liturgy, Three-in-One inner alchemical visualizations, and spirit medium trance techniques. Rather than producing a generic eternity or an anti-temporality, as suggested by Victor Turner,<sup>37</sup> these events might be said to produce infinite varieties of eternity (which one might liken to William James's varieties of religious experience). This is a good thing, for as Woody Allen said, "Eternity is very long, especially towards the end."<sup>38</sup>

## 11. Daoism beyond Modernity

### *The "Healing Tao" as Postmodern Movement*

Elijah Siegler

Postmodern men and women do need the alchemist able, or claiming to be able, to transmogrify base uncertainty into precious self-assurance, and the authority of approval (in the name of superior knowledge, or access to wisdom closed to others) is the philosophical stone these alchemists boast of possessing.

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN

I wish to present two thought experiments as a way to begin to reflect about Daoism and comparative modernity. First, here is a public statement from 1885 by a governing body of what could be called a new religious denomination, with identifying words removed:

We hold that all such ————— laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas entirely foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern ————— with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation. ————— is a progressive religion, ever striving to be in accord with the postulates of reason.

Could the blanks be filled in with the words "Daoist," "Chinese," and "Daoism," respectively? Does this sound like an excerpt from a primary document uncovered and translated by Vincent Goossaert or Xun Liu in the course of their research for this volume? In fact, this is a passage from the Pittsburgh Platform, a regularly anthologized document in American religious history textbooks. It announces the principles of a new denomination of Judaism: the Reform Movement. The missing words are "Mosaic and rabbinical," "Jew," and "Judaism." Reform Jews were worried their ancient religion bore too many traces of Old Europe and thus advocated an abbreviated liturgy, prayers in the vernacular, and a regular sermon. One of the founders of the movement, David Einhorn, said, "Judaism had to cleanse itself of ideas and practices antithetical to modernity and rationalism."<sup>1</sup>

For the second experiment, imagine a new form of collective religiosity sweeping a large and troubled nation in the mid- to late nineteenth century. One present-day scholar of this religious movement described the forces that helped shape this religious “craze,” including

[t]he increasing cultural authority of science and the corresponding growth of a scientific materialism that denied the existence, or at least the knowability, of spirit; a shift in the emphasis from external and empirical to internal and intuitive sources of religious experience and epistemological authority; [. . .] a transformation from an older religious (and social) order based on deference and hierarchy to a newer one which emphasized personal experience, spiritual equality, and self-reliant individualism; and the emergence of a pluralistic religious culture in which a bewildering array of ideologies and sects competed for support and religious truth seemed increasingly uncertain and relativistic.

As well, this scholar notes how members of this new religious permutation implicitly repudiated “the professionalizing clergy of their society as too mechanical and too influenced by powerful social interests to exercise effective religious and moral leadership.” Is the scholar describing the country of China and the conditions necessary for the rise of the Daoist “self-cultivation market” and of spirit-writing groups? Perhaps these quotes are excerpted from a monograph on the modernization of *neidan* 內丹?

In fact, they are from a book by the historian of American religion Bret Carroll about the forces that helped shape the religion of Spiritualism.<sup>2</sup> Part of the American metaphysical tradition, Spiritualism began in upstate New York when the teenage Fox sisters claimed to receive messages from the dead. By the early 1850s, the international craze for spirit communication via séances, spirit rappings, automatic writing, and possession trances had attracted the interest of thousands, including government leaders, lawyers, and journalists. A large segment of the American public would flock to Spiritualist lectures on the lyceum or Chautauqua circuits and by 1854 ten spiritualist publications were circulating nationally.<sup>3</sup>

What is the point in this frivolous exercise? Why evoke forced comparisons, through selective quotation, between two moments in American religious history and aspects of Daoism in modernity previously discussed in this volume? I do not mean to show some hidden connection between America and China, nor to prove any kind of essential similarity. This exercise had two modest aims, the first to demonstrate that modernity was a worldwide phenomenon, the second to help us understand that the subject of the remainder of this essay, the popular global Daoist-inspired

movement known as the “Healing Tao,” was not born *ex nihilo*. Let us take up each aim in turn.

#### MODERNITY AS WORLDWIDE PHENOMENON

Modernity is of course a multiheaded hydra of a concept, but in its worldwide effect on religions one adequate synonym is Protestantization—of clergy, of liturgy, and indeed of the very concept of religion. We might see America and China as two fronts in a worldwide war against ritual, a war that was ultimately unsuccessful, but one with serious repercussions.

This war had higher stakes in China. Certainly America had no equivalent to the anti-superstition campaign that, as Lai Chi-tim’s chapter describes it, forbade all Zhengyi 正一 Daoists from performing liturgy and required them to find other employment. But still, in America, Reform Jews willingly engaged in a campaign of self-transformation that involved modernization, purification, “spiritual elevation,” and, though they did not use this term, Protestantization.<sup>4</sup>

The Reform rabbis remind one of the “literati and religious entrepreneurs” Goossaert writes about in chapter 5 of this volume, who “resorted to more or less overt anticlerical arguments, claiming that clerics were mostly immersed in performing rituals.” Similarly, the Chinese “redemptive societies” that organized themselves according to new Western-inspired models of religion and opposed superstition were engaged in much the same refashioning as Reform synagogues that instituted Sunday services complete with topical sermons and choirs.

Meanwhile, some of Zhao Bichen’s 趙避塵 ideas (also held by his contemporary Chen Yingning 陳櫻寧, as discussed by Xun Liu in chapter 6) paralleled the project of the American spiritualists. These included using a modern Western scientific discourse, attempting to balance between materialism and idealism, a desire to reach a large audience, especially women, and the building of a lay-led movement.

The spirit-writing cultists of China saw their theology as in harmony with, not in opposition to, science, even coining a term for a new academic discipline, *lingxue* 靈學 (spirit studies). Similarly, as one scholar of American religion noted, “because spiritualists insisted that theirs was a new scientific religion, they frequently compared their phenomena to the mysteries of electricity.”<sup>5</sup> In fact, due to his connection with the discovery of electricity, Benjamin Franklin became something like the patron saint of the spiritualist movement, his spirit making appearances in trance-lectures and automatic writing.

Besides Franklin, other prominent visitors to spiritualist gatherings from “the other side” included “Indian chiefs” and George Washington.<sup>6</sup> Just as spiritualism evoked these American “culture heroes,” Chinese spirit-writing groups at around the same time conversed with Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 and various military heroes. It thus may be argued that both movements were involved in nation-building.

It seems clear then, that these movements are not reactions against modernity, a rearguard action of an enchanted worldview that is rapidly disappearing. Rather these metaphysical movements echo modernity. They share modernity’s concern with purity and with origins. Spiritualism and its heir, the New Age “channeling” movement, negate the need for following living masters, substituting omniscient eternal spiritual beings.<sup>7</sup> So too do Chinese spirit-writing cults and self-cultivation circles offer direct unmediated contact with “immortal teachers” and claim access to the “pure source.”

#### THE BIRTH OF POPULAR WESTERN DAOISM

Daoism’s globalizing trajectory is conspicuously different from those of Buddhism or Hinduism. Daoism was not first exported from China by immigrant communities, nor by missionaries, but rather as an act of literary imagination. One part of the story of the popular Western appropriation of Daoism has been told quite frequently and quite well. Scholarship has demonstrated how popular conceptions of Daoism owe much to Victorian-era Orientalist prejudice that emphasized the philosophical origins and “mystic essence of Daoism” in collusion with late-Qing dynasty literati, whom Kristofer Schipper has referred to as “Confucian fundamentalists.”<sup>8</sup> Thanks to this research, we know why bookstores throughout the West sell multiple translations of the *Daodejing* 道德經 while the contours of Daoist practice, both current and historical, are usually ignored, derided, and/or misunderstood.

But there is another story that needs to be told about the Westernization of Daoism, a story that ends with the creation of popular Western Daoist groups.<sup>9</sup> The development of modern Western Daoist groups can be traced to the 1965 changes in the immigration laws of the United States and Canada, which brought more Chinese to North America. Since the 1960s, the Chinese population of the United States has been doubling every decade and by 2006 was hovering around three-and-a-half million. This growth had several effects on the development of popular Western Daoism. First, with so many Chinese living in North America, Chinese culture—from martial arts to eating with chopsticks—no longer seemed so exotic as it did

in the 1940s through early 1970s. Second, a handful of these immigrants were experienced in various Chinese religio-physical techniques and eager to teach these skills to willing Americans.

At approximately the same time, young North Americans' search for spirituality outside traditional institutions (often called "the new religious consciousness") led them to embrace teachers and practices from Asia. There are anywhere from ten to thirty thousand self-identified American Daoists in the United States and Canada. Typically, they are well educated, middle-class, and white. The majority first heard about Daoism in a college or high school class, was lent a book (typically the *Daodejing* or *The Tao of Pooh*) by a friend or family member, or learned about it through *taiji* 太極 or martial arts.

Thus, the situation was ripe for the creation of indigenous American Daoist teachers and organizations, the first of which (in the sense of being officially recognized as a tax-exempt religious institution) was the Taoist Sanctuary, founded in North Hollywood, California, in 1970. The founder was not Chinese—though he often played one on television. Khigh Dhiagh was of Anglo-Egyptian descent and was born Kenneth Dickerson in New Jersey. Nonetheless, his sanctuary was the first comprehensive popular Western Daoist organization in America, teaching *taiji*, martial arts, the *Daodejing* and the *Yijing* 易經, and conducting seasonal Daoist rituals (albeit invented by Dhiagh himself).

In 1976, three students of the Taoist Sanctuary, studying Chinese medicine in Taiwan, met a Chinese doctor who they invited to the United States. Hua-Ching Ni settled in Malibu, California, and opened a shrine called the Eternal Breath of Tao and began teaching classes privately in a venue he named the College of Tao. Over the years, Ni-sponsored organizations have multiplied. His private acupuncture clinic was known as the Union of Tao and Man. He also founded Yo San University of Traditional Chinese Medicine in 1989, an accredited degree-granting college.

Moy Lin-Shin 梅連羨 (1931-1998) founded the Taoist Tai Chi Society (TTCS) in 1970 in Toronto. This is perhaps the largest Daoist group in the Western hemisphere, though largely unknown within the American Daoist community, in part because it is based in Canada, a country that the United States often knows little about. The Society teaches "Taoist Tai Chi," a modified form of yang style *taijiquan* and has taught thousands of classes in over four hundred locations on four continents. It claims to have some 10,000 dues-paying members worldwide. The Taoist Tai Chi Society's religious arm is Fung Loy Kok 蓬萊閣 Temple, dedicated in 1981. The original temple was located upstairs from the *taiji* studio. Most Taoist



Tai Chi studios around the world dedicate at least a corner of their space to a small shrine.

These groups are very different in their structure and teachings, but all invariably use a scientific and anti-ritualistic discourse that shows an unacknowledged debt to the modernization of Daoism. Thus Daoism's encounter with modernity paralleled American religion's similar encounter, in particular the self-purifying and Protestantizing by religious elites and an emphasis on nonempirical beings as imparters of wisdom. This parallel was the precondition through which Daoism could enter the West in the way it did. Daoism had to be modernized before it could be Americanized. And America had to modernize before it could appreciate and appropriate Daoism.

#### MANTAK CHIA AND THE HEALING TAO

The most widespread institutional form of popular Western Daoism is the Healing Tao.<sup>10</sup> Open to all, Healing Tao teaches a popularized system of breathing, visualization, meditation, and postures, based on the Daoist practice of Inner Alchemy (*neidan*). The introductory course and the prerequisite for any further study is called "Tao Basics" and consists of simple techniques to visualize the body's "five organs" and meridians. These include Microcosmic Orbit (seeing the body's *qi* flow), Inner Smile (relaxing the organs), and Six Healing Sounds (a specific vocalization directed to each internal organ). Other introductory courses include short form *taiji* and "iron shirt" *qigong* 氣功. The Healing Tao's intermediate level classes introduce students to the techniques and symbolism of internal alchemy. According to a participant-observer, in the class known as "Fusion," "practitioners proceed from mere channeling of energy into techniques of mixing energies for the purpose of producing superior, pure quality energy."<sup>11</sup> The advanced levels, whose techniques are not revealed to non-initiates, are "the highest stages of Taoist internal alchemy . . . attained only after many years of living the lower and intermediate practices."<sup>12</sup> In practice, however, an eager student could proceed from Tao Basics up to Congress of Heaven and Earth over the course of a single summer of workshops, or via audio and videotapes.

The Healing Tao was founded by Mantak Chia 謝明德 (b. 1944), a Thai-born Chinese man who was trained in Hong Kong and has a background in both Oriental and Western medicine, as well as in traditional Daoist practices. According to his autobiographical narrative, of his many teachers, his most influential was apparently a Daoist hermit who lived in the

hills behind a Quanzhen 全真 temple in Hong Kong. This teacher, called Yi Eng 一雲 (in English "One Cloud"), gave Chia a mandate to use the "Seven Formulas for Immortality" to teach and heal. Yi Eng had trained in a Daoist monastery in the Changbai range in Manchuria for thirty years, where a "grandmaster" taught him the "nine formulae of immortality." After mastering these, Yi Eng was displaced by the Japanese invasion and the civil wars and wound up in Hong Kong, where Mantak Chia was a high school student at an elite boarding school. Chia heard about a mysterious Daoist master in the mountains above the city, learned from him, and was given authority to teach the formulae.

Chia systematized the various teachings he had received, and in 1974 he opened a clinic in Bangkok called the Natural Healing Center, a place where "for a few pennies people sat on a large platform, charged with a negative ion current strong enough to detoxify chronic ailments."<sup>13</sup> In 1978, Chia moved to New York City and opened a healing and acupuncture center in Chinatown. By 1981 Chia's center, now named the Healing Tao Center, had attracted a coterie of Euro-American students.

Chia's first book, published in 1983, was titled *Awaken Healing Energy through the Tao: The Taoist Secret of Circulating Internal Power*. But it was his second book, *Taoist Secrets of Love: Cultivating Male Sexual Energy*, a year later, that, with its combination of practical advice and titillating expectations, "catapulted him to fame, and sold hundreds of thousand of copies with virtually no advertising."<sup>14</sup> According to the historian of American religion J. Gordon Melton, *Cultivating Male Sexual Energy* appeared at approximately the same time as "a variety of new books on various teachings concerning . . . Tantric yoga, sex magick (à la Aleister Crowley) and New Age sexuality. Thus the sudden popularity of Chia's book may have had little to do with the American appropriation of Taoism, but rather Chia's inadvertently stepping into another popular American subculture."<sup>15</sup> Chia's book, unlike most earlier books that might be considered part of "popular Western Daoism," did not focus on the perennial mysticism of Laozi or the *Yijing*.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, Chia's Euro-American students helped him organize a national seminar circuit and his Healing Tao grew into one of the largest Western Daoist groups, and a commercially successful international organization, today comprising thousands of certified instructors in many countries. In 1994, Chia moved back to Thailand to establish Tao Garden, an international Healing Tao center in Chiang Mai, where Europeans and Americans train to be instructors, while he continues to make regular tours of North America and Europe.

Chia's former chief student Michael Winn currently leads Healing Tao USA. Winn spends about half of each year in his home of Asheville, North Carolina, the rest of the time giving workshops in Europe, Mexico, and leading trips to China. Since 1995, Winn has run the Healing Tao University, which for ten years convened each summer in upstate New York and bills itself as the "the largest summer program of Tao Arts & Sciences in the world."<sup>16</sup> (As of 2007, it meets in North Carolina.) Winn sees his mission as "teaching a full spectrum of Daoist Arts and Sciences, with the sexual cultivation and alchemy as the core curriculum." But Healing Tao is no longer officially affiliated with Mantak Chia, even if Chia is a guest teacher every year. In fact, Winn has added several new techniques and he claims his emphasis is quite different from Chia's. Moreover, he has also successfully developed an international network of Healing Tao instructors, with currently some 1,000 certified teachers worldwide who can be found by location on a central website.

#### HEALING TAO AS MODERN DAOIST MOVEMENT

The Healing Tao in some ways resembles Reform Judaism and Spiritualism, but more to the point, it resembles the early self-cultivation societies described in Goosseart's and Liu's contributions to this volume. The Healing Tao proudly claims to reveal Taoism's "secrets" to all by teaching them in public and publishing them in plain, demystified, language. "Master Chia sees that the age has come when the public needs and deserves a clear teaching of this healing power, which was shrouded in China by the same secrecy that surrounded medieval alchemy in Europe," writes Michael Winn.<sup>17</sup> Winn credits this openness to Chia's Euro-American students: "Editorial collaboration by myself and other senior students with Mantak Chia resulted in the conversion of what had been a one-to-one 'ear-whispered' transmission in China into an open and detailed curriculum of progressive courses that Westerners could pay for and take when they were ready."<sup>18</sup>

Ironically but perhaps unsurprisingly, despite Healing Tao's claim to offer its teaching freely and openly, it markets itself through the appeal of secrecy. As we saw, Chia's first book's subtitle and his second book's main title both contained the phrase "Taoist secret." Some twenty years later, the strategy has not changed. One of his most recent publications is *Secret Teachings of the Tao Te Ching*.<sup>19</sup>

Chia's books are also products of modernity inasmuch as they use scientific language to substantiate their claims. For example, Chia's 1986 book,

*Healing Love Through the Tao: Cultivating Female Sexual Energy*, contains references to scientific studies of sexuality including the *Hite Report* and the Masters and Johnson survey.<sup>20</sup> This inclusion is attributable to Gunther Weil, a former senior student of Chia's who received his doctorate in social psychology from Harvard in 1965.

Finally, Healing Tao's modernizing tendencies include a disdain for superstition and ritual. Healing Tao formulates its Daoist identity not as a religion but in counterpoint to religion—which it opposes to esotericism. As Chia puts it: “The Taoists referred to in this essay are the masters of Taoist Esoteric practice, whose traditionally secret methods were studied by Master Mantak Chia. This is not to be confused with the Taoist religion, whose priests combined elements of Buddhism, Esoteric Taoism, and Chinese culture (folk beliefs, confucianism [sic]) in order to maintain a popular base.”<sup>21</sup> Michael Winn explicitly uses the discourse of purity and origins that is a hallmark of modernizing religion, arguing that American “Daoism is taking a different form, not necessarily a religious form, than it is taking in China, with temples and uniforms, and the state religion and all that stuff, that's its history. In the West it's taking more of the form of personal belief and identification with the Dao and the structures of the Dao, kind of like getting back to early Daoism, before all that existed in China.”<sup>22</sup> But to examine the Healing Tao solely as an example of Daoism in modernity would be to diminish its importance and miss its most important qualities. Healing Tao can be most productively viewed as a postmodern Daoist movement. The rest of this chapter generates a profile of postmodern religion and then shows how the Healing Tao conforms to this profile.

## POSTMODERN RELIGION

What is postmodern religion? First, it must be made clear that postmodernity does not negate modernity: “Post-modernity is a kind of interim situation where some characteristics of modernity become scarcely recognizable as such, but exactly what the new situation—or even whether any new situation can become ‘settled’—is unclear.”<sup>23</sup> All the conditions of modernity are still operative today in postmodern religion.

Postmodernity is hard to define, in part because it is still in the process of unfolding. There is no need to enter the theoretical quicksand that championing one definition of postmodern religion over others would entail. Here I offer five generally accepted and interrelated traits of postmodern religion.

First, postmodern religion is notable for its *eclecticism* (*hybridization* is another current term). Jean-François Lyotard famously defined the postmodern situation as the collapse of all metanarratives.<sup>24</sup> Applying this definition to religion, Paul Heelas sees “the claim that truth provided by the exercise of reason and the transmission of tradition is—at least in measure—weakened, even abandoned” as leading to deregulation and a combining of religious systems.<sup>25</sup>

If modernity’s metanarrative, as we saw in the American and Daoist examples, is impersonal, scientific, instrumental, progressive, and technological, then the wreckage of that narrative constitutes postmodernity. The wreckage has been used to create what theorists refer to as “pastiche” or “bricolage” of new narratives. Postmodern religion forces us all to choose from a dizzying variety of choices; we are all heretics, in Peter Berger’s formulation; put another way, we are all eclectics.

*Globalization* is the second characteristic. The eclectic range of choices in postmodern religion is forced upon us in part because the world seems to be shrinking. Religious traditions become deracinated and deterritorialized; new religious movements have multiple origins from many parts of the world. The scholarly spotlight now shines on diasporic and transnational religions. As the American scholar of global religions Mark Juergensmeyer puts it, “scarcely any region of the globe today is composed solely of members of a single strand of traditional religion. In an era of globalization the pace of cultural interaction and change has increased by seemingly exponential expansions of degrees.”<sup>26</sup>

Eclecticism and globalization create a climate where shallowness prevails over depth, creating the conditions for the *simulation* of religion. In Jean Baudrillard’s famous formulation, the postmodern embraces artificiality and surface. He wrote of new iterations of information and technology moving us from a productive to a reproductive order, where simulations and models constitute the world. Baudrillard saw this leading to the erasure of the distinction between reality and image.<sup>27</sup> Scholars note the proliferation of religions that exist only in cyberspace or in the mediasphere, or of “fake” religions that become real. Self-parodic religion notwithstanding, virtual or image-dependent religion insists all the more for being simulated on its own authenticity and purity.

A fourth characteristic of postmodern religion would be *consumerism*. Postmodern religion reconfigures the religious subject from a believer or a congregant into a consumer. The theorist of postmodernity Zygmunt Bauman sees the rise of “self-improvement movements that train our consumerist potential” to be a hallmark of postmodernity; these movements

package and sell “peak experiences,” which were “once the privilege of the selected” but now “put by postmodern culture within every individual’s reach [. . .] relocated as the product of a life devoted to the art of consumer self-indulgence.”<sup>28</sup> Others have noted that for these postmodern spiritualities, consumerism itself is “the new esoteric knowledge (disguised as ‘New Age’ spirituality).”<sup>29</sup>

Finally, postmodernity entails the growth of *subjectivity*. Modernity did its job in diminishing the importance of collective religiosity, but result was not the hoped-for rise in collective rationality. Rather, we are now in the period of the postmodern expansion of the individual. In other words, the privatization of religion resulted in sacralization of the self.

As we will see, the Healing Tao is a perfect example of, as Peter Beyer puts it, “the ‘subjectivization’ of religion, the idea that religiosity is less and less located in authoritative and ‘outside’ religious institutions and more and more within the ‘internal’ control and consciousness of individuals.”<sup>30</sup> New Age spirituality, in particular, places “emphasis on the individual as locus of religious authority and authenticity.”<sup>31</sup>

These categories (overlapping and self-reinforcing as they may be) enable us to conduct a deeper examination of the Healing Tao—find it to be the preeminent example of postmodern Daoism.

#### HEALING TAO AS ECLECTIC AND GLOBAL

We have already explored how Mantak Chia uses Western scientific language. The Sinologist Douglas Wile sees Mantak Chia as a “product of cross-cultural influences” who “uses Western scientific theories extensively to support and even to express his own teachings.”<sup>32</sup> As an example, Wile mentions Chia’s conflation of acupuncture points and the endocrine glandular system. More recently, Chia has been peppering his lectures with references to research on embryonic stem cells. He sees Healing Tao as activating the regenerative power of embryonic cells housed in the lower *dantian* 丹田.

Chia’s use of Western scientific language should not be seen as an example of the scientizing modernity seen in Liu and Gooseart’s cultivation groups. Analyzing Chia’s daily lectures at a weeklong training session at his center in Thailand, one quickly realizes that his discourse is a true postmodern pastiche of Daoist lore, science, and popular culture. Chia’s references to science are more associative than methodical. For example, he referred frequently to cloning through references to popular film—*The Sixth Day*, *Jurassic Park*, *Star Wars*—as examples. A further exam-

ple: Chia stated that when in the United States, he buys magazines such as *Scientific American* and *Popular Mechanics*. Here the point seemed to be that Chia approved of, and was interested in, Western science, rather than any larger message.

Along with more mainstream science, Chia weaves in endorsements of fringe science, such as Dr. Masaru Emoto's controversial theory that water can absorb the emotional charge the people who handle it. Finally Chia makes liberal use of such buzzwords of alternative health marketing as "nutri-energetics health system" and "emotional stream integration." Eclecticism is truly his hallmark.

As much as the content of his lectures, Chia's biography reveals his eclecticism. With his training and outlook he is anything but traditionally Daoist. A biographical account mentions his expertise in Thai boxing, Aikido (a Japanese form of hand-to-hand combat), Kundalini yoga, and a martial art known as "Buddhist palm"; interestingly, the biographical note published with his first two books states that "the author Mantak Chia is himself a Christian, but has used the traditional Taoist methods to help thousands of people heal or improve themselves."<sup>33</sup> The disclosure of Chia's Christianity was dropped in subsequent biographical statements. Chia is said to have begun self-cultivation at the age of six, studying Buddhist meditation, martial arts, *taijiquan*, and Kundalini yoga.

Chia's eclecticism quotient only increased with the first of his American collaborators. Chia's breakthrough book, *Taoist Secrets of Love*, is credited as "written with Michael Winn," who also contributed the introduction. Winn claims that he wrote the entire manuscript, since as a former professional journalist he could craft idiomatic and engaging sentences. Describing the success of *Taoist Secrets of Love*, Winn writes, "The book was written in my sophisticated Western literary voice, infused with insights from my years of Tantric practice, posing as Mantak Chia's voice, the Daoist transmitting his oral tradition."<sup>34</sup>

Before meeting Chia, Winn had had much experience practicing Kundalini yoga and Westernized Tantrism, and Winn describes how over several years he used the techniques that he learned from Chia to undo the damaging effects of Kundalini. "This shift in my practice led to my writing collaboration with Chia, which over time produced seven books on *qigong* and *neigong* 內功 ("inner skill"). Chia taught me the techniques he knew, and I would test them out on myself before writing about them, often under his name."<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile Gunther Weil, involved for a long time with the human potential movement and transpersonal psychology, wrote the foreword



to *Taoist Secrets of Love*. Here he backs up Chia's claims with examples from physiology and the history of psychology, citing Sigmund Freud's, Carl Jung's, and Wilhelm Reich's attitudes towards sex. Moreover, Weil's foreword adds a dimension to Chia not found in the texts themselves that are completely practical and technical.<sup>36</sup> According to Winn, he, Weil, and a few others became part of Chia's "brain trust," the individuals who taught him how to give American-style seminars and how to dress "like a Master." They also edited, simplified, and standardized his books prior to publication.<sup>37</sup>

By the late 1980s, Healing Tao had become a global movement. Chia travels frequently—in spring 2008, for example, he taught in Germany, Poland, France, Belgium, Romania, and Russia. Tao Garden has a Thai support staff, but the overall atmosphere is of a refuge for international expatriates. The Instructor Training Workshop that Chia offers each year truly exemplifies globalized Daoism: he teaches Chinese *neidan* techniques to some twenty French, Italians, Germans, and Brazilians in a center in Thailand, managed by Germans, with alternative health services provided by Italians, Swiss, and Thai. English was the lingua franca of all but the primary tongue of none.

Meanwhile, participants in Michael Winn's annual or biannual trips to China, to be discussed below, are mostly from the United States, although a growing number of Mexicans have joined in the last few years. Any given trip finds an eclectic assortment of "Dream Trippers." In 2004, for example, a Turkish woman educated in Belgium, a Japanese woman who lived in the Netherlands, and a Romanian who immigrated to Canada joined the trip. Religious or spiritual backgrounds are similarly diverse. Some, though by no means all, participants had experience in *qigong* or other "Daoist-inspired" techniques; virtually none practiced more traditional forms of Daoism. Instead, eclecticism was the common thread. A short list of background experiences would include New Age energy healing, Yogalates, Sufi dancing, dowsing, and shamanic drumming.

#### THE SIMULATED AND CONSUMERIST TAO

Jane Iwamura's article "Image of the Oriental Monk in American Culture" astutely analyzes the simulated quality of the Asian spiritual teacher. Iwamura argues that Western popular culture depicts the monk in a variety of roles, from actual Asian monks such as the Dalai Lama, to fictional characters such as the wandering martial arts master Caine from the television series "Kung Fu." She writes, "We are always able to recognize him



as the representative of an alternative spirituality that draws from the ancient wellsprings of 'Eastern' civilization and culture."<sup>38</sup>

Iwamura ties together figures as diverse as popular intellectual D. T. Suzuki and "New Age" healer Deepak Chopra by showing how "recognition of any Eastern spiritual guide (real or fictional) is predicated on their conformity to general features paradigmatically encapsulated in the icon of the Oriental Monk: his spiritual commitment, his calm demeanor, his Asian face, and often times his manner of dress."<sup>39</sup>

To see how Mantak Chia's self-presentation conforms to Iwamura's template of the Oriental monk as a transmitter of Asian secrets to the West is to understand the Healing Tao as simulation. Chia has changed his image over time. The author photograph for Chia's first two published books shows Chia wearing thick glasses, a tie, and a pin-striped suit, smiling (and referred to as a Christian.) In a more recent picture found on Chia's website, he wears a silk jacket, gazing serenely into the camera, conforming to the image of Iwamura's Oriental monk.<sup>40</sup> Beyond this, the illustrations in Chia's books are another way he evokes an ancient, mysterious China. Here, attractive couples with Asian features, embracing on Chinese style beds, with fans and silk slippers by the bedside, recall the long tradition of "Oriental erotica" popular in the West.<sup>41</sup>

Chia's appeal is based on a free-floating link to an "ancient" and "mysterious" China. The successive names of his organizations seem made to evoke a "feeling" of Oriental spirituality based on changing market considerations. His first center, Bangkok's Natural Healing Center, had a rather neutral, descriptive name. Only when he reached America did he include the word "Taoist" as in the "Taoist Esoteric Yoga Center" (Did the word "Taoist" have less resonance for Bangkok residents?) Later, of course, his organizations' names, the Healing Tao and Universal Tao, along with other American Daoist groups, such as Abode of the Eternal Tao, the Living Tao Foundation, and the Union of Tao and Man, testify to the allure of the word "Tao."<sup>42</sup>

It should be clear by now that as a fee-for-service operation, the Healing Tao is subject to market considerations undreamed of by modern self-cultivation groups or spiritualists of nineteenth-century China and America. Healing Tao's survival is based on merchandise sales and attracting new students. The large number of books, booklets, oils and creams, CDs, and DVDs in Chia's online Universal Tao catalog demonstrate this clearly.<sup>43</sup>

Michael Winn's organization is, if anything, more explicitly commercialized. Of course, Winn's revised Healing Tao program is also available

on audio CD and DVD. Here is how Winn describes them: “Each Qigong video, book, or audio course will assist your authentic Self to fulfill worldly needs and relations; feel the profound sexual pleasure of being a radiant, healthy body; express your unique virtues; complete your soul destiny; realize peace—experience eternal life flowing in this human body. Now 100% RISK-FREE.”<sup>44</sup>

Winn’s annual summer program also employs highly commercialized language to describe the benefits of cultivation practices. According to the brochure, students will be able to “to learn the science of inner sexual alchemy, and self-generate a feeling of ‘whole-body bliss,’” “permanently ‘breathe’ 6 to 10 lbs. of fat away each week with weight-loss chi kung,” and “leave feeling younger, healthier, and more enlightened.”<sup>45</sup>

Winn may feel that such commercialized language is necessary because of the competition within alternative health circles. Michael Winn makes his home and teaches weekend seminars on Healing Tao techniques in the mountain town of Asheville, North Carolina. Asheville is home to a bevy of alternative spiritualities and the people who seek them—an East Coast version of Sedona, Arizona, or Boulder, Colorado. Of course, Winn’s popular Daoist techniques must compete with techniques derived from Sufi, Native American, Celtic, Buddhist, and a variety of other traditions (all similarly simulated and consumerized, I might add) that are available in any given weekend in Asheville.

## SUBJECTIVITY

I believe that subjectivity is the most important characteristic in demonstrating the postmodern nature of the Healing Tao, and by implication, showing how postmodern Daoism differs from the traditional and modern iterations. Analyzing the environment and interviewing the participants at the Tao Garden facility in Thailand on the China Dream Trip shall provide powerful examples.

What did attendees of the teaching training session at Tao Garden feel were the most important aspects of their experience? Through interviews and follow-up emails, I was initially expecting many comments about the place itself.

Tao Garden is a carefully constructed tropical paradise that Chia built from the ground up and is now beginning to compete in the international luxury health spa market.<sup>46</sup> It markets itself with the slogan “good air, good water, good food, good chi, good heart, good mind.” An Australian journalist (and holistic health practitioner) wrote an article about Tao Gar-

den in which she stressed Tao Garden's exotic sensuality: "The 80 acres of organic gardens fragrant with tropical fruit trees, flower canopied cabanas and gently flowing rivulets. The sensual seduction continued as I paused to inhale a heavenly lotus before following a vibrant butterfly over the palm fringed bamboo bridge."<sup>47</sup>

The luxurious charm applies not only to the vegetation and but to the services offered. Visitors and students alike can experience Thai or Ayurvedic massage, colon cleansing, acupuncture, and a huge variety of alternative medical diagnostic and therapeutic techniques, as well as hair and beauty services.

Tao Garden is located in Northern Thailand, outside of Chiang Mai, the heart of the Thai "traditional culture" industry, a region that supports itself based on tourism devoted to traditional Thai dance, art, architecture, cooking, massage, and Buddhist meditation.

Part of Tao Garden's appeal lies in its references to religious Daoism. Names for the buildings include the Eight Immortals Practice Hall and Laozi Meditation Hut, while images of these and other Daoist worthies are hung on walls throughout the facility. A small outdoor shrine, at the center of the resort, honors the Three Purities (*sanqing* 三清), the supreme Daoist divinities.

Which of these three senses of place (as a luxurious spa, as a center for traditional Thai culture, or as a home for Daoist deities) appealed most to the students at the teaching training workshop? In talking to me about their experiences of at Tao Garden, respondents made absolutely no mention of any of these aspects. The students did not seem to care about the luxuriousness of the surroundings. No effort was made by the staff or students to connect to Thai culture. I never saw anyone enter or hear of anyone mention the Daoist shrine, nor remark on the Daoist images on the walls of many of the buildings.

Instead, students mentioned the effect Tao Garden had on their body's subjective space. For example, a French woman wrote to me in part:

What my vacation brought me: only good, nothing to throw out, every day was one step forward and one more treasure in my energy body. The richest? Always always condensing energy in my dantian with one goal: the opening of the heart, always more and more . . . which would permit me to become and remain as big as the universe. This retreat reinforced my connection to the universe.<sup>48</sup>

Other participants mentioned their fellow students or the energy of Mantak Chia as the defining experience. (A French man: "When Master

Chia guided us in meditation, his energy was very present and supported us all.”) Others noted how their bodies felt more energized, balanced, or purified. Tradition, scripture, community, or morality was never brought up at all. Subjective experience was the reason for coming to Tao Garden and the criterion for a successful visit there.

Michael Winn leads a group of Westerners on a three-week China Dream Trip that includes, in addition to visits famed tourist destinations such as the Great Wall and ample time for shopping, the opportunity to perform Healing Tao practices at Daoist sacred sites, to reside in Daoist monasteries and caves carved out as shrines and meditation chambers, and to converse with Daoist monks.

The itineraries are fast moving and intense. The 2004 cohort, for example, began their two weeks in Beijing and flew to Lhasa for three days, followed by a stay in Chengdu, including two days at in a monastery at Qingchengshan. Next, the group flew to Xi’an, then stayed at monasteries or caves at Huashan.

Clearly, the trip could introduce participants to a great deal of geographic, historic, cultural, and religious features of China. But what Winn stressed in promoting the trip was the idea of China as subjective body-centered space, not as external actuality. As one might expect from a leader of a high-end specialized tour, Winn emailed the thirty-seven “China Dream Trippers” (most of whom had never been to Asia) a series of recommendations and preparations. *All* of them concerned the practice of *qigong*. For example, in an email with the subject heading “Health Tips for China Dream Trip,” Winn wrote:

What’s the secret to staying healthy in China? Do chi kung [. . .] every day. If you are the really busy type, at least do lots of the first movement, Ocean Breathing, to open your dan tian (belly) power. The chi flows from there into every meridian in your body, and that is your best defense against any sickness. A daily meditation practice also helps to integrate your immune system. . . .Do chi kung at the airport just before getting on the plane. This improves chi circulation and opens your joints, which will get stiff from sitting. I usually do some small movement chi kung on the plane as well.

After he recommends meditation to prevent jetlag, he closes with “finally, don’t worry too much in advance! Worry weakens your stomach/spleen.”

One might expect the leader of a group trip to China, especially a trip that highlights mainly religious sites, to give participants a list of recommended background books or at least websites on Chinese history, culture, geography, or religion.<sup>49</sup> There was only one item Winn sent everyone to

prepare for the trip: an instructional DVD that features Winn practicing a form of *qigong* known as *wujigong* 無極功.

At each Daoist temple, monastery, or mountain visited, the group practiced *wujigong* en masse to experience the energy of that particular place. But what made that place (mountain, monastery, temple) special? Nothing inherent in the Chinese landscape or history itself, but the “energy signature” produced by generations of *qi*-practitioners. Many of the “Trippers” I spoke with mentioned they felt the presence of so many people having done body cultivation. It was this “presence” that made the trip so special, not the specificities of religion or landscape.

One response that illustrates this: “This trip again gave me the incredible opportunity to connect with the land and people in places of the world where there has been an ancient and continuous presence of powerful meditation practitioners. The result of this has been that I have developed *a deeper connection with my inner self* through the inner self of many other people (as well as the earth self) as a collective experience” (italics added).

Interviews revealed that the participants who were most familiar with Daoist-inspired techniques of energy cultivation, and had their own intensive regime of practice back in North America, were the *least* interested in Daoist history, liturgy, or religion. For the Western “Dream Tripper,” the subjective experience in one’s own body is the only source of authenticity transmitted by the energy signature of previously present (deceased) bodies. Lineage and place are explicitly rejected. At its most extreme this rejection is expressed in highly Orientalist and chauvinist language, such as this respondent: “The Chinese are more lost than Americans. . . . I’m no fan of the Chinese now. The Daoists there for the most part (except Hua Shan) are far far behind us ‘practitioners’ in the west & they don’t seem to care. The Chinese people do not have any reverence for the sacred sites we visited. We went there & showed them what they could be again.”<sup>50</sup>

It is subjectivity that unites the globalized clientele of Tao Garden, the China Dream Trip, and the Healing Tao in general, with their eclectic interests. It is subjectivity that provides the underlying “reality” to the simulated play of images and associations such as “Tao” and “ancient China” and it is subjective experience that all the consumerist language is really selling, more than any book, DVD, or class.

Lee Fongmao asks at the end of his essay in this volume whether Alchemic Taoism could be of benefit to other societies. Will it take its place with Zen meditation and yoga as “universal knowledge and culture of body and mind” or will it remain a kind of “local knowledge”? Lee’s wish that

alchemical Daoism might “nourish life but also cultivate and bring forth the full human potential” is shared by Michael Winn and Mantak Chia. And yet what does Lee the scholarly historian-practitioner have in common with Winn and Chia the spiritual entrepreneurs?

Winn and Chia know little about the contemporary *neidan* groups in Taiwan that Lee writes about, nor about the resurgent academic and governmental interest in Daoism on the Chinese mainland and in Taiwan; meanwhile Lee might find it difficult to take the Healing Tao seriously. Lee might not have had the Healing Tao in mind when he wrote his hopeful conclusion. But ultimately I believe that Lee’s ambition cannot be fulfilled on its own terms. Lee is expressing a modern wish in a postmodern situation. Whatever benefit a nonsectarian, rationalized inner alchemy-based iteration of Daoism might have for the world at large, postmodernity dictates it could only exist in an eclectic, simulated, subjective, and consumerist form.

# Notes

## INTRODUCTION

1. For example, Robinet's seminal work *Taoism: Growth of a Religion*, which is the only historical survey of Daoism existing in English, covers the period from antiquity to the fourteenth century CE.

2. The post-Song decline thesis remains persistent among many historians of Daoism. See Qing Xitai, *Zhongguo Daojiao shi*; and Ren Jiyu, *Zhongguo Daojiao shi*. But the view is not limited to scholars of Daoism. It is even more prevalent among historians of modern China. For example, the venerable Cambridge History series on the Late Qing, the Republic, and the Peoples' Republic of China contains hardly any discussion of Daoism within its multiple volumes.

3. See, for example, Goossaert, "The Quanzhen Clergy"; and "Quanzhen, What Quanzhen?"

4. See a preliminary presentation in Goossaert and Fang, "Temples and Daoists."

5. Dean, *Taoist Ritual; Lord of the Three-in-One*; "Ritual Matters"; "Further Partings of the Way"; and Dean and Zheng, *Ritual Alliances of the Putian Plain*. Lai Chi-tim, "Minguo shiqi"; "Daoism in China Today"; "Hong Kong Daoism"; *Guangdong difang Daojiao*.

6. See, for example, Tsui, *Taoist Tradition and Change*; Lang and Ragvald, *Rise of a Refugee God*.

7. See, e.g., Lagerwey, ed. *Traditional Hakka Society Series*; Wang Ch'iu-kui, ed. *Minsu quyi congshu*; Jones, *In Search of the Folk Daoists of North China*; Arrault's project "Daoism and Local Society: Liturgical Structures of Central Hunan"; and *Han Xin's Revenge*, directed by Fava.

8. See also Xu Jian, "Body, Discourse"; Nancy Chen, *Breathing Spaces*; Palmer, "Embodying Utopia"; Ownby, *Falun Gong*.

9. Siegler, "Chinese Traditions"; "Back to the Pristine"; Siegler and Palmer, *Dream Trippers*; see also Komjathy, "Qigong in America."

10. On the transformation during the late Qing, see Goossaert, "1898."
11. Welch, *The Buddhist Revival* and *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism*.
12. Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*; Poon, *Negotiating Religion in Modern China*.
13. Other representative collections among the rapidly growing literature on religion in contemporary China include Tamney and Yang, eds., *State, Market and Religions*; Ashiwa and Wank, eds., *Making Religion, Making the State*; Billioud and Palmer, eds., *Religious Reconfigurations*; Chau, ed., *Religion in Contemporary China*. For an introductory text on religion in contemporary Chinese society in relation to themes such as ethnicity, body, gender, environment, economy and civil society, see Palmer, Shive, and Wickeri, eds., *Chinese Religious Life*.
14. Schipper, "The Gene Bank of Culture."
15. Lagerwey, "Popular Ritual Specialists"; Tam, "Cong Yuebei Yingde."
16. See, for example, Lagerwey's edited volume *Religion and Chinese Society*, which defines the "modern period" as beginning in the Song.
17. Goossaert, "Bureaucratic Charisma."
18. See Lagerwey, ed., *Traditional Hakka Society Series*; Tam Wai-lun, *Minjian fojiao*.
19. Goossaert, "Quanzhen, What Quanzhen?"
20. See Shue, "The Quality of Mercy"; Handlin Smith, "Benevolent Societies"; Yau, *Shan yu ren tong*.
21. Shahar, *The Shaolin Monastery*.
22. Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist Religion*; Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements*.
23. De Groot, *Sectarianism*, devotes several chapters to Xiantiandao-related groups; other studies of Xiantiandao include Topley, "The Great Way of Former Heaven"; and the ongoing research by Shiga Ichiko, Yau Chi-on, and Ngai Ting-ming (see *Minsu quyī* 172).
24. Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*.
25. See Goossaert, "1898."
26. Goossaert, "Republican Church Engineering."
27. See Palmer, Katz and Wang, eds., "Redemptive Societies." On the category of redemptive societies, see Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, chap. 3; Palmer, "Chinese Redemptive Societies."
28. Wang Jianchuan, "Tongshanshe."
29. DuBois, "The Salvation of Religion?"
30. See Shao Yong, *Zhongguo huidaomen*; Palmer, "Heretical Doctrines."
31. For an official history of the China Daoist Association and its activities and policies, see Li Yangzheng, *Dangdai Daojiao*.
32. At the national level, the Religious Affairs Bureau was renamed the State Administration of Religious Affairs in 1998.
33. See Goossaert and Fang, "Temples and Daoists"; Palmer, "China's Religious *Danwei*."
34. Palmer, *Qigong Fever*.



35. On Jin Yong, see Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen*.
36. Welch, "The Chang T'ien Shih."
37. On Yiguandao, see Jordan and Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix*; Lu Yun-feng, *The Transformation of Yiguandao*.
38. Yau Chi-on, "Xianggang xiantiandao."
39. Siegler, "Chinese Traditions."
40. Siegler, "Back to the Pristine"; Palmer, "Globalization and the Quan-zhen Daoists"; Siegler and Palmer, *Dream Trippers*.
41. See, for example, Ge Rongjin, ed., *Daojia wenhua*; Luo Chuanfang, ed., *Daojiao wenhua*; Guo Wu, ed., *Daojiao jiaoyi*; Zhongguo Daojiao xiehui et al., eds., *Daojiao jiaoyi*; Chen Guying, ed., *Daojia wenhua*.
42. Capra, *The Tao of Physics*; Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*.
43. See Girardot, Miller, and Liu, eds., *Daoism and Ecology*.
44. Hu Fuchen, "21 shiji."
45. Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, 220n33.
46. Chan, "Packaging Tradition."
47. Yang Der-ruey, "The Changing Economy"; Goossaert and Fang, "Temples and Daoists."
48. In recent surveys in urban China, fewer than 1 percent of respondents identified themselves as Daoists, compared with almost 4 percent who identified as Christians and 11–16 percent as Buddhists. See Vermander, "Religious Revival" 5–6, for a discussion of these surveys.
49. In Taiwan, by the 1990s, surveys indicated that between 26 and 38 percent of Taiwanese identified as Buddhist (See Hsiao and Schak, "China's Socially Engaged Buddhist Groups," 47). Among the Chinese of Singapore, the number of self-identified Buddhists increased from 34.3 to 53.6 percent between 1980 and 2000, while the number of "Taoists" (a survey category including all forms of Chinese popular religion) declined from 38.2 to 10.8 percent. Tong, *Rationalizing Religion*, 63.
50. See Madsen, *Democracy's Dharma*; Huang, *Charisma and Compassion*.
51. Welch, *The Buddhist Revival*.

## CHAPTER 1

This chapter is based upon a research project entitled "Daoism and Local Society in Guangdong: A Collection of Daoist Epigraphy of Guangdong." The project was generously funded by the Research Grants Council of the Universities Grants Committee, Hong Kong (ref. CUHK 445309).

1. Schipper, "Daoism: The Story of the Way," 52.
2. In the Qing dynasty, the Zhengyi *daoshi* 正一道士 were officially called Qingwei Lingbao (sometimes Qingwei, or Lingbao, or Qingwei-Zhengyi); see Goossaert, "Counting the Monks."
3. Goossaert, "Bureaucratic Charisma," 121–59, has a detailed account of the history of the Zhang family of Longhushan in modern China.
4. Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical Ritual in Daoism," 21–36, impor-

tantly emphasizes that the rituals performed by today's *daoshi* in local communities have the characteristics of the classical ritual in the written tradition symbolized by the Daoist Canon.

5. Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical Ritual in Daoism," 24.
6. See Girardot, foreword to Schipper, *The Daoist Body*, xiii–xiv.
7. Schipper, "Introduction: Daoism in the Early Modern Era," in Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Daoist Canon*, 636.
8. Dean, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults*, 17; and Andersen, "Cults and Liturgical Frameworks."
9. See Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*; and Hymes, *Way and Byway*.
10. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, 11, clearly states his thesis: "it is, in fact, the assimilation of local cults by Daoism that produced the Daoist Ritual Master (*fashi*, or red-head priest) who, I will argue, mediated between Daoism and the possessed mediums of local cults and village religion."
11. See Lagerwey, "Popular Ritual Specialists"; "The Altar of Celebration Ritual"; and "Duangong Ritual." Furthermore, the eighty volumes of the monograph series "Studies in Chinese Ritual, Theatre and Folklore" (*Minsu quyi congshu*) edited by Wang Ch'iu-kui have contributed to a better understanding of vernacular Daoism at the county level in the past decade.
12. Schipper, "The Written Memorial in Daoist Ceremonies," 317.
13. Dean, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults*, 3.
14. For the study of lineages in the Pearl River Delta, see Faure, *The Structure of Chinese Rural Society*.
15. Faure, *The Structure of Chinese Rural Society*, 225n15, reports that there was a distinction between Zhengyi rites and *wan-uen* (*hunyuan* 混元) rites found in his observance of Daoist rites in the New Territories. Nevertheless, both classical and vernacular rites are performed by Daoist Masters.
16. On the study of the Lüshan ritual tradition in Fujian, see Ye Ming-sheng, *Fujiansheng longyanshi dongxiaozhen lüshanjiao*.
17. Schipper, *The Daoist Body*, 19.
18. Goossaert, "Counting the Monks," 54.
19. On books and reports on the revival of Daoist ritual at the local level, see Lai Chi-tim, "Daoism in China Today," 108n6.
20. Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical Ritual in Daoism," 29.
21. For the study of the liturgical functions of Daoist Masters of the early ecclesia of the Heavenly Master (Tianshi dao), see Franciscus Verellen's excellent study of the petition ritual, called *shangzhang*, in the *Chisong zi zhangli*, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda."
22. Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Daoist Canon*, 22–23.
23. For the study of Heavenly Master's system of conferring registers in the Tang, see Schipper, "Daoist Ordination Ranks in the Tunhuang Manuscripts"; Kobayashi, *Tōdai no Dōkyō to Tensidō*; Lagerwey, "Zhengyi Registers."
24. Schipper, "Daoism: The Story of the Way," 53.

25. Schipper, general introduction to Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Daoist Canon*, 31; see also Schipper, "Daoism: The Story of the Way," 48–49.
26. Schipper, general introduction to Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Daoist Canon*, 31.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Schipper, "Introduction: Daoism in the Early Modern Era," 633–34; and Michel Strickmann, "Sodai no raigi."
29. See *Maoshan daomen*. For the study of the Longhushan Zhang family during the Tang period, see Barrett, "The Emergence of the Daoist Papacy in the T'ang Dynasty."
30. See *Yuan shi*, *juan* 202 (Shilao zhi); *Yuan shi*, *juan* 87 (Baiguan zhi); *Xuxiu Longhushan zhi*, 69–70.
31. *Xuxiu Longhushan zhi*, 70–72.
32. *Huangming enming shilu*, *juan* 2, no. 5.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Schipper, "Daoism: The Story of the Way," 52.
35. *Changchun Daojiao yuanliu*, 119.
36. Ishida, "Mindai Dōkyō," 163.
37. Schipper, general introduction to Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Daoist Canon*, 31; Ishida, "Mindai Dōkyō," 166–7.
38. Ishida, "Mindai dōkyō," 170.
39. Schipper, "Daoism: The Story of the Way," 51–52.
40. Schipper, "The Written Memorial in Daoist Ceremonies," 311. See also Schipper, *The Daoist Body*, 60; and Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, 351–59.
41. Cf. Goossaert, "Bureaucratic Charisma," 127.
42. *Ming huidian*, vol. 226, 4435–37. See also Ishida, "Mindai dōkyō," 145–95.
43. *Ming shilu*, *juan* 144, 2262.
44. *Ming shilu*, *juan* 222.
45. *Ming shilu*, *juan* 144, 2262. See also *Ming Shi*, *juan* 74.
46. de Bruyn, "Daoism in the Ming (1368–1644)," 596–97.
47. Zhao Liang, "Mingdai Daojiao guanli zhidu."
48. The Xuanmiaoguan (Monastery of Primordial Mystery) in Guangzhou was founded in the Song as one of a network of officially sponsored Daoist temples spread over the empire called Tianqingguan 天慶觀, created by Emperor Zhenzong (997–1022).
49. *Guangzhou zhi* 廣州志, 1003.
50. See Lai Chi-tim, *Guangdong difang Daojiao yanjiu*, 8, 58.
51. *Changchun Daojiao yuanliu*, 137.
52. They were the Chongxu guan 沖虛觀, Huanglong guan 黃龍觀, Baihe guan 白鶴觀, Sanyuan gong 三元宮, Yingyuan gong 應元宮, and Yuanmiao guan 元妙觀 (Huizhou). See Yoshioka, "Daoist Monastic Life," 231. See also Lai Chi-tim, "Qingdai Guangdong Quanzhen daoguan kao," in Lai Chi-tim, *Guangdong difang Daojiao yanjiu*, 79–106.

53. Song Guangye, "Luofu shan zhi huibian," 466.
54. Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical Ritual in Daoism," 24.
55. *Panyu xianzhi*, 393.
56. Goossaert, "Counting the Monks," 60.
57. *Guangzhou shi dang'an guan [ziliao]*, 82–84; and Lai Chi-tim, "Guangzhou yuanmiao guan kaoshi."
58. For instance, see See Hosoya, "Yōshō chō no seikyō"; "Kenryū chō Seikyō."
59. Schipper, general introduction to Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Daoist Canon*, 39.
60. Goossaert, "Counting the Monks," 56. Goossaert cites *Da Qing huidian shili*, 501, p. 8a, which mentions a case in 1815 in which the Heavenly Master was punished for having sent his *faguan* on ordination tours.
61. The first Zhengyi ordination ceremony since the advent of Communist Party rule took place at the highest principal altar (*wanfa zongtan* 萬法宗壇) of the Halls of Tianshifu, at Longhushan on December 5, 1995, and lasted for three days. Instead of conceiving it as a revival of the Heavenly Master family system, this ordination of "conferring registers" (*shoulu* 授籙) was not organized by the Halls of Tianshifu, but by the China Daoist Association. With no ecclesiastical connection with the hereditary Heavenly Master, the ordination was actually presided over by only three primary masters of the Zhengyi order, with He Canran as the "Master who initiates and transmits" (*chuandu shi* 傳度師), Chen Liansheng as the "Master who examines" (*jiandu shi* 監督師), and Zhou Niankao as the "Master who guarantees" (*baoju shi* 保舉師). In fact, after the sixty-third Heavenly Master, Zhang Enpu (1904–1969), fled to Taiwan in 1949, the hereditary office of Heavenly Master Zhang was no longer recognized and has not yet been restored in China. See *Zhongguo Daojiao* 1 (1996), 11–12; *Shanghai Daojiao*, 1 (1996), 7–11; Li Yangzhen, ed., *Dangdai Daojiao*, 125–26.
62. In the Ming, the term *huoju* did not specially refer to Zhengyi *daoshi*. *Ming huidian*, vol. 95, simply used *huoju daoshi* to refer to either Buddhist or Daoist priests who did not follow their old custom or to laypeople who practiced Daoist methods.
63. Goossaert, "Counting the Monks," 56.
64. *Ibid.*, 57.
65. *Ibid.*, 48.
66. The term *nahm-mouh* may also have onomatopoeic origins, deriving from ritual specialists' low, monotonous chants, which sound to most observers like meaningless droning: *nahm mouh*, *nahm mouh*. See Watson, "Funeral Specialists in Cantonese Society," 117n20.
67. As known by many scholars of Daoism, traditional Daoist masters in local districts actually belonged to the literati class, were trained in the classics, and were expert in literary composition in their villages or counties. See Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical Ritual in Daoism," 24.
68. See Watson, "Funeral Specialists in Cantonese Society," 109–34.
69. Faure, *The Structure of Chinese Rural Society*, 227n21.

70. Lai Chi-tim, "Minguo shiqi guangzhoushi nahm-mouh daoyuan."
71. *Guangzhou shi dang'an guan [ziliao]*, 27–28.
72. *Ibid.*, 11–13.
73. Lai Chi-tim, "Minguo shiqi guangzhoushi nahm-mouh daoyuan," 36n36.
74. *Guangzhou shi dang'an guan [ziliao]*, 11–13; and Lai Chi-tim, "Minguo shiqi guangzhoushi nahm-mouh daoyuan," 17–18.
75. *Guangzhou shi dang'an guan [ziliao]*, 27–28.
76. Shiga, *Kindai Chūgoku no shāmanizumu*, 16–17. In addition, Yau Chi-On, ed., *Daofeng bainian*, 28, reports that out of the fifty-eight Daoist altars to which he had paid visits, twenty-four were dedicated to worship of Patriarch Lü.
77. For instance, although the Pengying xianguan 蓬瀛仙館 is known as a Daoist temple of the orthodox lineage of Longmen originally built for the "hidden cultivation" of disciples, the temple, which is devoted to the worship of the Patriarch Lü, was not a monastic temple with resident clerics. Cf. Lai Chi-tim, "Hong Kong Daoism."
78. According to the Zhengyi tradition, one becomes a Nahm-mouh Daoist master by following one's father or by being introduced to the profession by other relatives or friends and becoming an apprentice in a Nahm-mouh Daoist hall.
79. The purpose of the Daoist ritual for the dead (requiem services), known as the *gongde* or *zhai* fast ritual, is to absolve and purify the souls of the deceased so that they can ascend to the realm of the immortals without going through the torments of hell.
80. In Hong Kong, there is a small group of *huoju daoshi* of the Fujianese tradition handed down by the Hailufeng immigrants who moved to Hong Kong from the Haifeng 海豐 and Lufeng 陸豐 counties in Huizhou of Guangdong. Their Daoist rites are performed only in places where Hailufeng immigrants are concentrated. For a study of Hailufeng *daoshi* in Hong Kong, see Tanaka, "The Jiao Festival in Hong Kong."
81. Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical Ritual in Daoism," 24–26.
82. *Ibid.*, 34–35.
83. Lai Chi-tim, "Aomen wuqingyun daoyuan," 178–99.
84. See Wu Bingzhi, "Aomen de zhengyi pai yinyue."
85. See Welch, "The Chang T'ien Shih and Daoism in China."
86. When Zhang Enpu came to Hong Kong, he spent six months at the Cloud Spring Daoist temple (Yunquan xianguan 雲泉仙館) on Des Voeux road, Hong Kong.
87. The eleven Zhengyi masters of Macau who received ordination certificates from the sixty-third Heavenly Master Zhang Enpu were Wu Jinwen, Wu Tianshen, Li Qi 李七, Chen Zao 陳灶, Chen Houkun 陳厚坤, Chen Tongsu 陳同蘇, Zhou Guang 周光, Zhou Qing 周慶, Luo Chengjiu 羅成就, Liang Xin 梁新, and Lin Kai 林開. This list of ordinees was confirmed by Wu Tianshen and Li Qi when I interviewed them in Macau on November 5, 2002.

88. Lai Chi-tim, "Aomen wuqingyun daoyuan."

89. Lai Chi-tim, *Guangdong difang Daojiao yanjiu*, 191. Schipper, "The Written Memorial in Daoist Ceremonies," 317, claims that the "second part of the title, corresponding to the office, was invented by the magically oriented instigators of the New Orthodox Church of the Heavenly Master of Southern Sung times and is of little importance."

90. See Schipper, *Le fen-teng*.

91. Dean, "Daoist Ritual Today," 660.

92. Although many anthropologists and historians study Jiao festivals in Hong Kong, it is very rare that they are specifically interested in Daoist rituals. See Choi Chi-cheung, "Studies on Hong Kong Jiao Festivals."

93. Boltz, "Singing to the Spirits of the Dead"; and Chen Yaoting, "Xiantian hushi jilian you."

94. See the ritual manuscript of *Fendeng ke* collected in the *Fenling Wenxian* 粉嶺文獻 (Historical literature of Fanling), vol. 11. Copies of collections are kept in the libraries of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong University, and the Institute of Oriental Culture, Tokyo University.

95. According to Schipper, in the rite of the Rolling of the Screen (*juanlian* 捲簾), "a large scroll, hanging right in the center of the altar (*tan* 壇) just behind the big table, is first unrolled, then again rolled up to the middle. It carries only the character of *jue* 闕, gate, meaning the Golden Gate, the residence of Yuhuang shangdi 玉皇上帝, the head of the pantheon. This scroll represents the screen which hangs before the emperor. It has now rolled up; the audience may begin." See Schipper, "Taoism: The Liturgical Tradition," 29. See also Lü Chuikuan, *Taiwan de Daojiao yishi yu yinyue*.

96. For detailed comparison, see Lai Chi-tim, *Guangdong difang Daojiao yanjiu*, 205–7. For a brief introduction of the *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi*, see Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Daoist Canon*, 1014–18.

97. Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Daoist Canon*, 2–3.

98. Watson, "Funeral Specialists in Cantonese Society," 118.

## CHAPTER 2

1. See Yang Der-ruey, "The Education of Taoist Priests."

2. Interested readers can find the curriculum of the Daoist College and the modules being taught in the College in the appendix to this chapter.

3. Almost all the younger priests with whom I have discussed this conflict insisted that the question of the black caps is just a disguise for some other disturbing issues. According to them, the actual problem is the discontent of the senior priests regarding the SDA's payment scheme. The SDA provided the younger priests with a higher salary and a better welfare plan than the senior priests.

4. The consecration ceremony I described here is based on the *shoulu dadian* of the Zhengyi tradition. The equivalent ceremony of the Quanzhen

全真 tradition—*Chuanjie dadian* 傳戒大典—is basically identical to it despite two notable differences. First, the candidates are given *jiedie* 戒牒 instead of *lu*. Second, the finale is not “stabbing the golden flower” but the *Guanjin keyi* 冠巾科儀 (the Rite of Hat and Kerchief).

5. For example, the genealogical nomenclature of the Zhengyi tradition is called *Sanshan dixuepai* 三山滴血派, which is the lineage that all of the contemporary Daoist priests in Shanghai belong to, and is based on the following poem:

守道明仁德、全真復太和。至誠宣玉典、中正演金科。沖漢通元蘊、高宏鼎大羅。武當興震運、福海超洪波。(or 三山愈興振、福海涌洪波。)穹窿揚妙法、寰宇澄仙都。

6. This practice stands in sharp contrast to that of Chinese Buddhism. The Buddhist naming rule does not leave any room for monks and nuns to preserve their lineage identity or personal identity.

7. The most representative case of this usage of the golden flower can be found in these three frequently used ritual manuals for *fashi*: *Qingwei sandong zhaifa* 清微三洞齋法 (Ritual manual of the sacrificial ritual of the *Qingwei* order in the *Sandong* collection), *Zougao bawang jieci* / *Wangdou* 奏告拔亡節次/亡斗 (Procedure for praying for divine salvation for the deceased), and *Jinbiao keyi* 進表科儀 (Rite for forwarding petitions). The first two manuals are about two necessary sections of *wangshi* 亡事 (literally, “tasks about death,” and containing all the rituals regarding death)—the most frequently performed rites for Shanghai’s Daoist priests. The last is about the central part of *qingshi* 清事 (literally, “clean tasks,” denoting the rituals aimed at praying for divine blessing for living people).

8. This idea has since been succinctly expressed through the saying widespread among Daoist practitioners, *shun ze sheng ren, ni ze cheng xian* 順則生人、逆則成仙 (One procreates offspring by going along, whereas one achieves immortality by reversion.) For more information, see chapters 6 and 8 in this volume, by Xun Liu and Lee Fongmao, respectively.

9. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*.

10. Geertz, “Person, Time and Conducts.”

11. Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*, chapter 8.

12. *Ibid.*, 149.

13. Except for the chosen apprentices for the *fashi*’s craft, average students are unable to gain access to *neimi* to this day.

14. The following recounting, which I heard in December 1998 from a renowned *fashi*—Master Cao, the most outstanding heir of various parochial traditions in the Pudong area for many years—illustrates the beginning of the effort toward standardization.

The project was a necessary task for that moment because, during the early 1980s, the number of all the available Daoist priests around the larger Shanghai area was less than forty. If we don’t coordinate with



each other, there is no way any tradition can survive. That's why we should sort out a standard liturgy for everybody to follow. . . . The standard liturgy is a mixture of all the local traditions around Shanghai. I'm also one of the authors. It's in sometime during the early 1980s . . . probably around '83 or '84. I am not quite sure. . . . I was invited to attend an expert group, which is aimed at sorting out a general version for all those frequently used rituals. We are a group of five or six *fashi*; each represents one local ritual tradition. I represented the traditions of Pudong, especially those coming from southern Pudong. First, each of us wrote down all the details one can memorize about the tradition one inherits. . . . Then, we tried our best to illuminate the differences between various local traditions by comparing the manuscripts composed by each one of us. Finally, we dropped off some contradicting elements and unified all these traditions into one general version—for example, the procedure of the present standard *fafu* 發符 (Enchanting the Talisman) ritual is copied from the urban tradition while its contents, especially the hymns and the details of each episode, followed the model of the southern Pudong tradition.

Master Cao quit the SDA a few years ago and is now working as a *sanju daoshi*.

15. *Wang wu* includes these five rituals: *fafu*, *jinbiao* (Forwarding Petition), *wangdou* 亡斗 (Worshipping the Constellations of Death), *duqiao* 渡橋 (Crossing the Bridge), and *xue hudeng* (Rescuing Lamp amid the Bloody Lake; for women) or *jiuyou deng* 九幽燈 (Rescuing Lamp in Hell; for men); while the *qing wu* consists of *fafu*, *jinbiao*, *zhaitian* 齋天 (Sacrifice for Heaven), *kuanwang* 款王 (Treating the Kings of Heaven and Hell), and *jiuyang deng* 九陽燈 (Lamp Rite for Worshipping the Ultimate Yang).

16. My argument here has already excluded *fashi* candidates. The relationship between *fashi* candidates and masters will be addressed elsewhere.

17. The “traditional curriculum” here mainly refers to the local apprenticeship tradition. However, there are some good reasons to presume that what I argue here is also applicable to the monastic tradition. Among all the cases of monastic training that I know, there is no one set ritual skill secondary to literary study.

18. As is shown by the appendix to this chapter, ritual skills training occupies 35 percent of the time allocated to professional coursework, which is 65 percent of total school hours. Thus, 22.75 percent of the total time is allocated to ritual skills training.

19. Mr. Gong came from Haian and enrolled as one of the second cluster students in 1992. He is now thirty years old, serving in the City God Temple as a ritual assistant.

20. The first widely known application of this dialectic is the *Bianfa* 變法 (Constitutional Reform) initiated and promulgated by Wang Anshi 王安石



石 in 1069. For a brief introduction to Wang's constitutional reform and its background, see Li Guilin, ed., *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi*, 156–65, 209–17; and Jin Zheng, *Keju zhidu*, 16–49.

21. Those senior priests who joined the SDA when it was founded in the mid-1980s are not included in my discussion here. They are recognized as Daoist priests according to the traditional definition—based on their self-reported personal and intellectual genealogies, which are further confirmed by authoritative senior Daoist masters.

22. *Longchuan wenji*, chapter 11, section “Quanxuan zige” (On evaluation, selection, and qualification). His criticism was echoed by Huang Zongxi (1610–1695), one of the most prominent scholars of the seventeenth century; see *Mingyi daifanglu*, 9–19.

23. On the “colonial perspective,” see Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*. On “B-series time,” see Gell, *The Anthropology of Time*, 149–165. On “clock time,” see Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism.”

24. By “trainees,” I refer to the third cohort of students who were doing internships at the moment.

25. Thompson, “Time”; Sahllins, “Other Times”; Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*, chapter 17.

26. Thompson, “Time,” 83–84.

27. Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*, 328.

28. See Yang Der-ruey, “The Changing Economy,” for a more detailed description and analysis of the conflict between the leading young priests and the junior graduates over working hour management and work ethic.

29. Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*, 333.

### CHAPTER 3

I would like to thank David Palmer and Xun Liu for their invaluable suggestions for improving this chapter and more generally for the genuine exchange they established among the contributors to this book, an exchange that was extremely helpful for a number of the ideas developed here. I also wish to thank Judy Rosenthal and Matthew Cunningham for their help with the English translation.

1. On this historical and very interesting question, see in particular Ozaki Masaharu, who considers whether or not Daoists practiced *chujia* and withdrew from family life during the first half of Tang (“The Taoist Priesthood,” 7); Kristofer Schipper, who examines how monasticism, introduced by Buddhists, was understood and appreciated by Daoists, and takes a more general look at the application of monastic rule and the origin of the *guan* 冠 (“Le monachisme taoïste,” 200); and Livia Kohn, who shows how as far back as the medieval epoch (before Quanzhen 全真) Daoist monasticism was “a continuation of the earliest Daoist movements under changed circumstances” (*Monastic Life in Medieval Daoism*, 34–35). On the beginning of the Quanzhen

school and its Longmen branch, see Marsone, *Wang Chongyang*; Goossaert, "The Invention of an Order"; Esposito, "The Longmen School"; and Eskildsen, *Teachings and Practices*.

2. Ozaki, "The Taoist Priesthood," 97.
3. Schopen, "The Buddhist Bhikṣu's Obligation," 132.
4. If living alone, or away from the world, means living far from one's kin, then the etymology of the English term "monk" (and also *moine* in French), from the late Latin *monachus* and late Greek *monakhos* (solitary, single) is not that far from *chujia ren*, used by the monastic schools of Daoist clergy and also by Buddhist clergy. See Herrou, introduction to *Moines et moniales de par le monde*, 15–16.
5. Schipper, "Le monachisme taoïste," 215.
6. According to a short paper presenting the Wengong temple (unpublished) written by the monks in 1994, the temple was built in 1744 (eighth year of Qianlong's 乾隆 reign). It was a small temple, extended in the 1920s to the size it had at the time of the Liberation of 1949. The recent gazetteer *Hanzhong shi zhi* notes that the temple was built in 1918 (see *Hanzhong shi zhi*, 740–41), whereas the inscription on the only remaining stele (engraved in 1926) mentions that the temple passed to the Daoist monks during the Republic (see Chen Xianyuan, *Hanzhong Beishi*, 423). It was erected on a *Tudi miao*, as mentioned in the Qing *Hanzhong di zhi* (1675).
7. There were about fifteen monks in the 1940s and this was the largest community the temple had ever accommodated. There were eight in 1949.
8. While most of the monks in the area stem from this spiritual lineage, others are of a lineage from Maiji shan 麥積山 in Gansu, or of small local lineages; still others are outsiders.
9. The absence of such facilities is not an impediment to religious practice, although it reveals a simplicity in the way of life (mainly implying extra domestic chores such as carrying drinkable water or cutting wood for fire) that often differentiates monasteries located in towns or on plains from those in the mountains.
10. Ozaki, "The Taoist Priesthood," 99.
11. Ibid., 108. *Chujia ren* are already at the heart of the *Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* (Daozang, 1125, vol. 24/741). According to Livia Kohn, this text underwent several stages of development, from the 550s to the compilation of the Daoist Canon in 1445, and "does in fact reflect the ideal envisioned for Daoist institutional organization and practice in the early to high Tang" (*The Daoist Monastic Manual*, 46–47). See also Reiter and Cedzich, "Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi," 451–52.
12. Ozaki, "The Taoist Priesthood," 102. On the six categories or levels in which Daoists were classified in the medieval epoch according to the *Fengdao kejie*, see Kohn, *The Daoist Monastic Manual*, 175–77.
13. Kohn, *The Daoist Monastic Manual*, 9. On the origin of the use of the term *guan* (observatory) to designate Daoist monasteries, see Schipper, "Le monachisme taoïste," 209–12.

14. Kohn, *The Daoist Monastic Manual*, 15. On the question of abstinence, see also Kohn, *Monastic Life in Medieval Daoism*, 119–23.
15. Schipper, “Le monachisme taoïste,” 206.
16. Kohn, “Monastic Rules in Quanzhen Daoism,” 393.
17. On the Longmen pai 龍門派 poem, see Esposito, “The Longmen School,” 629–30; Goossaert, “The Invention of an Order,” 130–32; Herrou, *La vie entre soi*, 315–19.
18. Marsone, *Wang Chongyang*, 354.
19. The term *chujia* is derived from the Sanskrit *pravrajyâ* (Nakamura Hajime, *Bukkyôgo dai jiten*, 671), “going forth from home” (the first rite of a layman who wishes to become a buddhist monk); “roaming, wandering out” (especially as a religious mendicant) (Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 694.) It is interesting to note that in other societies, the same Sanskrit term used to refer to the act of renouncement has given rise to different translations that do not necessarily evoke breaking off with kinship, as in Tibet, where *raptu-chungwa* literally means “attaining excellence” (see *Rangjung Yeshe Tibetan-English Online Dictionary*; Nicolas Sihlé, personal communication).
20. Quoted by Marsone, *Wang Chongyang*, 354.
21. To explain religious commitment, Buddhists speak of “karmic causes” (*yinyuan* 因緣). Daoist monks speak of “predisposition” or “feeling” (*ganqing* 感情), emanating from the person’s “authenticity” (*cheng* 誠).
22. See Herrou, *La vie entre soi*, chapter 5.
23. *Daode jing*, chapter 40.
24. For this reason, it is not possible to speak of atrophy or of castration (Schipper, *Le corps taoïste*, 172). Whereas monks of Hanzhong stress a retraction of the penis, other sources evoke the shrinking of the testicles (Despeux, *Immortelles de la Chine ancienne*, 240).
25. *Shimu* can be used to refer to the wife of a married Daoist master (also called *shifu*) in other schools of this religion, but it is not used in the monastery.
26. Hanzhong monks and nuns refer to the trigrams and hexagrams of the *Yijing* 易經 to explain *qian* and *kun*, which represent Heaven and Earth, yang and yin, and their respective attributes.
27. Min Zhiting, *Daojiao yifan*, 89.
28. As Berthier shows, “before the start of destiny”—between four months and ten years—children may “strike” (*chong* 沖) the destiny of those they meet, with whom they develop ties, and so endanger them and suffer themselves (“Enfant de divination,” 88–89). Before that age, the child is, as Schipper says (*L’empereur Wou*, 61), asexual. Granet indicates that the separation of the sexes, which starts at seven and ends at seventy, “extends from the first to the last manifestations of the generative power” (*Études Sociologiques sur la Chine*, 212–13).
29. Daoist monks and nuns are religious specialists who perform these funeral rituals. In the case of their own deaths, monks do not speak about

*chaodu wanghun* or *chaodu linghun*, nor about *chaodu guhun* 孤魂 (which apply only to laypeople), but rather about *chaodu xialing*. After their departure they won't become bad or good souls, *wanghun* 亡魂 or *linghun* 靈魂, neither "orphan souls" (*guhun*) but special souls close to energy (*ling* but not *hun*), "eternal souls" (*xialing*) with regard to the belief that they never pass away; they "transform into birds" (*yuhua*).

30. See chapter 5 in this volume, by Vincent Goossaert.

31. See Herrou, "Quand les moines taoïstes se mettent en texte."

32. Monks in Hanzhong often think of the Daoist masters belonging to other schools (mainly Tianshi pai 天師派 and Maoshan pai) as *daoshi* who live *zaijia*. However they have little opportunity to meet them in the region. They assume that it is possible to transfer from their own school to those that offer this alternative religious life.

33. Min Zhiting, *Daojiao yifan*, 23–25.

34. *Jiutang shu*, juan 160.

35. Ma Shutian, *Zhongguo mingjie zhushen*, 180.

36. According to the Daoist monks explanation, *gui* are those who had a "bad death," i.e., who have not died in the proper manner (by accident, disease, or violent situation), but also those who had a "good death" but who had nobody to give them an ancestral cult or for whom the ancestral cult has not been correctly performed. These two kinds of ghosts are also called the "lost souls" (*wanghun*) and the "orphouls" (*guhun* 孤魂).

37. Official texts issued by government agencies such as the Council of State Affairs of the People's Republic of China, the Bureau of Religious Affairs of the same Council of State Affairs, or the provincial government make up a regulatory code that evolves with time. Monastery rules, however, decreed by the founders of Quanzhen, are held as immutable; therefore they require more strict obedience than state regulations.

38. Written by the previous abbot of the Baxiangong (of Xi'an), also president of the National Daoist Association, and published in 1986 by the China Daoist College, *Daojiao yifan* is intended for monks. This book deals not only with the observances that command Daoist monks' lives, but also with the designations, costumes, and insignia of the Daoist school, with monastery types, charges, texts, divinities, etc. It is probably based for the most part on the Daoist canon without always explicitly quoting the reference texts.

39. Min Zhiting, *Daojiao yifan*, 218–23. Even if Min Zhiting refers to the text *Guanjin keyi* attributed to Qiu Chuji, the founder of the Longmen school, we do not know for certain whether the ritual that it prescribes dates from the twelfth century or only began to be practiced later, or indeed may even have begun recently.

40. Yoshioka mentions the existence in the 1950s of the headdress and robe ceremony, *guanjin li*, in the Baiyunguan of Beijing ("Daoist Monastic Life," 234).

41. Yang Der-ruey, chapter 2 in this volume.

## CHAPTER 4

1. For general studies of City God temples, see Stephen Feuchtwang, "School Temple and City God"; and Wang Yongjian, *Tudi yu chenghuang xinyang*.
2. For more on Baxian Monastery, see Zhang Jianxin and Chen Yueqin, eds., *Xi'an Baxian gong*.

## CHAPTER 5

I am extremely grateful to Xun Liu and David Palmer for their invitation to contribute to the present volume and for the extremely stimulating intellectual companionship we have been sharing over the years. I also thank all participants in the 2006 conference "Between Eternity and Modernity: Daoism and Its Reinventions in the Twentieth Century" at Harvard University and this volume's external reviewers for their comments, Isabelle Charleux for insightful comments on drafts, and Robert Weller for subsequent suggestions on how to think through "religious markets" in China, notably during the conference "Chinese Religions and Globalization, 1800–Present" at the University of Cambridge, July 3–6, 2008.

1. For recent developments of these theories within the China field, see Yang and Tamney, eds., *State, Market, and Religions*, Lu Yunfeng, *The Transformation of Yiguan Dao*; and a forthcoming special issue of *Religion* edited by Thoralf Klein and Christian Meyer.
2. Lechner, "Rational Choice and Religious Economies."
3. I take inspiration from Stolz, who in "Salvation Goods and Religious Markets" argues that we must define exactly what type of religious goods we discuss, and under what conditions they are traded on a market rather than through other types of social mechanism.
4. Goossaert, *Taoists of Peking*. The present chapter reproduces passages of chapter 7 of this book, in abbreviated form, but also introduces new data as well as a new analytical framework.
5. This book market has, in contemporary times, itself become part of an ever larger market for TV programs, magazines, websites, and other media.
6. Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, 428–49.
7. I am very grateful to Xun Liu for letting me use his collection of self-cultivation journals.
8. Several spirit-writing books (produced by Beijing groups worshipping Lü Dongbin) published by the Yongshengzhai are reprinted in *Sandong shiyi*, vol. 3; and several morality books in vol. 6.
9. *Daoyuan jingwei ge*, 2.78a–90a.
10. *Qiaojiao dongzhang*, 2.70a.
11. See notably *Xianshu miku*; *Xiuzhen jingyue* and *Daotong dacheng*, all reprinted in *Sandong shiyi*, vol. 9.
12. On the nineteenth-century compilation of female alchemy encyclopedias, see Valussi, "Female Alchemy and Paratext."

13. Esposito, "The Daozang Jiyao Project."
14. Examples would include *Xiuzhen chengtuo* and *Xuanmiaojing*, both reprinted in *Sandong shiyi*.
15. Xun Liu, *Daoist Modern*, 26–28.
16. Zhao's writings are often quoted in Li Leqiu, *Fangdao yulu*, but this book also includes some criticism of Zhao as too "popular" (see, for instance, p. 57, and also p. 161, where Zhao's teachings are deemed a mere preliminary stage when compared to those of the Baiyunguan). The *Fangdao yulu* (1966) is an anthology of discussions between the editor, himself a devoted member of the self-cultivation milieu, and nearly 100 famous spiritual masters in activity in post-1949 Taipei; see also Li Shiwei, "Jieyan qian Taiwan xiandao," 492–93.
17. Xun Liu, *Daoist Modern*, 234–38.
18. In a preface to *Xingli tanwei*, a short early-nineteenth-century self-cultivation essay published by the Tianhuaguan, we find a self-advertisement by Tianhuaguan explaining its publishing policy, that is, to publish primarily Tongshanshe morality books, but also all religious books that would be proposed to them.
19. Goossaert, *Taoists of Peking*, chapter 3.
20. On Quanzhen one-to-one pedagogy, see also Herrou, *La vie entre soi*, 319–27.
21. For instance, *Yunshui ji*, 2.27a–33a, on incantations to recite in order to resist certain "demonic obstacles," or body techniques to finish a meditation session without harm.
22. On the *Neijing tu*, see Despeux, *Taoïsme et corps humain*, 44–47; Rouselle, "Nei ging tu"; and Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 350–51.
23. Despeux, *Taoïsme et corps humain*, 26; *Yunshui ji*, 2.25b–27a.
24. *Weng Tonghe riji*, 829.
25. Goossaert, *Taoists of Peking*, chapter 5; Despeux, *Taoïsme et corps humain*, 48 fig. 18.
26. Xun Liu, "Vizualizing Perfection," 106–10.
27. For a case of a nineteenth-century official who was a disciple of female relatives within the framework of lay Quanzhen communities, see Goossaert, "Quanzhen Clergy," 744–45.
28. Liu Mingrui discusses *nüdan* in *Daoyuan jingwei ge*, 2.37b–46b.
29. Zi Xiufeng 琇峰, *hao Xichan zi 盼蟾子*, Qiaojiao daoren 敲蹻道人. On Liu Mingrui, see his biography in *Namo daopai zongpu*; Yokote Yutaka, "Ryu Meizui to Cho Hijin"; and Qing Xitai, ed., *Zhongguo Daojiao shi*, vol. 4, 322–26, and more details in Goossaert, *Taoists of Peking*, 293–97.
30. *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, p. 11 of the prefatory material.
31. *Namo daopai zongpu*.
32. *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, p. 11 of the prefatory material.
33. *Qiaojiao dongzhang*, 2.70a.
34. Zi Zhenghe 正和, *hao Miyuan zi 覓源子*, Niedi daoren 捏蒂道人, born in Wanping county, that is, very close to Beijing.

35. *Daoyuan jingwei ge*, 2.78a–85a.
36. *Qiaojiao dongzhang*, 1.21b–32b.
37. *Qiaojiao dongzhang*, 1.34b.
38. “Fang hufa lun,” *Nanbei hecan fayao*, 81–84; see also Xun Liu, *Daoist Modern*, 143–47.
39. Fan Chunwu, “Xiuzhen, feiluan yu banshan.”
40. Hao Shunyi zi 順一子, Qianfeng laoren 千峰老人. On Zhao, see also Yokote Yutaka, “Ryu Meizui to Cho Hijin”; Qing Xitai, ed., *Zhongguo Daojiao shi*, vol. 4, 326–29, Lei Xiangyang and Zhang Tao, “Wu-Liu danfa,” which adds biographical elements; and more details in Goossaert, *Taoists of Peking*, 297–303.
41. *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, 1.11a.
42. Despeux, *Zhao Bichen*; Yokote Yutaka, “Ryu Meizui to Cho Hijin.” See also a translation in English of the *Xingming fajue mingzhi*: Lu Kuan Yü, *Taoist Yoga*.
43. Hu Dazhong’s 扈大中 preface to *Xingming fajue mingzhi*.
44. A list of more than fifty disciples is provided in *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, 1.16b–19b, and many more names appear in dialogues throughout the book.
45. *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, 6.10a–11b.
46. *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, 12.8a–b.
47. Yokote Yutaka, “Ryu Meizui to Cho Hijin,” 41.
48. The presence of retired gentlemen explains the profusion in the *Xingming fajue mingzhi* of questions on the possibility of beginning self-cultivation when already old and at the end of one’s sexual life. See, e.g., *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, 10.2a.
49. *Yunshui ji*, 1.13a–15b.
50. I have already developed this typology, in the context of discussing the role of charisma in modern Daoist milieus, in Goossaert, “Mapping Charisma,” 25–26.
51. *Namo daopai zongpu*.
52. *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, 1.16b.
53. Overmyer, “Quan-Zhen Daoist Influence.” The data discussed in Overmyer’s article are actually mainstream *neidan*, not specifically Quanzhen.
54. Ma Xisha, “Daojiao yu Qingdai Baguajiao.” Later Bagua preachers composed “five watches poems” (*wugeng ci* 五更詞) to train disciples. The genre of the “five watches poems” was popularized by Quanzhen clerics and is characteristic of their *neidan* poetry.
55. Notably the *Wuqi laozu quanshu* by the Xiantian dao patriarch Yuan Zhiqian 袁志謙 (1761–1834) (a collection of six different anthologies), which, beside the millenarian themes, carries a mainstream *neidan* discourse. On *neidan* in Xiantian dao, see Lin Wanchuan, *Xiantian dao yanjiu*, 11–17 *passim*.
56. Topley, “The Great Way.”
57. On a major spirit-writing cult in Beijing, active from at least 1875 to after 1919, see Fan Chunwu and Wang Jianchuan, “Beijing luantang.”



58. Mori Yuria, "Identity and Lineage."
59. Mori Yuria, "Dōzō shūyō," 46–47.
60. *Chishe Huashan zongtan jinyu zongbian*.
61. *Chishe Huashan zongtan jinyu zongbian*, "miji," 9a, praises the altar's head and his wife.
62. *Qiu zu yulu*, appendix 3b.
63. See, notably, the case of Wang Yiting 王一亭 (1867–1938): Katz, "'It Is Difficult to Be Indifferent to One's Roots.'"
64. It should be noted, though, that Chen Yingning counted several members of the Tongshanshe or Xiantiandao among his disciples.
65. For the notion of redemptive society, see Duara (who coined the term), *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 103–22; Goossaert and Palmer, *Religious Question*, chapter 4; Palmer, "Chinese Redemptive Societies." Other studies on these groups include Shao Yong, *Zhongguo huidaomen*; Sakai, *Kin-gendai Chūgoku*; and Li Shiyu, *Xiandai Huabei mimi zongjiao*.
66. I do not discuss here the Yiguandao, which became the largest and most famous of all redemptive societies, but Wang Jianchuan, "Tongshanshe zaoqi," n45, has noted that several of Zhao Bichen's disciples later became eminent Yiguandao leaders.
67. Naquin, *Peking*, 597, 665; Dubois, *The Sacred Village*, chapter 5; Li Shiyu, "Tianjin zailijiao"; see also Jiang Zhushan, "1930 niandai tianjin duli zhen shangren de zongjiao"; Goossaert, *Taoists of Peking*, 312–17. *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, 1.15b–16a, claims that Zhao Bichen received initiations from two different Zailijiao masters in two Beijing temples, in 1898 and 1920.
68. Li Shiyu, "Tianjin zailijiao," 179, 181.
69. *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, 6.7a–9b.
70. Sakai Tadao, "Minguo chuqi," 6.
71. Wang Jianchuan, "Tongshanshe zaoqi"; Nedostup, "Religion, Superstition," 90–102.
72. Wang Jianchuan, "Tongshanshe zaoqi."
73. The Tongshanshe method is discussed throughout Li Leqiu, *Fangdao yulu*.
74. Lin Rongze, *Taiwan minjian zongjiao yanjiu lunji*, 106–7.
75. Nedostup, "Religion, Superstition," 145–53.
76. Sakai, "Daoyuan de yan'ge," 100–102, 120–21.
77. Löwenthal, *Religious Periodical Press*, 165–84.
78. Sakai, "Minguo chuqi," 10–22.
79. See Chang Renchun, *Jinshi mingren da chubin*, 302–8; *Beiyang huabao*, December 18, 1926, October 5, 1927.
80. *Daojiao hui bugao*, "Xuanyan shu 宣言書," 13. Jiang also authored a short text included in the association manifesto, "Daojiaohui xiaoyin," *Daojiaohui bugao*, 14.
81. Goossaert, *Taoists of Peking*, 314–15.
82. Topley, "The Great Way," 374–75; Wang Jianchuan, "Tongshanshe



zaoqi," 64; Sakai, "Minguo chuqi," 28, regarding the Daode xueshe (Moral Studies Society, established in 1916).

83. Sakai, "Daoyuan de yan'ge," 130–38.

84. *Xuyong xianzhi*, 4:14a.

85. Palmer, *Qigong Fever*. This theme was already common among early twentieth-century practitioners such as Jiang Weiqiao: Xun Liu, *Daoist Modern*, 27.

86. *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, p. 18 of prefatory material.

87. This does not necessarily represent a claim shared by all Zailijiao adepts, as Li Shiyu, "Tianjin Zailijiao," 188–89, notes that genealogies varied between the different Zailijiao lodges.

88. *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, 6.9a.

89. *Yunshui ji*, 1.23b, 2.5a. On cooperation between Beijing Daoist-run temples and spirit-writing altars, see Goossaert, *Taoists of Peking*, 319.

90. Fan Chunwu, "Jinxiandai Zhongguo fojiao yu fuji."

## CHAPTER 6

1. The identity of Heyang zi was not explained by Chen Yingning when he cited his poem. I think that he was most likely an influential adept of inner alchemy of the same sobriquet during the early eighteenth century. According to Xu Xuanjing 徐玄靜, Master Heyang zi came from Guangdong and was active during the Qianlong reign. He became widely admired by *neidan* practitioners from Guangdong during the nineteenth century. See *Tian le ji* 天樂集, 59. The poem "Xu zhong ge" is one of the two singled out by Chen Yingning. The other poem entitled "Lian xu ge" (Ode on refining the void) was by the late Song and early Yuan-era Daoist Li Daochun 李道純.

2. For a full study of Chen Yingning and the Shanghai inner alchemic movement, see Xun Liu, *Daoist Modern*. See also Wu Yakui, *Shengming de zhuiqiu*.

3. See Chen Yingning, "Du Huasheng xu de ganxiang," 3.

4. The Daoists Chen listed as having sported the Void in their sobriquets lived from the Song down to the Qing: Zhang Xujing 張虛靜, Chen Chongsu 陳沖素 (sobriquet Xubai), Wu Shouyang 伍守陽 (sobriquet Chongxu), Lu Xixing 陸西星 (sobriquet Qianxu) and Li Xiyue 李西月 (sobriquet Hanxu). See *ibid.*

5. See Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*. For more recent studies on the intricate connection between the body and nationalism, and politics in modern China, see also Zito and Barlow, eds., *Body, Subject, and Power in China*; Karl and Zarrow, eds., *Rethinking the 1898 Reform Period*; and Zarrow, ed., *Creating Chinese Modernity*.

6. See Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung*, 14–15. I have slightly modified Schram's translation.

7. See Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*.

8. For late Qing and early Republican era intellectuals' self-cultivation

practice and activism, see Fan Chunwu, "Xiuzhen, feiluan yu banshan"; and Katz, "The Religious Life of a Renowned Shanghai Businessman." See also Xun Liu, *Daoist Modern*, pp. 25–28. For the Daoist clerical role and participation in self-cultivation, see chapter 5 in this volume, by Vincent Goossaert, and his *Taoists of Peking*, 274–319.

9. Chen Yingning, "1953, Zizhuan," 1–5.

10. "Pian zhong xin xing, dui yu routi reng wu banfa." See *ibid.*, 2.

11. For the Buddhist revival at the turn of the century, see Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*.

12. Over his career as a practitioner and writer of Pure Land Buddhism, Gao did not seem to have completely shed his Daoist sentiments and habits and continued to use several rather Daoist sounding styles for himself, such as Zhongnan shi 終南侍 (Attendant on Mt. Zhongnan), Yunshan Daoren 雲山道人 (Daoist of the Cloud Mount), and Xuanxi Daoren 玄溪道人 (Daoist of the Dark Stream).

13. See Chen Zixiu (a.k.a. Chen Yingning), "Minguo ernian song Henian jushi chao Wutai," 367–68.

14. According to Taixu, Madam Haroon initially invited Master Yuexia to run the Huayan Institute at her luxurious garden estate in the city in fall 1914. But three months later, she allegedly insisted that the Buddhist seminarians perform bows to her. The Buddhist seminarians protested this insult by leaving and relocating the institute to Hangzhou. See Taixu, "Taixu zi zhuan."

15. Chen Yingning, "1953, Zizhuan," 3.

16. See *Yangshan banyue kan* (hereafter YSBK) 52 (August 16, 1935): 49. In addition to the lay Buddhist Mr. Gao, Chen seemed also to have become acquainted with many prominent Buddhist leaders such as Master Taixu and Master Yuexia. Between 1912 and 1913, Chen even served as a lecture assistant to Master Yuexia, who was then hosting the Buddhist Huayan Institute sponsored by the famous Iraqi Jewish merchant Haroon and his Chinese wife. See YSBK 46 (February 16, 1935): 288

17. Chen Yingning did hold a tender spot for Hinayana, or "Lesser Vehicle," Buddhism. To him, regardless of its ontological view of the body, the Lesser Vehicle stresses hard practice that engages the flesh fully and eschews the abstruse yet empty talk of metaphysics so characteristic of the Weishi Lineage of Mahayana Buddhism. Chen Yingning, "Bian 'Leng Yan Jing' shi zhong xian," 2–3.

18. Chen Yingning, "Du Huasheng xu de ganxiang," 2.

19. Chen Yingning, "Bian 'Lengyan jing' shi zhong xian," 7.

20. *Ibid.*, 2–3.

21. For the history of the arsenal as the leading institution that introduced science and technology in China, see Meng Yue, "Hybrid Science versus Modernity."

22. See Li Yangzheng, *Daojiao yu yangsheng*, 444–78. Li Yangzheng's account of Chen's early life is based in part on Chen's own autobiography and in part on his own notes of Chen's recollection of his early life. Li is one of the few biographers who claimed that Chen had studied with Yan Fu during his

enrollment at the Anhui Advanced College of Law and Politics. But neither Li nor other biographers have presented any evidence verifying that Chen had studied with Yan Fu. But there is some tangential evidence that may suggest the possibility of Chen's encounter with Yan Fu. We know that in 1906 Yan Fu was invited by then Anhui Governor En-ming to serve as the superintendent of the Anhui Higher Normal College. It is conceivable that during his brief tenure at the Higher Normal College from 1906 to 1907 that Yan Fu may have either lectured or spoke at the Advanced College of Law and Politics. Hence the claim of Chen having studied with Yan Fu, a practice not entirely unusual among some educated Chinese. For Yan Fu's appointment at the Anhui Higher Normal College, see Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, 212–13.

23. See Chen Yingning, "1953 Zizhuan," 2.

24. See Yu Zhongjue, *Jindai Daojia gongfa dashi*, 6–7.

25. Chen Zhonglian, "Huan nian bo fu Chen Yingning." Dr. Zhang Zhuming was one of the first Chinese radiologists trained at the German-run Deutch (Tongji) Medical College in Shanghai. Dr. Zhu Changya studied medicine in the United States and was a colleague of Dr. Wu Yizhu. Mr. Shen Linsheng was a trained mining engineer.

26. Chen Yingning, "Fu Wuchang Zhang Huasheng xian sheng han."

27. See Chen Yingning, "Xuexian bicheng," 41.

28. See Chen Yingning, "Du Huasheng xu de gan xiang," 2–3.

29. *Ibid.*, 3.

30. *Ibid.*, 2.

31. Chen Yingning, "Xuexian bicheng," 36–38. The passage from chapter 42 of Laozi's *Daodejing* reads: "The Way generates the One; the One begets the Duo; the Duo begets the Trio; and the Trio begets the Myriad Beings. The Myriad Beings are of yin on the back and of yang in the front. The yin and the yang intermesh into harmony." For the original text of Laozi, see Chen Guying, *Laozi zhushi ji pingjia*, 232. The translation is my own.

32. Chen Yingning, "Xuexian bicheng," p. 42. In the notes added to the overhead margin of the manuscript, Chen specifically revised the "maternal blood" in the stock phrase of "fu jing mu xue" 父精母血 (paternal essence and maternal blood) as "mu luan" (maternal egg).

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*, 36, 42–43.

37. *Ibid.*, 42.

38. Chen Yingning, "Bian 'lengyan jing' shi zhong xian," 6–7.

39. See also Palmer, *Qigong Fever*.

## CHAPTER 7

I am grateful to Li Weisheng, Cynthia Kao, Liu Wenxing, Pan Shuren, Yu Rongsheng, and David Ownby for their assistance in undertaking the research

for this article. Field research in Taiwan was funded through a research fellowship at the Institute of History and Philology of the Academia Sinica in June 2005, and subsequently by the French Center for Research on Contemporary China.

1. On the May Fourth movement, see Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*; Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment*. On the influence of the May Fourth Movement on the Chinese community in Singapore, see Kenley, *New Culture in a New World*.

2. Shao Yong, *Zhongguo huidaomen*; Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*; Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, chapter 4; Palmer, "Chinese Redemptive Societies."

3. See also Palmer, *Qigong Fever*.

4. This trip was conducted together with David Ownby of the University of Montreal.

5. This archive contains original manuscripts and early editions of Li Yujie's works and other Tiandijiao scriptures; diaries; certificates and memoranda related to Li's official duties; records of Tiandijiao activities; and photographs.

6. Most useful is the extensively documented and referenced *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu changbian* by Liu Wenxing, as well as an official history by the Tiandijiao jiyuan jiaoshi weiyuanhui, *Tiandijiao jianshi*; a reprint of Li Yujie's diaries of his journey to Lanzhou in the early 1940s and his son Li Weisheng's classroom notes of Li Yujie's lectures on meditation and religious philosophy on the same trip, *Hanjing laoren Lanzhou chandao shilu*; notes and diaries from Li Yujie's stay at Huashan, *Shangfang enshen ji baiyun*; poetry and aphorisms composed by Li Yujie at Huashan: *Qingxuji*, originally published in Xi'an in 1940 and reprinted in 1986; and several compilations of Li Yujie's essays and newspaper editorials. Pan Shuren, who has written a detailed chronology of Xiao Changming's life (*Lihai shengge*), has kindly shared with me some of his materials.

7. The only existing treatment of Tiandejiao in English is Welch and Yu, "The Tradition of Innovation," based on visits and interviews conducted by Holmes Welch in Hong Kong in 1958 and Yü Chün-fang in Taiwan in 1978. The denomination appears less flourishing today than when visited by Welch and Yu. Liu Wenxing, "Xianggang Tiande shengjiao," is another field report on Tiandejiao in Hong Kong. The main academic study of Tiandejiao is the M.A. thesis by Ye Hui ren, "Tiandejiao zai Taiwan de fazhan."

8. On the repression of Tiandejiao in the PRC in the 1950s and 1980s, see Li Xianguang, "Shidai beiju."

9. Differences in Tiandejiao practices in Hong Kong and Taiwan are described in Welch and Yu, "Tradition of Innovation," 234.

10. The translation of the characters follows Welch and Yu, which differs slightly from the English edition published by Tiandejiao: Hsiao Chang Ming, *Compass of Life*.

11. For a brief description of Tiandejiao practices in Hong Kong, see Welch and Yu, "Tradition of Innovation," 229–33.

12. For a brief summary of Tiandejiao cosmology, see *ibid.*, 226–28.
13. This canon was reprinted in 1988 in nineteen *juan* 卷 as the *Dezangjing* 德藏經 by the Zhongguo jingshen liaoyang yanjiuhui. Some of these scriptures are also reproduced in Wang Guangzeng, ed., *Wuxing gufo yu Xiao Changming dazongshi*. For a synopsis and concordance of the scriptures in the Canon, see Liu Wenxing, “Dezangjing shumu tiyao.”
14. See Yuan, “Xinxing zongjiao,” for a study of intellectuals in Tiandijiao.
15. See Lu Xiaoheng, “Liang’an zongjiao yanjiu.”
16. *Zongjiao zhexue* (Journal of Religious Philosophy).
17. See Chen Keyi, *Dangdai tianren zhi xue*.
18. For proceedings of these conferences, see *Di yi jie / er jie / san jie / di si jie / di wu jie Xiao dazongshi zongjiao zhexue yantaohui*.
19. For a field report on Xiao’s ancestral house and places where he lived in Sichuan, see Pan Shuren, “Xungen zhi lu.”
20. Palmer, *Qigong Fever*, 50; Pan Shuren, “Qihai mingzhu: Bao Guiwen laoshi chuanlue,” in *Di san jie Xiao dazongshi*, 185–96.
21. For a detailed treatment of Li’s role in the May Fourth movement, see Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 553–87. On the May Fourth movement in Shanghai, see Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 129–32, 151–58; Chen, “The May Fourth Movement in Shanghai”; Haishang, *Shanghai bashi*.
22. Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 70–72.
23. *Ibid.*, 73.
24. *Ibid.*, 74–78.
25. See *Shenbao*, August 14–15, 1927, 15.
26. See Li Weigang, “Tianren zhongshi de zhudao yuanliu”; Li Yujie, “Wode tianming.”
27. On Jiang Weiqiao, see Livia Kohn, “Quiet Sitting with Master Yinshi”; and Xun Liu, *Daoist Modern*, 26–28.
28. On the religious activities of Wang Yiting, see Katz, “The Religious Life.”
29. Wang Hua, “Cihui yu shangdao.”
30. Liu Wenxing, *Nianpu*, 90.
31. See *Shenbao*, December 30, 1933, and January 5, 1934. I am grateful to Liu Wenxing for providing me with copies of these articles.
32. Some of the Perfected Sovereigns—notably Wang Yiting and Wang Xiaolai—did not take part in the workshop, while some additional disciples did. See Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 93, for the lists of Sovereigns and workshop participants.
33. *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 555–56.
34. On the Red Swastika Society, see Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 131–69; Young, “Sanctuary of the Tao”; Sakai, “Daoyuan de yan’ge”; Song Guangyu, *Zongjiao wenhua*, 487–618.
35. Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 94. See *ibid.*, 611–13, for a list of the directors of the Society in Xi’an.
36. *Ibid.*, 101.

37. Lu Zhongwei, *Minguo huidaomen*, 180. On the bans on Tiandejiao and similar groups in Republican China, see Palmer, "Heretical Doctrines," Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*.

38. Ye Huiren, "Tiandejiao zai Taiwan," 25.

39. Li Xianguang, "Shidai beiju," 129.

40. Ye Huiren, "Tiandejiao zai Taiwan," 26.

41. On this text, see Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein, "The Zhong-Lü Tradition," in Schipper and Verellen eds., *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, 801. On the Zhong-Lü tradition, see Fabrizio Pregadio and Lowell Skar, "Inner Alchemy," 469–70 and 478 in Kohn, ed., *Daoism Handbook*, vol. 2; Baldrian-Hussein, *Procédés secrets*.

42. "Wuwei 無爲" according to another version of the story.

43. Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 117.

44. Interview with a Daoist monk at Huashan, August 8, 2007.

45. A personal inventory of his books at Huashan, reproduced in Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 603–13, includes his list of Daoist books, which, according to one account, were for the most part given to him by Daoist monks at Huashan.

46. Li Yujie, *Xin zongjiao zhexue sixiang tixi*, first edition published in Xi'an, 1943.

47. Li Yujie, *Xin jingjie*.

48. Li Yujie, *The Ultimate Realm*.

49. Also known as 無生老母, the supreme divinity in most redemptive societies as well as in many Ming and Qing-era salvationist movements.

50. *Sanqi huizong*.

51. Other revelations attributed to the Jade Emperor, transmitted by the Formless Ancient Buddha and the Beginningless Ancient Buddha, are recorded in Li Yujie (Hanjing Laoren) and Li Dazhen, *Weidaolun*, preserved in the Tiandijiao archives.

52. Tiandijiao jiyuan jiaoshi weiyuanhui, *Tiandijiao jianshi*, 26–27. Copies of the correspondence between Li Yujie, Hu Zongnan, and other officials in the area are stored at the Tiandijiao archives.

53. Some of these stories are recounted, along with a letter of thanks by General Hu Zongnan, in Li Yujie, *Tiandijiao jiaogang*, 271–79.

54. Li Yujie dairy entry, quoted at length in Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 152–53.

55. Tiandijiao jiyuan jiaoshi weiyuanhui, *Tiandijiao jianshi*, 27–28.

56. For an account of his death, see Welch and Yu, "Tradition of Innovation," 224–25.

57. Li Yujie, *Tianrenjiao jiaogang*.

58. This branch was banned by the Gansu provincial government in 1946, as it implemented the nationwide ban on Tiandejiao promulgated in 1936, on the grounds of swindling people in the name of religion by healing through talismanic water (see Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 160).

59. This memorial is reproduced in Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 145–48.

60. On Taixu, see Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*.
61. On Zhang Enpu, see Welch, "The Chang T'ien Shih."
62. Statement published in *Shenbao*, May 29, 1947, 1; reproduced in Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 164–65.
63. Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 167, 614.
64. See Li Yujie, *Bairi de guoji guan cha*.
65. For Li Yujie's views on the political and social issues of the day in Taiwan, see "Tiansheng renyu," in his *Tiansheng renyu*, 100–231.
66. *Zili wanbao*, May 2–3, 1958.
67. See the website of the Daoist Association of the Republic of China, <http://www.chinesetaoism.org/index2.html>, accessed September 19, 2007.
68. Part of this document is reproduced in Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 41.
69. On the role of the Daoist Association in the development of alchemical Daoism in postwar Taiwan, see chapter 8 in this volume, by Lee Fongmao. This association was used as a cover for many of these religious denominations, which otherwise were not legally recognized and, in the case of Yiguan dao, were banned. See Wang Jianchuan, "Zhanhou de Li Yujie yu Zhongguo zongjiaotu lianyihui, Zhonghua minguo Daojiaohui," in Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*, 12–13.
70. See Yuan, "Xinxing zongjiao," 40–53 for a description of the meditation method.
71. On striving cards, see Liu Wenxing, "Cong 'guaguo boyi'"
72. For a summary of the elements of Tiandijiao life to be learned by all new believers, see *Chugui tongfen bidu*. For Li Yujie's statements establishing the norms and structures of the Tiandijiao organization, see Li Yujie, *Hanjing laoren yanlunji*. For an exposition of the mission and rationale for the establishment of Tiandijiao, see Li Yujie, *Shouxi shizun jingshen jianghua*. For details on Tiandijiao liturgy, see *Tianren liyi shouce*, vols. 1–2.
73. See *Tianren liyi shouce* for the organizational chart of the heavenly and earthly organizations. The spirit-writing system involves the training of mediums and the use of computers as a medium for spirit communication. Messages, which range from subjects as diverse as internal organizational matters to commentaries on Freud and Jung, are attributed to Chinese and Daoist divinities and historical figures such as Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek. For collections of spirit messages, see Li Yujie, *Tianyu chuanzhen*; and *Qingxugong hongfayuan*.
74. A manual for survival in the event of a nuclear war, "based on the experience of nuclear war on other planets," and involving meditation, cooking, and water purification techniques, was published by Tiandijiao in the 1980s: see *Hejie qianhou*. Tiandijiao eschatology follows the three-kalpa *sanqi mojie* 三期末劫 structure common in Chinese sectarian traditions and redemptive societies such as Yiguan dao. See Li Cuizhen, *Jie yu jiuji*, for a study of Tiandijiao eschatology and comparison with other religious groups in the same tradition.



75. Li Yujie, "Da zhihui."
76. This trait is common in many Taiwanese redemptive societies: see Jordan and Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix*.
77. Liang Shufang, *Xingming shuangxiu daopai zhi chuancheng*, 68.
78. See Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*.
79. See Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, chapter 3.
80. Li Yujie, "Wode tianming."

## CHAPTER 8

1. For more details on these associations and on Li Yujie's role in their establishment, see chapter 7 in this volume, by David Palmer. A preliminary study on this theme can be found in Liu Liwen, ed., "Cong Daojiao kan xian-dai shehui lunli."
2. See chapter 7 in this volume.
3. Li Shiwei, "Jieyan qian Taiwan xiandao tuanti."
4. Please refer to Lai Jing, *Longmen danjue*.
5. *Xianxue* 11 (1986): 10, quoted in Li Shiwei, "Jieyan qian Taiwan xiandao tuanti." The torture was confirmed by Zhongding zi during an interview conducted by the author.
6. For Li Yujie's biography, see chapter 7 in this volume; for more detailed material, see Liu Wenxing, *Li Yujie xiansheng nianpu*.
7. For the classification of the Orthodox Oneness and Elixir Cauldron traditions, readers can refer to histories of Daoism, for instance, Qing Xitai, *Zhongguo Daojiao shi*, vol. 4; Ren Jiyu, *Zhongguo Daojiao shi*.
8. On the problem of lay cultivation (*suxiu* 俗修) in the *Jin'gai xindeng* 金蓋心燈, see Wu Yakui, *Jiangnan Quanzhen Daojiao*.
9. See Ma Bingwen and Zeng Qiuhang, *Xuanmen xipai michuan danjing jiangyi*, an internal document which was given to me during my interviews.
10. About the notion of *jie* in Daoism, many references are available. The more focused ones are the works of Kobayashi Masayoshi listed in the bibliography. See also Lee Fongmao, "Liuchao Daojiao," "Daojiao jielun," and "Jiujie yu dujie."
11. Concerning the relationship between Daoism and the establishment of the Tang dynasty, see Lee Fongmao, "Tangren chuanyue xiaoshuo."
12. Xuan Dao, "Kunlun Liu Peizhong xiansheng zipu"; for a basic analysis, see Li Shiwei, "Jieyan qian Taiwan xiandao tuanti," 499.
13. See chapter 7 in this volume, by David Palmer.
14. On Tiandijiao prophecies, see Lee Fongmao, "Daojiao jielun."
15. This saying was from *Changchun zhenren xiyou ji*, extracted from a conversation between Genghis Khan and a student of Qiu Chuji 邱處機. Readers can refer to Lee Fongmao, "Yuanyi shan yu Quanzhen jiao."
16. On the charisma of Chinese spiritual masters, see Goossaert, "Mapping Charisma," as well as the other articles in the same thematic issue of *Nova Religio* (vol. 12, no. 2, 2008) on charisma in Chinese religion.



17. This understanding of transmission of the Eremitic Immortal School (Yinxian pai) mainly relies on my study with Zhongding zi from 1998 to 2005.

18. According my training record in the Lei Yi A Hall of Worship in Nantou in 1998.

19. See Lee Fongmao, "Shun yu ni."

20. On celibacy in religious studies, see Ye Haiyan, "Fojiao de dushen yu hunyin guan"; Schillebeeckx, *Celibacy*; Vogels, *Celibacy*.

21. Xiao Tianshi explained the theory of "skill, wealth, companion, and place" in *Daojiao yangsheng*.

22. I have become familiar with the techniques because I have enrolled in the Yellow Dragon Elixir School. I was allowed to participate in the first stage of training from 2003 to 2004 when Master Lai Jing offered internal teachings to his followers.

23. For recent studies on the illustration, see Catherine Despeux, *Taoïsme et corps humain* and Xun Liu, "Visualized Perfection." The current *Neijing tu* in public circulation is the facsimile from the Baiyunguan 白雲觀 in Beijing. It is published by Mingshan Shuju.

24. See Li Shen, *Yitu kao*; Zheng Jixiong, *Yitu xiang*.

25. See Lee Fongmao, "Nixiu yu shuncheng."

26. See Zheng Zhiming, "Taiwan qigong tuanti."

27. Among the numerous works discussing the cultural functions of *qi*, see Tadao Yuasa, *Ki Shugyou Shintai*; Yukio Akatsuka, 'Ki' no Bunkaron; also see Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, ed., *Qi de wenhua yanjiu*.

28. For a detailed study of *qigong* scientism, see Palmer, *Qigong Fever*.

29. Lee Fongmao, "Quiet Sitting and Chan Cultivation."

30. See Xun Liu, *Daoist Modern*, 77–121.

31. Li Yujie, *Xin jingjie*.

32. Concerning the records of cultivation, readers can refer to Dr. Li Shuzhong, *Longmen danjian*. This diary records the reaction to 'basic cultivation in one hundred days' in detail.

33. See Palmer, *Qigong Fever*, 67–72, 76–78, 108–9.

34. See Li Sichen, "You qigong, teyi gongneng, xinxichang dao zongjiao."

## CHAPTER 9

EDITORS' NOTE: The author of the present chapter is both a scholar of Daoism and a former practitioner of Yuanjidao. As a result, this chapter is written more from the standpoint of a sympathetic former participant than that of a critically detached observer. Based on our previous research on the *qigong* movement, the data on Yuanjidao presented here is typical of most large-scale *qigong* organizations in post-Mao China prior to 1999; worthy of note in this case are its elaborate claims to a Daoist genealogy and its use of *qigong* in prisons. Yuanjidao activities were stopped in 2000, a year after the crackdown on Falungong, and its *qigong* method was banned in 2005 as one of fourteen *qigong* methods designated as a "harmful *qigong*" (*youhai qigong* 有害氣功);

its master, Zhang Zhixiang, turned part of his assets over to the local government and retained his political position as vice-chairman of the Peoples' Political Consultative Conference of Ezhou. He converted his core network of *qigong* instructors into the management team of a new enterprise, the Sea Sound Health Products Co. (Haiyin baojianpin gongsi 海音保健品公司), engaged in the sale of nutritional supplements, Chinese medicinal products, cosmetics, and teas. A mainland Chinese Ph.D. student was detained for a few days in 2009 while conducting research on Yuanjidao. Though Yuanjidao was one of the larger *qigong* organizations, it has hardly been mentioned in the academic literature on the *qigong* movement. Most footnotes in this chapter have been added by the editors.

1. For a detailed sociohistorical study of the post-Mao *qigong* movement, see Palmer, *Qigong Fever*. For anthropological studies of *qigong* as a form of popular healing, see Chen, *Breathing Spaces*; Hsu, *The Transmission of Chinese Medicine*.

2. On Zhineng Qigong, see Lim Chee-Han, "Purging the Ghost of Descartes."

3. For a further discussion of this phenomenon and its bearing on the *qigong* movement, see Palmer, "Embodying Utopia."

4. On the Taiyidao, see Qing Xitai, ed., *Zhongguo daojiaoshi*, vol. 3, 2–10.

5. *Taiyi wuzu yanhua zhenchang zhenren xing zhuang*.

6. This diagram looks like a traditional yin-yang symbol, but with a circle at the center.

7. On "reactionary secret societies" and other stigmatizing labels, see Palmer, "Heretical Doctrines."

8. This story can be found in dozens of Internet postings on Yuanjigong; see, for example, <http://news.wenda.sogou.com/question/14347396.html>, accessed January 31, 2010. For a full hagiography of Zhang Zhixiang, see Liu Ming, *Yuanji chuanren*.

9. On "coming out of the mountains," see Palmer, *Qigong Fever*, 86–101.

10. Zhang Zhixiang, *Zhongguo yuanji gongfa*.

11. Palmer, *Qigong Fever*, 73–85, 166–169.

12. Ke Yunlu, *Da qigongshi*, and *Faxian huangdi neijing*. Both of these bestselling works were by the popular novelist and *qigong* enthusiast Ke Yunlu. The former was a fictionalized account of a charismatic *qigong* master, while the latter was an account of a miraculous healer in rural Shaanxi, Hu Wanlin. Ke and Hu were the targets of intense polemical attacks in the press in 1998 and 1999, exposing Hu as a quack. He was arrested and his public trial provided fodder for anti-pseudoscience controversies. See Palmer, *Qigong Fever*, 153–54.

13. For a detailed treatment of these controversies, see Palmer, *Qigong Fever*, 158–182.

14. For other examples of *qigong* theoretical systems, see Palmer, "Chinese Religious Innovation."

15. Yuanji theory is expounded in Zhang Zhixiang, *Zhongguo Yuanji*

*Qigong*, vols. 1–3, and *Yuanji xue xuanbian*; Yuanji xue yanjiu hui lilun weiyuan hui, *Yuanjixue ziliao huibian*.

16. Zhang Zhixiang, *Zhongguo yuanji gongfa*, vol. 1, 1994 ed., 18–19.

17. See *Yuanji xue di sanjie guoji lilun yantaohui lunwenji*.

18. On military support for the *qigong* movement, see Palmer, *Qigong Fever*, 73–74, 82–85.

19. On *qigong* scientism, see Palmer, *Qigong Fever*, 102–135; Penny, “Qigong, Daoism, and Science.”

20. For another report on *qigong* being used in prisons, see Zhu Xiaoyang and Penny, eds., “The Qigong Boom.”

21. The following section is based on the author’s own observations as dean of the ethics department of Central South University (CSU) and as a member of the team of Yuanjigong instructors conducting the workshops. This section is a brief description of the workshop contents and procedure, and of the participants’ reactions and the instructors’ interpretations, as an example of how *qigong* was used in novel ways in the 1990s. It does not claim to draw scientific conclusions about the effects of Yuanjigong practice.

## CHAPTER 10

NOTE: The abbreviation “CT” refers to works in the Daoist Canon, numbered according to Kristofer Schipper, *Concordance du Tao-tsang*, also used in Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon*.

1. Putian County, along with Xianyou County, makes up the Xinghua region. This area, surrounded by mountains on three sides and facing the sea, has some 3.2 million inhabitants who speak the dialect of Puxianhua and participate in a distinct local culture. Another half-million Xinghua emigrants and their descendants live in Southeast Asia, and around the world.

2. In the Republican period, the Three in One established links with medical clinics and advertised group courses in inner alchemy in local newspapers. Contemporary Three in One materials, such as the mimeographed sheets entitled “Sanjiao yaozhi jieda 三教要旨解答” (Explanatory dialogue on the essence of the Three [in One] Teachings), circa 1990, employ contemporary modern terminology and discursive fields. For example, one passage differentiates the Three in One from the “five official religions.” Another passage characterizes the Three in One inner alchemical system called the *Jiuxu xinfu* (Nine Stages of the Heart Method) as a *yixue qigong* 醫學氣功 ([TCM] medical scientific breath regimen). Yet another passage explains historical changes as “modern discoveries suited to modern times,” and so on (pp. 1, 3, 4). See the chapters by Xun Liu, Lee Fongmao, and Lü Xichen in this volume for further discussion of scientism in modern Daoist movements.

3. Of course spirit possession has a very long history in Chinese religious life, as pointed out by van der Loon, in “Les origines rituelles,” in his comment on “shamanic substrata.” The point here is that this is by no means an unchanging history, or substrate. One can instead chart the changing forms

or organization and modalities of experience within Chinese spirit possession, often brought on through interaction with different organized religions (see Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, for examples of the impact of Daoism and tantric Buddhist traditions on spirit possession during the Song.)

4. On Chen Shouyuan, see Schafer, *The Empire of Min*. For Tan Zixiao and the Tianxin zhengfa, see the discussion of CT 1044, *Hua Shu* 化書, by Poul Anderson in Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon*, 309–12 and 1056–81.

5. See Taylor, “Official and Popular Religion”; and Feuchtwang, “School Temple and City God.”

6. This survey has been conducted together with Professor Zheng Zhenman of Xiamen University. See Dean and Zheng, *Ritual Alliances of the Putian Plain*, 2 vols.

7. See Dean, *Taoist Ritual*, 183, for a photograph and translation of an ordination document for a Daoist ritual master from Putian. Note that although Longhushan 龍虎山 is mentioned in the document, ordinations take place locally and Daoists no longer go to Longhushan to receive ordination. There is some influence from Lüshan 閩山 rites on certain coastal Putian Daoist ritual practices.

8. Putian Daoist altars rarely display paintings of Daoist deities. In their place, inscribed envelopes with the names of the high gods and other invited gods from nearby allied temples are placed on a multi-tiered altar.

9. For further information on these Daoist rituals, see Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History*.

10. Dean and Zheng, *Fujian zongjiaoshi beiwen huibian: Quanzhoufufence*, vol. 2, 784, inscription 782.

11. According to Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon*, the Twenty-four Dioceses are mentioned in CT 875, *Laojun bianhua wujijing* 老君變無極經. The conversion of the Sichuan dioceses to one based on stellar mansions occurs in Kou Qianzhi’s 寇謙之 (365–448) CT 562, *Laojun yinsong jiejing* 老君音誦誡經. See also the preface to CT 1032, *Ershisizhi* 二十四治, where the additional four Sichuan dioceses added by Zhang Daoling’s 張道陵 followers complete the correspondence with the twenty-eight stellar mansions. CT 1388, *Shangqing jinzhen yuhuang shangyuan jiutian zhenling sanbailiushiwu bu yuanlu* 上清金真玉隍上元九天真靈三百六事務部元錄, attributed to Jinming Qizhen 金明七真 (fl. 551), mentions that his local Daoist organization used thirty-six dioceses.

12. For examples, see Dean and Zheng, “Mintai Daojiao,” and Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*.

13. Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*.

14. In the Republican period, Three in One temples established links with local hospitals and offered courses on their meditation methods for therapeutic purposes (see Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*). I also located a spirit medium in a Three in One temple in Gaiwei Township who cures people while possessed by the goddess Yang Jiuniang. She writes out talismans, which are burned and

consumed along with traditional Chinese medicines prescribed by the traditional Chinese pharmacists who work in the temple.

15. Mount Lu is a well known spiritual site in Jiangxi (see CT 1286, *Lushan Taiping xingguo gong caifang zhenjun shishi* 廬山太平興國採訪真君事實). This is where Tan Zixiao is said to have founded the Tianxin Zhengfa. However, it seems more likely that reference is being made to local Lushan traditions that originated in the Gutian area north of Fuzhou. See Bapandier, *The Lady of Linshui*. The Putian plain is home to a widespread, quite ancient cult called the Lufu (Ministry of Smallpox), dedicated to Chen Jinggu, Zhang Gong, and an elderly matron, Yima. Daoist manuscript collections in the area include Lufu *jiao* Daoist liturgies and Lufujing scriptures as well as Lufuxi (marionette plays), which were used to seek relief from smallpox infection. Nonetheless, I have not found evidence in the Daoist ritual traditions of Putian of the kind of ritual theatrical rendition of the life of Chen Jinggu, complete with cross-dressing, that is seen in the Daoist *jiao* of the Lüshan traditions of northern and southwest Fujian. (See Ye Mingsheng's study of Lüshan ritual traditions in Longyan: *Fujiansheng Longyanshi Dongxiaozhen Lüshanjiao*).

16. These stelae include two from Republican times, no. 325 from 1919 and no. 329 from 1925, both from temples in Jiangkou (see texts in Dean and Zheng, *Fujian zongjiaoshi beiwen huibian: Xinghua fu fence*).

17. See also Sangren, "Traditional Chinese Corporations," and Zheng, *Family Lineage Organization*, for a description of the transformation of the lineage into a (transnational) contractual joint stock corporation.

18. See Dean, "The Transformation of State Sacrifice."

19. See Jordan and Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix*. The Three in One movement is well represented in this rising interest in spirit-writing. (See Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, for a description of a three-volume collection of spirit-writing of various deities covering the period from 1908 to 1920.)

20. Entitled *Dingjiucuo Jiuli Fendong Jianshi beiji* 頂舊厝九鯉分洞建史碑記 (Stele recording the history of the establishment of the Nine Carp Subsidiary Cavern of Dingjiucuo Village).

21. See Morris, *In the Place of Origins*.

22. This temple was later moved to its current address: Kiew Lee Tong Tong, no.5 (Upper Thompson Road), Singapore 2057. Several other related Putian temples have divided off from the Jiulidong and established themselves around Singapore.

23. The Tebintinggi temple is located at Jalan Sudirman, no. 193.

24. The Dongyueguan in Medan is currently located on Vihara Gunung Timur, Jl Hang Tuah 16. The Kisaran temple is on Jl. Diponegoro. It was founded in 1955.

25. See Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*.

26. There is a Putian Huiguan located on Geylang Lorong 33, no.25, Singapore, which has a Tian Hou temple upstairs.

27. Both inscriptions are included in Tanaka, *Chūgoku zonzo to engaki kenkyū*.

28. See Franke, "Some Remarks on the 'Three in One Doctrine.'"

29. Tanaka, *Chugoku zonzō*, 1024–90; see also Tanaka, *Chūgoku saishi engeki kenkyū*, 347–92, for the text of the first part of the marionette script of the Mulian opera.

30. I would like to thank the chief organizers and sponsors of the event for allowing me to participate and to stay at the temple throughout the event. These included Mr. Cai Jinrui, the zongwu 總務, or general manager; Mr. Chen Jinshui, marionettist and director of the opera; Mr. Huang Yasong, leader of the spirit-writing association; Mr. Weng Wenhui, a key organizer of ritual activities; and Mr. Huang Wende.

31. Tanaka, *Chūgoku saishi engeki kenkyū*.

32. Linshangong, *Shuangqing jinian*, 67.

33. Generally speaking, these "revivals" were for "research purposes" only, and performances were restricted to audiences of specialists in the history of Chinese opera. These plays remained officially under ban as *guixi* (demonic operas). Ellen Judd ("Mulian Saves His Mother") has pointed out the contradictions underlying similar official cultural preservation revivals of regional Mulian opera performances in other parts of China.

34. See Schipper and Wang, "Progressive and Regressive Time Cycles," for a fascinating account of manipulation of time in Daoist ritual.

35. See Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*.

36. See Dean and Lamarre, "Ritual Matters," for a description of a ritual with parallel rites by Daoist and Three in One ritual masters.

37. Turner, "Images of Anti-Temporality," 243–65.

38. Woody Allen, quoted in Martin Rees, *Just Six Numbers*, 80.

## CHAPTER 11

The epigraph comes from Bauman, "Postmodern Religion?" 68.

1. Diner, *The Jews*, 120.

2. Carroll, *Spiritualism*, 2.

3. See Trimble, "Spiritualism and Channeling."

4. Reform Jews were not the only minority religious group in America to Protestantize. Japanese-American Pure Land Buddhists named themselves Buddhist Churches of America in 1944.

5. Isaacs, "The Fox Sisters and American Spiritualism," 101.

6. Carroll, *Spiritualism*, 69.

7. For discussions of the two most prominent contemporary "channeled entities," see Melton, *Finding Enlightenment*, on the former Atlantean warrior Ramtha channeled by J. Z. Knight, and Siegler, "Marketing Lazaris," on the incorporeal spirit known as Lazaris.

8. See, among others, Russell Kirkland, "Taoism of the Western Imagination"; Bradbury, "The American Conquest of Philosophical Taoism"; Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China*; and Clarke, *Tao of The West*.

9. Whether these groups are "authentically" Daoist or not is a question

for Sinology. Here, I will stipulate there is something called “popular Western Daoism.”

10. Now called Healing Tao USA in the United States and The Universal Tao elsewhere, the name Healing Tao will be used in this chapter for the sake of simplicity.

11. Belamide, “Taoism and Healing in North America,” 263.

12. *Ibid.*, 270.

13. Michael Winn, “The Quest for Spiritual Orgasm.”

14. *Ibid.*

15. J. Gordon Melton, personal communication with author, July 28, 2003. For more on the milieu of the 1970s (though with no mention made of Daoism), see Urban, *Magia Sexualis*.

16. Healing Tao University and Heavenly Mountain Retreats Catalogue, [www.healingtaoretreats.com](http://www.healingtaoretreats.com), accessed February 1, 2008.

17. Michael Winn, foreword to Chia, *Awaken Healing Energy Through the Tao*, viii.

18. Michael Winn, interview with the author, Vashon Island, WA, May 12, 2001.

19. Chia and Huang, *Secret Teachings*.

20. Chia, *Healing Love Through the Tao*.

21. Chia, *Awaken Healing Energy*, 141.

22. Michael Winn, interview with the author, Asheville, NC, November 6, 2004. The Healing Tao’s modernizing position that the ritual and “folk belief” aspects of the Daoist tradition are inessential and that at the core of Daoism lies esoteric teaching and mystical philosophy recalls the positions of the famous twentieth-century scholars of religion Gershom Scholem, Mircea Eliade, and Henry Corbin, who made similar arguments about Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, respectively. See Wasserstrom, *Religion After Religion*.

23. Lyon, *Jesus in Disneyland*, 7.

24. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*.

25. Heelas, *Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity*, 4–5.

26. Mark Juergensmeyer, “Thinking Globally About Religions,” 4.

27. Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*.

28. Bauman, “Postmodern Religion?” 70.

29. Carrette and King, *Selling Spirituality*, 23–24.

30. Beyer, *Religions in Global Society*, 283.

31. *Ibid.*, 280. For a book-length exploration of how the New Age movement, of which the Healing Tao can be seen as a part, looks to the self as a source of authenticity and is thus quintessentially modern, see Paul Heelas’s now-classic *The New Age Movement*, esp. 18–27.

32. Wile, *Art of the Bedchamber*, 64.

33. Chia, *Awaken Healing Energy*, vii.

34. Winn, “Spiritual Orgasm.”

35. *Ibid.*

36. In 1994, he founded the organizational consulting group Aspen Con-



sulting Associates. Weil's biographical information comes from the organization's website at: <http://www.aspen-consult.com> (accessed on February 1, 2008, defunct as of this writing).

37. Michael Winn, interview with the author, Vachon Island, WA, May 12, 2001.

38. Jane Iwamura, "The Oriental Monk in American Popular Culture," 26.

39. *Ibid.*, 27.

40. <http://www.tao-garden.com>.

41. See, in particular, Chia, *Healing Love*.

42. For details about these groups, see Siegler, "Chinese Traditions," 257–80.

43. <http://www.healing- tao.com/tao-garden/universal/en/>; accessed May 6, 2008.

44. <http://www.healingtaousa.com/index.html>; accessed May 6, 2008.

45. Healing Tao University Catalog.

46. To Chia's credit, Tao Garden chooses to remain at a competitive disadvantage: food is served only in the dining hall and the entire Tao Garden is tobacco, alcohol, red meat, and white sugar free.

47. <http://www.universal- tao.com/article/taogardenarticle.html>.

48. Personal email correspondence, September 7, 2005. My own translation.

49. See, for example, the China trips offered by Tauck Tours, a high-end general interest tour agency, at <http://www.tauck.com>. The recommended reading list for this trip consists of five books, including a general travel guide, a literary essay on Hong Kong, Jung Chang's memoir *Wild Swans*, and an introduction to contemporary Chinese politics and economics. The full list is available at <http://www.longitudebooks.com/find/d/410/pc/Tauck%20World%20Discovery/r/TT/mcms.html>.

50. Personal email communication, August 17, 2004.



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