

CHAPTER THREE

HAN COSMOLOGY AND MANTIC PRACTICES

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DESCRIPTION

The Daoist religion in both its worldview and practices derives to a large extent from the cosmology and mantic practices (from the Greek *mantia*, divination) of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E. – 220 C.E.). All Daoists' efforts to control *qi* 氣, both in the body and the universe, their cultivation of spirit forces in the self and the stars, as well as their many ritual activities of purification, expiation, release of the dead and renewal of the world are unthinkable without a worldview that proposes a correspondence of all forces under Heaven and allows the determination of the auspicious times, places and methods. Thus mantic practices, which during the Han were employed at all levels of society and served many different functions, came to play a key role in the techniques of later Daoism and popular religion.

Han mantic practices included classical divination techniques, such as casting stalks to determine the hexagrams of the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes), as well as a variety of omenological and fate interpolation methods, such as the observation of the skies and their changing patterns, dream interpretation and physiognomy. Such practices were conceptualized as partial understandings of the Dao, and often utilized correlative schemes, such as yin-yang and the five phases, thought to govern the natural world. During the Han, many of these methods were transmitted through private networks and were often valued because they were the product of revelation. Particular sages and divinities became associated with these methods and with the motif of revelation, notably Huangdi 黃帝 (Yellow Emperor), Shennong 神農 (Divine Agriculturalist) and Taiyi 太一 (Great Unity). In contrast to the situation in some other cultures, few Chinese mantic practices in the Han were dependent on the intuitive or psychic gifts of the practitioner, and instead derived their efficacy from the authority of the method or text itself. In this sense, Han mantic texts could be seen as the forerunners of the tesserae or talismans (*fú* 符) used in Daoist ritual practice.

This essay will begin with a historical and sociological overview of the transmission of mantic practices, move on to a discussion of the varieties of texts involved, outline the hybrid cosmology of the Han and conclude with an outline of selected practices. While the number of practices that could be treated is very large, particular attention will be paid to those for which verifiably Han manuals or examples exist, and to those that reveal both conceptual and sociological continuities with early Daoist communities.

Significant connections between Han mantic practices and those of early Daoist communities exist both at the level of **cosmological assumptions** and in terms of the resulting role of text. The Han understanding of the cosmos combines a model based on the three realms of Heaven, Earth and Humankind, related to each other through a variety of natural categories of mutual correspondence, with a competing model dependent on the existence of a world of anthropomorphic demons and spirits. One way these two models were integrated in the Han was by the attribution of texts based on systems of correspondence to revelation by divine or semi-divine figures. Texts deriving their authority from their revealed character were one example of the increasingly ubiquitous category of objects that symbolized correspondences between Heaven and human beings. Such tesseræ derived authority and efficacy from their status as the nexus of the link between the sacred and profane.

The study of the relationship between Han mantic practices and early Daoism has been complicated by certain historical trends in **Daoist scholarship**. Situated between the "axial age" florescence of political and philosophical writings, such as the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and *Daode jing* 道德經, and the elaborate institutions and liturgies of the Six Dynasties period, the four hundred year Han Dynasty has attracted relatively less attention from historians of Daoism. This situation is to a large degree a product the scholarly debate over the relationship between the pre- and post-Han situation, eras associated with what were once called "philosophical" and "religious" Daoism. One approach, exemplified by Maxime Kaltenmark's *Lao tseu et le taoïsme* (1965), was to connect the conceptual aspects of the *Daode jing* to later Daoist practices that were identified with Laozi, the putative author of the text. Another approach, exemplified by the writings of Michel Strickmann, emphasized the novelty of social institutions associated with the Celestial Masters movement and the continuity of those institutions to the present day (see Strickmann 1979). Despite the differences between the orientations of their respective approaches, these two authors shared a picture of Daoism in which Han developments played a negligible role. The image of Daoism implicit in these approaches was to a significant extent a result of the source materials that each author used as evidence. Today, because the

literary corpus of essays from which Kaltenmark drew and the diverse genres incorporated into the Daoist canon studied by Strickmann have been augmented by a myriad of recently excavated materials from the late Warring States and early Han periods, it is possible to fill in much information that had been missing in earlier accounts of the history of Daoism.

HISTORY

EARLY METHODS. Evidence of mantic practices stretches back to the beginnings of Chinese history. The bulk of written records of the Shang dynasty (ab. 1700-1000 B.C.E.) consists of the so-called oracle bones, which are records of pyromancy, the divinatory inquiries carried out at the Shang court. Incised on cattle scapula and tortoise plastrons, these inquiries had concerns that ranged from the possible outcomes of military action to the source and duration of medical maladies. The application of heat produced a crack in the bone or shell that was interpreted as a communication from the Shang ancestors. As Keightley points out, by the late Shang period, the inquiries were constructed so as to prevent undesirable communications, with the result that they came to be regarded as "magical charms to ensure that there would be no disaster" (1984, 15).

Some inscriptions have recently been linked to the second major early mantic system, the hexagrams of the *Yijing*. Working from inscriptions on bones and bronze vessels, scholars such as Zhang Zhenglang 張政璜 have suggested that the forerunners of the *Yijing* hexagrams were sets of six numbers, which were later correlated with solid and broken lines (see Li 1993, 235-55; Shaughnessy 1998, 1-13). Regardless of its origins, the method of casting milfoil stalks was seen as a way of catching the natural potential at the moment of divination: each hexagram took shape "as an inherent and inescapable element of a particular moment of time, or of a particular moment in the cycle" (Loewe 1981, 50). As such the casting of milfoil stalks was tantamount to the measurement of an objective characteristic of the external situation, and in this way similar to many of the omenological methods of the Han.

THE HAN DYNASTY. Besides divination through oracle bones and milfoil stalks, the late Warring States period saw the rise of a number of other mantic practices. The consolidation of the Qin and the Han empires then led to a bifurcated system of transmission of such practices. The bureaucracy of the Han had positions for numerous officials involved in the application of mantic practices, and in 124 B.C.E., Emperor Wu (r. 141-87 B.C.E.) ordered the establishment of state educa-

tional institutions, from the Imperial Academy in the capital down to local academies (*xueguan* 學官) in the commanderies and principalities. The primary qualification for a teacher in this system was the mastery of one of the Five Classics, and, as a result, the academic study of the *Yijing* became institutionalized and served as an important route to public office (*Shiji* 史記 121.3127).

In addition to the official system, texts and practices were also being transmitted privately. One type of **non-official transmission** took place at regional courts under the sponsorship of local princes. Liu An 劉安, the prince of Huainan 淮南 who died as a rebel in 122 B.C.E., was said to have gathered several thousand experts in recipes and techniques, from which he compiled a work treating matters of spirit transcendence (*shenxian* 神仙) and alchemy (*huangbai* 黃白) that is now lost (*Hanshu* 漢書 44.2145). He is also associated with a work on the interpretation and observation of the stars, which is ironic since it was the appearance of the portent of a comet with a long tail in 135 B.C.E. that precipitated the attempt at rebellion which culminated in his death (*Shiji* 118.3082; *Hanshu* 30.1765). Several texts on related topics and on immortality were apparently later gathered from Huainan by Liu De 劉德 and recopied by his son Xiang 劉向 (77-6 B.C.E.), but the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity, CT 1185) of the early fourth century says that because father and son did not understand the techniques of the Dao, their version was not efficacious in manufacturing gold (*Hanshu* 36.1928-9; Xiao 1998, 277). Liu An's interests contrast with those of his contemporary Liu Xian 劉歆, Prince of Hejian 河間, who attracted experts in the Dao and techniques, but was chiefly interested in pre-Qin texts associated with ritual techniques and the disciples of Confucius. Qian Mu has argued that the difference between their preferences reflected a difference in regional cultures, differences that had only partially been erased by the centralizing effect of Han unification (1987, 72-73).

The individuals that were attracted to these regional patrons were generally known as "recipe masters" (*fangshi* 方士), "technique masters" (*shushi* 術士), or "Dao masters" (*daoshi* 道士). They specialized in a variety of practices and were particularly associated with the ancient state of Qi 齊 (Ngo 1976; DeWoskin 1983). They were portrayed in Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記 (Historical Records) as experts in the mantic arts of antiquity who preyed on the aspirations of particularly megalomaniac rulers, such as the First Emperor of the Qin and Emperor Wu of the Han. In particular, Emperor Wu carried out the *feng* and *shan* 封禪 sacrifices, which a *fangshi* explained originated with the Yellow Emperor (*Shiji* 12.482), and in 102 B.C.E. built a pentagonal twelve-story hall dedicated to the pursuit of longevity, based on plans (also presented by a

fangshi) that allegedly dated back to similarly ancient times (*Shiji* 12.480, 484). His success in emulating the Yellow Emperor was confirmed by an observer of the night sky who witnessed the appearance of a comet (*Shiji* 28.1399). In these cases, the *fangshi* self-consciously placed themselves in the role of the Yellow Emperor's ministers relative to Emperor Wu (Csikszentmihalyi 1994, 93-94). While they were not members of government, they may have been experts in the same practices and even the same texts as members of the government (Chen 1948, 33-40). The source of their authority was their link to fictive traditions that contextualized mantic practices in the successful rule and apotheosis of the sage-kings.

One of the legendary figures associated with the mantic practices was the **Yellow Emperor**, especially during the reign of Emperor Wu. This association was central to a tradition called Huang-Lao 黃老, literally "Yellow Emperor and Laozi," which flourished in the first half of the second century B.C.E. At that time, the Yellow Emperor's association with the unofficial transmission of mantic practices appears to have made him an important figure to one faction at the courts of emperors Wen and Jing (Si 1980, 84-137). The term Huang-Lao then was coined by Sima Qian when he applied it to describe a set of beliefs held by his contemporaries and certain figures of previous generations. For him, Huang-Lao apparently was closely linked with a set of methods that derived from a particular cosmological view at a particular historical moment (Csikszentmihalyi 1994).

These methods were taught privately, in contrast to Confucian methods, which were transmitted by the state. An early example of a private institution that handed down such knowledge was that of Yue Chengong 樂臣公, who "excelled at cultivating the doctrines of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi, became famous in Qi, and was named 'Worthy Master' (*xianshi* 賢師)" (*Shiji* 80.2436). Almost half of the second-century figures associated with Yellow Emperor and with Laozi elsewhere in the *Shiji* are linked through the figure of Master Yue. While the myth of the Yellow Emperor and early texts associated with the Yellow Emperor and Laozi may have originated in the state of Qi during the late Warring States period, institutions like Master Yue's had the effect of expanding them from an original regional base (see Shimamori 1981). The exact nature of the "doctrines" taught by Master Yue is open to debate, but the association with mantic practices based on correlative cosmology is generally accepted (Yates 1998, 10-12). There is little evidence that the Han association of the Yellow Emperor with such texts is indicative of a particular philosophical position, it might better be seen as descriptive of a particular genre (see Csikszentmihalyi 1994). As such, while this historical sketch utilizes the Yellow Emperor as the most common of a set of semi-

divine figures associated with mantic texts, Gu Jiegang's idea that the chronological primacy of the Yellow Emperor caused him to be associated with these texts indicates that similar arguments might well be made about other legendary figures associated with mantic practices in the Han (1972, 35-44).

LATER DEVELOPMENTS. The extragovernmental nature of the *fangshi* and the relationship between the Prince of Huainan's independent scholastic gatherings and his rebellious activities had political ramifications and are therefore similar to **later Daoist movements**. They highlight one of the central facts about the private transmission of methods and texts in the Han, i.e., that it was often seen as a danger to the state. As varied methods and texts figured strongly into the political history of the Qin and Han dynasties, the well-known attempts to control and even destroy certain classes of books must be seen as political efforts, similar to the attempts by Emperor Wu to valorize certain works that stressed the virtues of loyalty and filial piety. The use of omen interpretation became even more widespread when breaks in the hereditary transfer of power caused struggles for legitimacy between different contenders to the throne, resulting in the reigns of Wang Mang 王莽 in 9 C.E. and Liu Xiu 劉秀 in 25 C.E. (Bielenstein 1984). The conception of the natural world as a book in which clues to the potential for certain types of changes were hidden was coupled with the use of books as records of past anomalies and divinatory readings. In particular, the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals), attributed to Confucius, was increasingly read as an encoded source for that sage's esoteric transmission of a technique of rulership. Similarly, a set of texts known collectively as the "apocrypha" (*chenwei* 讖緯), often connected with the *fangshi*, were read as the esoteric counterparts to certain classical texts that contained prophetic messages that could only be accessed by the initiated (Chen 1948, 46-57).

The private transmission of knowledge continued in the Eastern Han, as shown by the example of Yang Hou 楊厚 (fl. 109-149 C.E.), a native of southwest China. Yang Hou's techniques include charts and apocryphal texts (*tuchen* 圖讖) that served as the basis of correspondence theory used to interpret portents. After retiring from his official position, Yang presided over the largest institution of Yellow Emperor and Laozi learning. Between 141 and 146 C.E., Yang had over 3000 students, and when he died, "his disciples set up a shrine where the Commandery's literary officials and scribes performed a yearly feasting and archery ceremonial, as well as regular sacrifice" (*Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 30a.1050). In addition to Yang Hou, the "Way of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi" (Huang-Lao, meant as two separate terms or perhaps as an anthropomorphized binome) was also significant for Emperor Huan (r. 147-167

C.E.), and Zhang Jue 張角. Zhang, the founder of the Yellow Turbans (Huang jiu 黃九, is identified in the *Hou Hanshu* as a follower of the "Way of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi" (Ôfuchi 1991, 79-81).

TEXTS

There are both technical manuals of Han mantic practices and texts that preserve their descriptions or integrate them into political-philosophical discussions. Among them, the latter have been best preserved—notably the *Huainanzi* of the Western Han and the *Lunheng* and *Fengsu tongyi* of the Eastern Han—while the latter are mainly found in the bibliographic chapter of the *Hanshu*. Both types attest to the wide variety of methods practiced at the time and serve to augment information found in archaeological sources.

POLITICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS. *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (Writings of the Prince of Huainan, 21 j., ed. *Zhuji jicheng* 7), edited under the guidance of Liu An 劉安 (d. 122 B.C.E.; see Morgan 1934; Larre et al. 1993; Le Blanc 1985; Roth 1992). Classified as an eclectic (*za* 雜) text in the *Hanshu*, this work has also been characterized as a "mixture of Laozi and Zhuangzi" (Kanaya 1960, 541). Both descriptions are accurate in part, but while the work builds on ideas of the earlier Daoist thinkers, it often filters them through a synthetic worldview that attempts to unify them under a broader conceptual scheme. One of the most valuable aspects of the text is the preservation of "spirit transcendence" traditions from the southern regions of Huainan and Chu (Yamada 1983, 356). An example of this is the reference to breathing exercises associated with the figures Wang[zi] Qiao 王子喬 and Chisongzi 赤松子 (11.178; Larre et al. 1993, 135). The exercises allowed these figures to "rise to the clouds and have intimate communion with Heaven," made possible because they, as many others, relied for their success on the Dao. Yet the passage is followed by a criticism of contemporaneous practitioners of such exercises; they are also disparaged in other chapters (Harper 1998, 114-17). While the *Huainanzi*, therefore, provides much information on practices in the early Han, it often presents it in the context of dismissing them as inferior to the pursuit of more abstract truths.

The relationship between the *Huainanzi* and the traditions associated with Huang-Lao has been a matter of much debate. Major has said that "many, perhaps most, specialists have adopted the view that the *Huainanzi* is a Huang-Lao work" (1993, 8). Others, too, who see Huang-Lao as a Daoist-Legalist synthesis (e.g., Tu 1979), as suggested first by Sima Qian (*Shiji* 63.2146), find an affinity between certain parts of the

Huainanzi and the absolutist view of law characteristic of Han Fei 韓非 and thus Huang-Lao (e.g., ch. 13; Larre et al. 1993, 161-93). Yamada, however, has characterized the work as reflecting the thought of a school of southern recipe masters, clearly distinct from those of Qi who were central figures in the traditions associated with Huang-Lao (1983, 357). To the extent that both positions assume that the traditions associated with Huang-Lao may be characterized as philosophical positions, they rely on a basically unproven hypothesis. As Michael Loewe has pointed out, how far a Huang-Lao mode of thought "may be regarded as a comprehensive system must remain open to question" (1994b, 390).

Lunheng 論衡 (Balanced Discussions, 84 pian, ed. *Zhuzi jicheng* 7), by Wang Chong 王充 (27-ab. 100 C.E.), a discussion of many popular practices at the time (trl. Forke 1962). His chapter *Bushi* 卜筮 (On [Divination by] Shells and Stalks) summarizes the popular view that "Heaven and Earth make careful reports, and milfoil and tortoiseshells genuinely have spirit and numen" (pp. 235-57; Forke 1962, 1: 182-90). Wang critiques this by making several arguments, at times mutually inconsistent, to the effect that it is a mistake to anthropomorphize Heaven and Earth or think that spirits would respond to human entreaties. Instead, divination readings are the result of like affecting like, and because of this "the good encounter good fortune, and the bad meet with bad fortune." Wang's perspective is consistent with a materialistic application of the mature correlative cosmology of the Han.

His skepticism about explanations of efficacy that depend on the spirits extends to the practices of sacrifice and exorcism. In the chapter *Siyi* 祀義 (The Significance of Sacrifice), he writes that such rituals are worthwhile only because they allow the practitioner to act on his feelings of kindness (pp. 274-49; Forke 1962, 1: 509-15). Elsewhere Wang describes exorcistic practices, such as the propitiation of the earth spirit (*tushen* 土神) by the fashioning of a demon-shaped earth "double" after the construction of a new house. In *Jiechu* 解除 (Exorcism), he explains that employing shamans and invocators (*wuzhu* 巫祝) to exorcise the earth spirit is wasteful, because no earth spirit would take note of human wants. Instead, people should work on their virtue (pp. 245-47; Forke 1962, 1: 532-37).

Fengsu tongyi 風俗通義 (General Account of Popular Customs, 10 j., annotated edition of Wang L. 1982), by Ying Shao 應邵 (ab. 140-200), an account of popular customs of the Later Han (see Nyman 1982). This work details a different set of mantic practices, but adopts a perspective towards them which is in many ways similar to that of Wang Chong. Among the popular beliefs described here are inauspicious signs of nature in the form of freaks called *bianguai* 變怪, "transformations into oddities." One example, a dog that learns to walk like a human, wears a

hat and helps with the cooking, illustrates Ying's critical attitude. The uneducated say that the dog is a canine freak and that it should die. His educated owner, however, sees nothing wrong and even says: "The dog may be likened to a gentleman; it sees people walk and imitates them. What harm could come from this?" (Wang L. 1982, 418). This example follows Ying's general rhetorical strategy, as explained by Michael Nylan: "Every entry suggests a plausible explanation for the historical outgrowth of such customs, implicitly discounting divine origin or supramundane efficacy" (1982, 162).

As a classicist, Ying Shao, like Wang Chong and the writers of some chapters of the *Huainanzi*, had a scholarly interest in tracing practices to their recorded precedents. By linking contemporary methods with classical patterns, such thinkers implicitly recognized that they derived from custom and were subject to distortion over time. This attitude may be contrasted with the message implicit in the titles of many Han mantic texts, which attributed their methods to deities or sage-kings of the past. These titles make the opposite claim, i.e., that the practices are outside of time because they are the product of divine revelation. Yet while the concept of revelation resonates strongly with later Daoist movements, one factor that early Daoists have in common with the authors of these political-philosophical treatises is their disdain for many of the explanations of popular religion.

Technical manuals. An overview of Han mantic texts is provided in the bibliographic chapter of Ban Gu's 班固 (32-92 C.E.) *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Han, j. 30). Ban's chapter was based on the result of an imperial survey carried out at the end of the previous century and internalized into Liu Xin's 劉歆 (d.23 C.E.) *Qilue* 七略 (Seven Categories). In the bibliography, the categories of "Numerical Algorithms and Techniques" (*shushu* 數術) and "Recipes and Arts" (*fangji* 方技) are particularly rich in texts that appear to be based on mantic practices. Since comprehensiveness was a goal of the compilers of the bibliography, it provides a good framework for an overview of the mantic texts in circulation during the first century B.C.E.

NUMERICAL ALGORITHMS AND TECHNIQUES. The first two divisions of this category chiefly concern astronomical observation and its application to navigation, calendrics, and the determination of the potential of specific points in temporal cycles. The first, "**Heavenly Patterns**" (*tianwen* 天文) consists of twenty-two texts on stars and the *qi* of stars, clouds and rain. Six of the texts are specifically for sea travel. Many appear to include records of past divinations, perhaps notated as to their effectiveness, and Ban Gu says their purpose was to "lay out the images that correspond to good and bad fortune, so that the sage-king may align his government with them" (*Hanshu* 30.1765). The importance

of these methods to government is attested by the presence of the governmental office of Watcher of *Qi* (*houqi* 候氣; see Bodde 1959), comprising twelve experts who worked under the Grand Astrologer 太史, alongside the Watchers of the Stars and the Watchers of the Wind.

Texts of this group were not only concerned with the stars but also with omenological readings of astronomical and meteorological phenomena. One of these texts was the *Haizhong riyue huihong zazhan* 海中日月彗虹雜占 (Miscellaneous Divinations of the Sun, Moon, Comets and Rainbows at Sea, 18 j.). Now lost, the contents of the text probably resembled the images of the sun, moon, halos, stars, comets, clouds, mirages and rainbows and their accompanying divinations found at Mawangdui on a chart now entitled *Tianwen qixiang zazhan* 天文氣象雜占 (Miscellaneous Divinations According to Heavenly Patterns and Qi Images). The chart provides a number of military divinations related to the appearances of natural phenomena influenced by *qi* (Li 1993, 34; Yamada 1985, 45-86). This division contains several texts associated with Great Unity and the Yellow Emperor, treating the observation of stars, clouds, rain and *qi*.

The second division, "**Calendrics and Pitchpipes**" (*lipu* 曆譜) consists of eighteen texts on calendars and methods of calculating them, astronomical records and chronologies of past eras as well as mathematical texts. Ban Gu says: "In order to understand the cycles of the beginning and ending of cold and warm periods, the sage-king must correct his calendar and pitchpipes, and thereby establish the regulations of the calendrical conventions of the Xia, Shang and Zhou, as well as their clothing and colors" (*Hanshu* 30.1767).

Texts in this group were concerned with astronomical record keeping, the calendar and the prediction of conjunctions, solstices and equinoxes. An example is the *Zigou wuxing sheji* 自古五星宿記 (Record of the Mansions of the Five Stars from Ancient Times, 30 j.). Now lost, the text may have resembled the astronomical record of the five stars found at Mawangdui. One part of this record, now known as the *Wuxing zhan* 五星占 (Divinations of the Five Stars), relates the position of Venus, Mars and the other three of the "five stars" (Jupiter, Saturn and Mercury) to military divinations. The second part is a precise table of the positions of Saturn, Jupiter and Venus in the night sky from 246 to 177 B.C.E. (Li 1993, 34). One of the texts in this division is also associated with the Yellow Emperor.

The "**Five Phases**" (*wuxing* 五行) division has thirty-one texts, based on a variety of techniques that employ yin-yang, five phases and calendrical correlations. They include various methods for determining auspicious days, interpreting portents, "punishments and rewards" and using the cosmic diviner's board (*shi* 式). The techniques listed here employed

a variety of correlational schemes used to divine good and bad fortune in specific contexts or at specific times. Among these techniques are several related to the cosmic board, including the *Zhuanwei shier shen* 轉位十二神 (Changing Positions of the Twelve Spirits, 25 j.) as well as the *Xianmen shifa* 獲門式法 (Xianmen's Method for the Cosmic Board, 20 j.) and the *Xianmen shi* 獲門式 (Xianmen's Cosmic Board, 20 j.). The cosmic board, with its inscribed square base and rotating circular disk, was a microcosm of heaven and earth. Its use was connected to the progress of the counter-Jupiter (Taisui 太歲) in the night sky (Major 1993, 40), but the names of twelve spirits inscribed on the rotating disk were also connected to the determination of auspicious times and directions for travel (see Harper 1978; Kalinowski 1983). The practice was criticized by Wang Chong, who stated that movement in the direction of the counter-Jupiter was popularly avoided (Xiao 1998, 269).

The texts are functionally related to the hemerological texts found at Han sites near Yunmeng and Zhangjia shan over the last two decades. Great Unity's progress through the "nine palaces" *jiugong* 九宮 was probably connected to Wen Jie's 文解 *Liujia* 六甲 (Six Jia Dates, 18 j.); it was also one of the twelve spirits on the cosmic board. In addition, two texts in this division are explicitly related to Great Unity, the *Taiji yinyang* 太一陰陽 (Great Unity's Yin and Yang, 23 j.) and the *Taiyi* 太一 (Great Unity, 29 bds.). The titles of two other texts are also related to the Yellow Emperor.

Two of the final three divisions of "Numerical Algorithms and Techniques" are devoted to methods that use **"Stalks and Shells"** (*shigui* 蓍龜) and **"Methods Based on Forms"** (*xingfa* 形法). The first contains fifteen texts, including the *Yijing*, treating divination by tortoise shell and milfoil stalk or derivative methods. The second contains six texts based on reading the topography of the land and the physical features of animals and swords. Ban Gu says the goal of judging physical features is to determine their "pitch and *qi*, value or worthlessness, and good or bad fortune" (*Hanshu* 30.1775). An example of the latter division is *Xiang liuchu* 相六畜 (Physiognomizing the Six Domestic Animals, 38 j.), a text which, judging from comparable early examples, was devoted to judging the potential utility of animals based on their eyes and other physical features. None of these ancient methods were associated with Yellow Emperor, Great Unity or Divine Agriculturalist.

The remaining texts in the first category are listed under **"Miscellaneous Divinations"** (*zazhan* 雜占) and consist of eighteen texts that use methods from reading dreams and physical sensations, rainmaking and interpreting agricultural signs, to requests made to the spirit world for wealth and fortune. Ban Gu says of this division: "By laying out the im-

ages of the hundred affairs, one may watch for proofs of good and bad" (*Hanshu* 30.1773).

Texts in this group are concerned with interpreting signs to determine the future potential of a person or thing. The signs may be in dreams, as indicated by the title of the now-lost *Huangdi changliu zhanmeng* 黃帝長柳占夢 (Yellow Emperor's Old Willow Divinations by Dreams, 11 j.); or in physical sensations as described in the *Ti erming zazhan* 嚏耳鳴雜占 (Miscellaneous Divinations Concerning Sneezes and Ringing in the Ears, 16 j.). Alternately, the signs might be in the form of freaks of nature, as in the three texts devoted to "transformations into oddities" (see *Fengsu tongyi* 9). Yet this division also contains the titles of texts that appear to be concerned with interacting with demons and spirits. The *Zhi buxiang he guiwu* 執不祥劾鬼物 (Managing the Inauspicious and Exposing Demonic Creatures, 8 j.) appears to be concerned with the capture of malicious spirits, while three texts are plaints to the spirits: the *Qing guan chuyao xiang* 請官除妖祥 (Requesting the Officials for the Elimination of Evil Spirits and for Good Fortune, 19 j.), the *Qingshou zhifu* 請壽致福 (Requesting Longevity and the Arrival of Wealth, 19 j.), and the *Qingyu zhiyu* 請雨止雨 (Requesting Rain and the Cessation of Rain, 26 bds.). The one text associated with Great Unity is devoted to the practice of watching the year-star (*hou sui* 候歲).

RECIPES AND ARTS. This second major category includes medical, pharmaceutical, hygiene and immortality texts. The first two divisions in this category are "**Medical Classics**" (*yijing* 醫經) and "**Classic Recipes**" (*jingfang* 經方). The six titles in the first division include the extant *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic), an attempt to systematize general medical principles in the form of a dialogue between the Yellow Emperor and various ministers. The eleven texts in the second division are less synthetic and are devoted to specific medical situations. One text in this division, the *Shennong Huangdi shijin* 神農黃帝食禁 (Dietary Proscriptions of Divine Agriculturist and Yellow Emperor) appears to be concerned with eliminating certain foods from the diet. This is also the focus of the Mawangdui manuscript *Quegu shiqi* 卻穀食氣 (Eliminating Grains and Eating Qi), which contains a specific regimen for restricting the diet, with breathing exercises that allow one to "eat what is round" and therefore heavenly, rather than what is square, and therefore earthly (Harper 1998, 305-9).

The third division of the "Recipes and Arts" category focuses on "**Bedchamber**" (*fangzhong* 房中) texts. The eight texts in this division are concerned with altering the inner balance of yin and yang through sexual techniques. Six describe the *yindao* 陰道, one contains "recipes for nourishing yang" and another presents "recipes for having children." Among these texts is the *Huangdi sanwang yangyang fang* 黃帝三王養陽方

(Yellow Emperor's and Three Kings' Recipes for Nourishing Yang, 12 j.). This text was probably similar to Mawangdui texts such as the *He jinyang* 合陰陽 (Joining Yin and Yang), which—according to Donald Harper—is concerned with generating *qi* and seminal essence (*jing* 精) to be stored inside the male body (1998, 136).

The final division in this category is that of **"Spirit Transcendence"** (*shenxian* 神仙). Of the ten texts in this division, eight are associated with Yellow Emperor, Divine Agriculturist or Great Unity. The *Taiyi zazi huangye* 太一雜子黃液 (The Golden Fluid of the Great Unity and Its Various Disciples, 31 j.) appears to have been concerned with alchemy, yet its inclusion in this section perhaps suggests that the alchemy is more inner than outer. Another text is the *Huangdi zazi zhijun* 黃帝雜子芝菌 (Wondrous Mushrooms of the Yellow Emperor and His Various Disciples, 18 j.), which perhaps resembles a taxonomy of mushrooms related to their use to attain immortality. Health and immortality appears to have been the general aim of the texts in this section.

THE DAOIST CONNECTION. Many of the practices outlined in the texts also appear in later Daoist collections. This is true of two areas in particular: the complex of medical and immortality techniques and the techniques for determining auspiciousness that involve spirits and demons. Texts involving the set of techniques in the "Recipes and Arts" category describe such central practices as breathing techniques, healing, alchemy and abstention from grain—all aspects to be found in texts in the Daoist canon (Xiao 1998, 271; Harper 1998, 305n1). The Han interest in evaluating the best time or day for a given activity is at center of the "Numerical Algorithms and Techniques" category, and some of these techniques also overlap with those found in later Daoist texts. The twelve spirits of the cosmic board are connected with the calendar in several texts in the Daoist canon including the *Huangdi jinkui yuheng jing* 黃帝金匱玉衡經 (Yellow Emperor's Classic of Golden Bookcase and Jade Traverse, CT 284). These methods are related to plights to heavenly officials and the methods of expelling and identifying harmful supernatural creatures (Xiao 1998, 269-70). While there are parallels in terms of content, the frequent attribution of these texts to Yellow Emperor, Divine Agriculturist and Great Unity indicates that there are also strong sociological parallels between the transmission of Han mantic practices and textual transmission in early Daoism.

WORLDVIEW

Many of the above-listed texts are predicated on the existence of homologies between the realms of Heaven and Earth and that of human-

kind. Han mantic practices were methods for gathering information about the human realm in accordance with the rules governing all three spheres. The need to develop typologies on which to base these homologies was a driving force behind the refinement of Han cosmological theory. Whether a thing was part of the human body, the skies/heavens or the imperial court, its correct identification enabled a practitioner to act on it in accordance with natural categories that governed the way things developed. The universality of these categories accounts for the fact that attainment and growth is the same for plants, animals and the luminous objects in the sky. Things may differ in physical form, but their development is governed by common processes, such as the reciprocal effect of yang upon yin, on which practices as varied as calendrics, cosmic boards and "consuming yin" were based.

YIN AND YANG. The universe of homologies this approach engendered was built on a set of natural categories, primarily yin and yang, the five phases, the sixty stems and branches (*ganzhi* 干支) and the sixty-four hexagrams (*gua* 卦). Of these schemata, the earliest appear to have been the stems and branches of the calendar cycle and the hexagrams used in divination according to the *Yijing*. The origins of yin-yang theory, as distinct from the terms yin and yang used independently as descriptions of natural phenomena, is usually placed in the mid-Warring States period (see Li H. 1981).

Some scholars have argued that yin-yang thought and cyclical terms used in conjunction with the calendar appear in the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of Poetry), implying that yin-yang theory actually began much earlier (Inoue 1996). In the *Shijing*, yin most often refers to shade or areas that receive less sunlight, such as the north side of mountains, while yang indicates sunshine or sunny places. In this context, however, the existence of the binary pair yin and yang may be distinguished from yin-yang thought that established the two in a network of correlations. Graham has argued that while yin and yang were established by 300 B.C.E., they had not yet been fitted into correlative schemes (1986, 9). The five phases were thought to have been the latest of these schemata, developing in the mid-third century B.C.E. as perhaps an outgrowth of theories related to historical cycles (*wude* 五德). A recently discovered manuscript from Guodian dating to the early third century uses the term in an ethical context, but as with yin and yang, a mention of the five phases does not necessarily imply that they are being used in a robust correlative sense (Ikeda 1993, 417-18).

THE DAO. The important and original facet of the Han approach to these sets of natural categories is that, in Han texts, the different schemata were integrated as aspects of a distinct totalistic entity, the Dao. The Dao came to represent the universe of homologies that were the ba-

sis of the multitude of mantic techniques summarized earlier. The Dao was the embodiment of the connections that allowed *qi* in the skies/heavens to affect like *qi* on earth and caused the movement of the Great Unity to determine the potential success of a particular action at a particular time. In this sense, the Dao was both immanent and transcendent, because the operations of the universe were "deeply implicated in the human order, as when Heaven 'naturally' produces omens to announce a new dynasty" (Schwartz 1985, 370). Under the totalistic view of the cosmos current in the Han, the great variety of mantic techniques were seen to be efficacious because they were constituents of an overarching and ineffable Dao (see Csikszentmihalyi 1997).

This is not to say that the naturalistic view new in the Han "replaced" views of the cosmos that relied on the existence of anthropomorphic deities. Instead, these deities were integrated into correlative systems in sets of two, five, and so on. Some concepts like Heaven and Great Unity were homologized to the overarching Dao and in effect placed at the top of the pantheon. Great Unity appears first in divinations of the late fourth century B.C.E. that were found at Baoshan 包山 along with a set of celestial officials including the Ruler of Fate (Siming 司命), spirits of rivers and mountains, doorways, dwellings and directions (Li L. 1993, 268-71). In 113 B.C.E., Great Unity became the object of an official cult by order of Emperor Wu and was elevated above the heavenly emperors of the five directions and the sun and moon in worship (*Hanshu* 25a.1230). This arrangement mirrored the relationship between the Dao, the five phases (each correlated with a color and a direction) and yin (the moon) and yang (the sun). Elsewhere, Great Unity is related to officials such as Siming in a more bureaucratic framework, one that could also be homologized to hierarchies in the natural world. Ying Shao states in his *Fengsu tongyi* that the worship of Siming through a carved wooden figurine was common in the area of the old state of Qi, and was often the subject of the sacrifice of a pig in the Runan commandery (Wang L. 1982, 384). This idea of invoking a particular deity to assure or request good fortune was characteristic of an anthropomorphic view of the cosmos, and this view continued to be represented in China through the Han and is current even today. Yet these examples of the Great Unity and subordinate objects of sacrifice also illustrate the extent to which deities inherited from pre-Han times were rearranged according to the emerging naturalistic models of the cosmos.

PRACTICES

There have been several attempts to rewrite the early history of Daoism so as to assume neither its novelty nor its lineal derivation from the thought of Laozi and Zhuangzi. An important example is Anna Seidel's "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments" (1983), where she develops Rolf Stein's idea that Daoism was an attempt at recreating the order of the Han dynasty by exploring the continuity between Han imperial treasure objects and the talismans used by Six Dynasties Daoist priests. Seidel stresses not only formal continuities but also the underlying assumptions about the reciprocity between heaven and human beings that these talismans depended upon. Chinese scholarship is also generally less prone to view Daoism as unconnected to previous phenomena, and this can be seen in the influential "History of Chinese Daoism" by Qing Xi-tai (1988). He emphasizes the role of omen interpretation and its implicit assumptions about the reciprocity between heaven and human beings that occurs in the apocrypha and other Qin/Han texts. He also looks at the development of ideas about the spirits (*guishen* 鬼神) from the writings of Mozi 墨子 through the Han development of the lore of immortals to the Celestial Masters and later traditions, as well as the influence of Han dynasty Huang-Lao thought on longevity, internal alchemy and other practices in Daoist traditions. These connections are important, and demonstrate the degree to which the early Celestial Masters, while identified by later traditions as foundational, were very much creatures of their time.

These approaches are notable for the extent to which they are able to bridge the gap between the Han and early Daoist movements by focusing on continuities at the level of practice. On a more abstract level, one of the most important practical continuities was the very notion of practice itself and its relationship to text. A category explored by Seidel is the Han imperial treasure object (*bao* 寶) that guaranteed the mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命) as well as the way in which such an object served as the model for the tesserae or talismans so important in early Daoism. This change is foreshadowed by the idea of powerful texts that gained favor in the context of the rise of mantic practices, especially in the Eastern Han.

The affiliation of mantic texts with mythical sage-ruler of antiquity, such as Great Unity, Divine Agriculturist and the Yellow Emperor, became increasingly common during the Han. As the *Huainanzi* points out, in the Han an association with an ancient sage-king added value to and guaranteed an audience for a text (ch. 19). This association did not mean that these rulers were supposed to have written the texts; rather, they were often the recipients of a revelation. Han texts therefore relate that

the Yellow Emperor received texts on sexual hygiene from Sunü 素女 (Pure Woman) and Rongchengzi 容成子 (Master Perfect Face). The apocrypha draw on a second type of revelation, one that is not based on the testimony of deities but rather on the patterns in the natural world (Seidel 1983, 336-42). Given the combination of naturalistic and anthropomorphic views of causation outlined above, both categories of revelation could give a text authority.

The transmission of mantic texts may be distinguished from that of the classics by their non-official status and the intrinsic worth of their physical form. An important characteristic of revealed texts is that the limitation on their production increases their value (Strickmann 1979, 15-30). As noted earlier, Huang-Lao technical texts were distinguished by their private transmission. For example, the medical texts associated with the Yellow Emperor passed from Yang Qing 陽慶 to Chunyu Yi 淳于意 in the second century B.C.E. and are described by Sima Qian as "secret recipes" (*Shiji* 105.2794). Some of these texts were also called "pillow books" (*zhenshu* 枕書), a designation that expressed the value of a text in later Daoism (Seidel 1983, 301). The false declaration by Meng Xi 孟喜 that some of his texts on omen interpretation and divination had come from the pillow of his dying master (*Hanshu* 88.3599) is just such an attempt at raising the value of texts by claiming their position in an esoteric transmission. Origin in revelation was also part of the lore of several texts bearing the title *Taiping jing* 太平經 (Scripture of Great Peace), associated with the early Daoist movements (see Wang M. 1960).

The value of mantic texts was not just a function of their scarcity, but also of the nature of their content. Ying Shao relates how a certain Zhi Boyi 鄭伯夷 was able to stave off a snake "transformed into an oddity" by chanting the hemerological text *Lijia* 六甲 (Six Jia Dates), the Confucian classic *Xiaojing* 孝經 (Book of Filial Piety) and a divination work called *Yiben* 易本 (Roots of the Changes) (Wang, L. 1982, 428). Despite Ying's penchant for explaining away popular beliefs, he accepts this aspect of the story, indicating that by the Eastern Han the magical efficacy of chanting texts was accepted even by classicists. From Ying's standpoint, of course, such practices were inferior to chanting the classics for their own sake. Thus, Ying recounts that Emperor Wu hired a shaman (*wu* 巫) to curse Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104 B.C.E.), but by chanting the classics Dong was able to avoid injury and cause the shaman to die suddenly (Wang L. 1982, 423). Then there was Qu Shengqing 瞿聖卿 of the Eastern Han, an expert in writing efficacious talismans, who was able to kill or control demons and spirits with them. Another writer of talismans was Hugong 壺公 (Gourd Master), the

teacher of Fei Changfang 費長房, who was killed by demons after he lost the talisman that allowed him to hold them at bay (*Hou Hanshu* 72.2744, 2747). Examples of excavated Han talismans carry dates of 151 and 190 C.E. (Qing 1994, 305). The efficacy of text seen so often in Daoist practices was thus also a property of Han mantic texts. Han mantic practices may therefore be seen as a precedent for some aspects of Daoism not only because of their mode of transmission, their authority as the product of revelation and their cosmological basis, but also because of their reliance on a common set of techniques.

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