CHAPTER FOUR

LONGEVITY TECHNIQUES AND CHINESE MEDICINE

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DESCRIPTION

Keeping the body healthy and preserving its harmonious functions by nourishing and prolonging life (*yangsheng* 養生; longevity techniques) has been an important concern for Daoists of all different schools and currents as well as for the practitioners of Chinese medicine. Concrete ideas about the body, its vital functions and how to preserve them, were first explored in philosophical writings of about 400 B.C.E. (Sivin 1987, 48). Around 300 B.C.E., early medical literature began to develop, and the practices of nourishing life became an important part of medical knowledge. Under the Han they were adopted by the *fangshi* 方士, magical practitioners, who used them together with divinatory and meditative methods in their search for the Dao. Once Daoism emerged as a recognizable religion in the late Han, the practices were integrated in almost every school or current; Daoists duly refined, discussed and expanded them in the context of their various religious practices. In Daoism, longevity techniques reached their peak, while also continuing to develop in the medical tradition. Over the course of history, the two traditions have maintained a fruitful and stimulating exchange.

Outside of Daoism and Chinese medicine, longevity techniques were also practiced by ordinary people as a way to keep their bodies healthy. This is testified from the early Han, until today when thousands meet early each morning in parks or stadiums to exercise Qigong 氣功, health practices that directly derive from longevity techniques (Miura 1989).

The early tradition of nourishing life comprises techniques to absorb or to guide the *qi* 氣, including breathing exercises, sexual hygiene, therapeutic gymnastics, massages, dietetics and drugs. The texts, besides describing these techniques and their goal of maintaining and replenishing the vital forces, also include advice for everyday life, such as the regulation of sleep, hygiene, food, activities, movements and so on.

This serves to harmonize daily routine and avoid harmful excesses to the body.

The practices of nourishing life opened a way to keep the body healthy and vigorous for as long as possible by maintaining its harmonious functions, enhancing its vital forces and preventing illnesses. This was an important task for physicians at all times, but also for Daoists to whom the body was a "vessel" of the Dao (Kohn 1989, 197). Keeping it functioning in complete harmony, then, was the first stage of the religious quest for immortality. For this reason, longevity techniques formed a key foundation of Daoist practice, being located between "Heil and Heilung," salvation and physical wholeness.

HISTORY

EARLY REFERENCES. Terms for longevity, such as ***shou*** 壽 or ***changsheng*** 長生, are first found in Zhou bronze inscriptions, especially in prayers for blessings (Yü 1964, 87). The term "longevity" in the context of physical practices means that human beings attain their proper life expectancy in possession of their full vital forces and do not undergo an early death, called *yao* 夭. In contrast, the expression ***chengxian*** 成仙, "to become an immortal," which appeared first in the Warring States period, implies a transformation of the body and a change in the state of being, a level of otherworldly transcendence. There is thus a clear distinction between longevity and immortality, which has been discussed over the ages.

The term ***yangsheng***, "nourishing life," first appears as the heading of the third chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, one of the authentic chapters of the work and linked with the philosopher Zhuang Zhou himself (4th c. B.C.E.). Although Zhuangzi considers the physical practices inferior to more meditative techniques, he describes them in some detail:

> To huff and puff, exhale and inhale, blow out the old and draw in the new, do the "bear-hang" and the "bird-stretch," interested only in long life—such are the tastes of the practitioners of "guide-and-pull" exercises, the nurturers of the body, Grandfathers P'eng's ripe-old-agers. (ch. 15; Graham 1986, 265)

This passage already has the names of various breathing techniques and the first mention of breathing exercises, therapeutic gymnastics and other arts of the body. It is a classical passage, whose ideas, in more detail and technical application, reappear in various medical manuscripts

found from the late Warring States and Qin periods as well as in later texts, both Daoist and medical.

HAN DYNASTY. It is evident from recently found manuscripts (see below) that almost the entire array of longevity techniques was present even before the Han dynasty, undertaken and developed, according to Donald Harper's research, by physicians and the medically interested elite across geographical regions (1998, 55). During the Han dynasty the techniques were further developed by the ***fangshi***, "recipe gentlemen," a range of specialists in natural philosophy and occult knowledge that included "doctors, diviners and magicians" (DeWoskin 1983). Many *fangshi* lived at the courts of the Han rulers and local aristocrats and served as their advisors. Their chief attribute was the possession of *fang*, recipes—especially books that contained their knowledge and techniques. Many of these texts are mentioned in the bibliographic treatise of the *Hanshu* (ch. 30; Harper 1998, 45-54).

At the end of the Han, in the second century C.E., several popular religious movements arose that led to the formation of a collective and organized Daoist religion. Most prominent in this context are the Celestial Masters, founded by Zhang Daoling 張道陵 and still an active Daoist school today. Based on a formal covenant between the newly arisen Lord Lao and the Daoist community, the way of the Celestial Master promised its members that the gods would grant them health and long life—provided they did not commit any sins. Thus, they also practiced physical longevity techniques like eating *qi*, abstention from grains and breathing exercises to maintain health. At the same time, however, the practices became part of an ethical curriculum which was activated through the confession of sins and good moral behavior. The techniques were no longer individual practices but were now embedded in the strict communal observance of precepts and purification rites.

Health was equalized with purity and freedom from sin, while sickness was seen as a kind of punishment for one's own and one's ancestors' bad deeds. Therefore, healing was believed possible only through the confession of sins, penance and exorcistic rituals (see Tsuchiya, forthcoming). In this context, therapeutic talismans were considered as documents that guaranteed the covenant between the deity and humanity. As late as the fifth century, Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406-477) reports that the Celestial Masters would not allow treatments with acupuncture or drugs but healed their members exclusively with talisman water, confession of sins and formal petitions to the supernatural authorities (Robinet 1984, 68-69).

EARLY MIDDLE AGES. A comparatively vivid picture of longevity practices emerges from the ***Baopuzi*** 抱朴子 (Book of the Master Who

Embraces Simplicity, CT 1185; Ware 1966), dated to about 320 and attributed to Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343). Ge was the son of an aristocratic clan of south China, near present-day Nanjing, at a time when refugees from the north were flooding into his region. Therefore, his work shows influences both from the indigenous religion of the state of Wu and from areas to its north and west. Ge presents himself as a seeker of immortality who gives clear preference to alchemical procedures. On other techniques, he says: "Through breathing exercises and gymnastics, by taking herbs and plant medicines, you may extend your years, but you will not avoid death in the end. Only taking the divine elixir will give you long life without end and allow you to live as long as heaven and earth" (ch. 4; Kohn 1993a, 308).

Ge Hong therefore makes a clear distinction between longevity and immortality, presenting three different types of immortals: celestial, earthly and corpse-liberated. The foundation of immortality in any form, then, is a healthy life. This means that one must avoid all excesses and prevent or heal all diseases. To this end Ge Hong lists a number of different practices, such as the taking of drugs, which he clearly categorizes according to their effect. In addition, he recommends various *qi* techniques, such as embryo respiration, gymnastics and various methods of visualization. Taking a fundamentally pragmatic position, Ge Hong often asserts that the perfection of any one method can only be attained in conjunction with several others.

Not long after Ge Hong, and in the same region and milieu in the 360s, the medium Yang Xi 楊羲 and the Xu brothers began to receive revelations that laid the foundation of the powerful Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) school of Daoism. According to its teachings, followers could gain access to the heaven of Shangqing—higher than those heavens previously known and the residence of the *zhen* 真 or *zhenren* 真人 (perfected). Shangqing Daoism took over and integrated numerous earlier longevity techniques, both from the Celestial Masters and from the alchemical immortality seekers, some going back as far as the late Zhou and Han dynasties. Individual practices predominate, undertaken in the solitude of the mountains or the meditation chamber (*jingshi* 靜室; see Yoshikawa 1987; Cedzich 1987, 63-67). In general, Shangqing lent more weight than previous traditions to mental images, visualizations and cosmic excursions, though it never completely dispensed with physiological practices. But the more physical practices, such as gymnastics and breathing exercises, served mainly as preparations for visualizations or rituals. Nevertheless, the Shangqing school is of great importance for the development of longevity techniques

and has shaped their connection with traditional Chinese medicine as no other Daoist school.

An impressive example of this connection is represented by the person of **Tao Hongjing** 陶弘景 (456-536), the first patriarch of Shangqing. A relative of both the Xu and Ge families, he originally set out on a career as an official but, in 492, withdrew to Maoshan to pursue philological, medical and alchemical studies (Strickman 1979; 1981). As a result, he compiled two major Shangqing texts: the *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected, CT 1016) and the *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 (Secret Instructions for the Ascent to Perfection, CT 421). In the former, he says:

> Whoever desires to study the Dao of long life first has to heal his diseases. ... Without this primary healing of diseases, one cannot attain any benefits for one's person, even if one assiduously practices the intake and guidance of *qi*. (10.17b)

Since Tao saw health as the basic prerequisite of any advanced religious realization, it is not surprising that he also pursued in-depth studies of pharmacology and medicine and engaged in various alchemical experiments. Around 500, he compiled the *Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經 (Shennong's Materia Medica), the first known collected pharmacology extant today. It goes back to a work of Han origins, which was lost early and which Tao reconstituted from fragments and citations and to which he added his own framework and commentary.

In this work, Tao rearranged over 700 drugs in three different classes. Most drugs in the upper/superior class have the effects of replenishing *qi*, making the body lighter, preventing old age, prolonging life and forestalling hunger. Such superior drugs can be taken for a long period of time, because they show no toxicity. The drugs of the second/medium class with similar effects are much fewer in number, but they still show no or little toxicity. The drugs of the third/inferior class are especially suited for attacking diseases. They are highly toxic and should not be consumed over an extended period of time (Unschuld 1986a, 17-43; Akahori 1989, 76). This hierarchical presentation of drugs shows a strong imprint of the immortality cult of the Han, when many immortals were said to have used drugs to achieve a lightening of the body and the ability to fly through the air. Another typical feature of the Han, the absence of a separation between health and longevity, is obvious as well; as in the Han, so here too the necessity of nourishing life is emphasized to support and maintain the constantly changing balance of all the various parts and functions of health.

Through the reconstitution of the *Shennong bencao jing* and his various commentaries Tao Hongjing laid the foundation for all later

developments of pharmacological therapy and his work became the model for many later collections.

In the 390s, Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫, Ge Hong's grand-nephew, set about composing a scripture that—together with various related works in the following decades—formed the core of the **Lingbao** 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure) school. It is mainly characterized by its emphasis on ritual and its strong adaptation of Buddhist elements. Lingbao doctrine, like that of other Daoist schools, maintained that aspirants could refine themselves step by step to reach perfection. As a new point it added Buddhist models and nomenclature, mainly from Mahâyâna Buddhism, to explain the adept's progress. Generally, Lingbao found a stronger relevance in prayers and orders to the otherworldly administration and made heavier use of spells and scriptural recitations that its Shangqing counterpart. Visualization and physical longevity practices were still applied, but their value was fundamentally lower (see Bokenkamp 1983; Yamada 1989).

HIGH MIDDLE AGES: SUI AND TANG. The Tang dynasty is well known as the heyday of Chinese culture, especially in art and poetry, and its fruitful interaction with foreign influences. Both Daoism and Chinese medicine reached new heights at this time, being further institutionalized and developing a new and superior quality. In medicine, in particular, the education of physicians was newly standardized and reached a much higher level than before. A major developmental step in the latter occurred already under the Sui, when Chao Yuanfang's 巢元方 *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 諸病源候論 (The Origins and Symptoms of Medical Disorders) was published in 610. He presents for the first time a systematic treatise on the etiology and pathology of Chinese medicine, distinguishing four major categories of diseases: inner, outer, women's and children's. Each of these four main parts is then subdivided into sections that outline the origin of the disorder in question, its process of development and its major clinical symptoms. After this, the text does not prescribe phytotherapeutic or acupuncture prescriptions but rather specific exercises of gymnastics, massages, breathing or visualization. This new classification of the practices of nourishing life in accordance with a systematic etiology and pathology represents a big step forward in the development of these techniques (Despeux 1989; Despeux and Obringer 1997).

The two major medical works of the Tang period were Sun Simiao's 孫思邈 (581-682) *Qianjin fang* 千金方 (Recipes Worth a Thousand Gold Pieces; see Despeux 1987) of the year 652 and Wang Tao's 王燾 *Waitai biyao* 外臺秘要 (Secret Essentials of the Outer Terrace) of the year 752. Both were deeply influenced by the *Zhubing yuanhou lun* and show a deep

appreciation of longevity practices, presenting them as an integral part of Chinese medicine (see Sivin 1968; Engelhardt 1989; Unschuld 1994).

Similarly, eminent Tang Daoists like Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 (647-735), the twelfth patriarch of Shangqing, presented integrated outlines of health practices as preliminaries for the attainment and realization of the Dao (see Kohn 1987; Kirkland 1986; Engelhardt 1987). They link traditional Chinese physical techniques with the Buddhist-inspired practice of insight meditation (*guan* 觀), outlining a detailed sequence of progress toward transcendence and describing the subsequent transformations of body, emotions and conscious thinking (Kohn 1990). The first step toward religious realization here is the recognition of the importance of the body and its health. Next, one has to cure all diseases and attain harmony in all physical actions. Then practitioners stop eating normal food and substitute a diet of pure substances and drugs to achieve a higher degree of subtlety in alignment with the cosmos. Visualizations and deep, trance-like immersions in the Dao finally lead to the religious goal. While Daoists in their descriptions of their practices and goals rely heavily on the works and ideas of medical practitioners, their ultimate aim goes far beyond the medical approach, leading ultimately to a reorganization of the adept's physical condition from a profane to a sacred level and to a mystical and transcendent oneness with the Dao. Still, physical practices are emphasized as essential and never overlooked.

Also during the Tang dynasty, Chinese and Daoist medical practices and recipes were transmitted to Japan, mainly as part of the sutras and teachings obtained by Buddhist (Tendai 天台) monks. In Japan, the practices were welcomed warmly and had a strong impact on the Buddhist and aristocratic establishments of the Heian period. They were summarized, with numerous citations from Chinese texts, in the *Ishimpô* 醫心方 (Essential Medical Methods), presented to the court by Tamba no Yasuyori 丹波康頼 in 984. This led to a vigorous Chinese medical tradition of health and healing practices throughout Japanese history (see Sakade 1989).

SONG AND BEYOND. From the Tang dynasty onwards, and especially under the Song, another branch of esoteric doctrines and practices systematically developed, the so-called *neidan* 內丹 or "inner alchemy." A major characteristic of this tendency is the expression of its inner meditation practices in the language of alchemy and the symbolism of the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes; see Baldrian-Hussein 1984). It also integrated forms of contemplation and silent meditation—rather than the visualization of deities—which in part derived from Buddhist practices (see Robinet 1997). The texts of inner alchemy, which became

more systematic and formalized during the Song and Yuan dynasties, present practices that were in general more contemplative and religious in nature than the physical techniques of nourishing life. Still, physical practices continued to be used as preparatory methods, and inner alchemy in its own turn exerted a massive influence on their later conception and execution.

From Ming times onwards, it is occasionally difficult to distinguish the practices of longevity techniques clearly from those of inner alchemy. There is, for example, Zhou Lüqing's 周履靖 *Chifeng sui* 赤鳳髓 (Marrow of the Red Phoenix; see Despeux 1988), which bears a title and contains many poems related to inner alchemy, yet also describes *qi* and gymnastic exercises.

Generally, longevity practices were wide-spread in Chinese society in the later dynasties. Famous poets and scholars of the Song, such as Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036-1101) and Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1082) were pronounced exponents of the techniques and wrote extensively about them (Wang 1989, 210, 261-70). In addition, the Song provided the first extant example of a work dealing exclusively with health techniques for the elderly. This, Chen Zhi's 陳直 *Yanglao fengqin shu* 養老奉親書 (Book on Nourishing Old Age and Taking Care of One's Parents), was quite popular. Under the Yuan it was expanded in Zou Xuan's 鄒鉉 *Shouqin yanglao xinshu* 壽親養老新書 (New Book on Extending the Life of One's Parents and Nourishing Old Age). The work is important in two respects. First, it deals predominantly with dietetics, drugs to be taken by the elderly and various instructions regarding daily routine, such as clothing, sleep and hygiene. Second, it is the first specialized work devoted exclusively to the needs and practices of older people and thus opens an entierely new category of longevity literature (see Sakade 1993, 101-18).

MING AND QING. Longevity writings in the Ming are characterized by their voluminosity and the appearance of many collections and compendia. Among them are works of a highly eclectic character. Some are inclusive and treat all different aspects of longevity practices, for example, Gao Lian's 高濂 *Zunsheng bajian* 遵生八箋 (Eight Treatises on [Following] the Principles of Life; see Dudgeon 1895; Wang 1989, 457-59). Other works focus entirely on a single method, such as the *Tiaoxi fa* 調息法 (Method of Breath Regulation) by the Neo-Confucian Wang Ji 王畿 (1498-1582). The authors of relevant works came from diverse social and professional backgrounds, including physicians, healers, literati, scholars, Neo-Confucians and followers of a syncretism that combined the various doctrines of China (see Stein 1998, 39).

Another new development under the Ming is the increased integration of longevity techniques into medical literature. Thus, Yang Jizhou's 楊繼洲 *Zhenjiu dacheng* 針灸大成 (Great Compendium on Acupuncture and Moxibustion), the most extensive monograph on the subject and a classic to the present day, presents gymnastic exercises for the various *qi*-circuits (meridians) together with their detailed description (chs. 6-7). Similarly, Li Chan's 李梴 *Yixue rumen* 醫學入門 (Introduction to Medicine, dat. 1575) speaks about the cultivation of vital forces in its first chapter. The author places greatest emphasis on the prevention of diseases:

When a patient takes drugs or receives acupuncture and there is no visible effect on his condition, this is due to ignorance about the methods of preserving life. In antiquity, people said: "It is better to prevent diseases before they appear than to understand the drugs to be taken once one has fallen ill." (Wang 1989, 456; Stein 1998, 41)

This clear preference for health and longevity techniques typifies the medical literature of the Ming and may help explain their high popularity. In addition, Li Chan's work places great emphasis on the mind as a causal factor in the development and treatment of diseases.

Another common element in Ming-dynasty works is their extensive discussion of what modern Qigong masters call *piancha* 偏差, "deviation," "derailment," "unwanted side-effects," that is, the negative and unexpected results that may arise from certain therapies or exercises. A classical description of one such *piancha* is found in Zhang Lu's 張璐 (1617-1701) *Zhangshi yitong* 張氏醫通 (Mr. Zhang's Pervasive Medicine, dat. 1695). Under the heading "Rumo" 入魔 (Getting Involved in [Demonic] Illusions), he outlines the symptoms, causes and therapies of a deviation described as "abnormality of the mind." It manifests itself in a person's "being sad like a wooden doll or laughing and crying like a madman, as if one was possessed by demons." As to its causes, Zhang states:

The cause lies in an excessive engagement of the mind, to the point where it falls into emptiness; the condition arises due to the flaring-up of phlegm-fire [*tanhuo* 痰火]. (Wang 1989, 333; Stein 1998, 43)

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. In later centuries, the various longevity techniques developed further into an unprecedented multiplicity; they were actively undertaken by Daoists of the various schools, physicians, medically concerned people and ordinary folk. Their interest has actively continued well into the twentieth century, transforming the understanding and execution of practices into even more medical and, increasingly, biological and scientific modes. An early examplar of this tendency is Jiang Weiqiao 蔣维橋, the author of the

Yinshizi jingzuo fa 因是子靜坐法 (Quiet Sitting with Master Yinshi, dat. 1914). This outline of gymnastics, breathing exercises and the guiding of *qi* became influential in Qigong circles (see Kohn 1993b).

Qigong 氣功, translated as "*Qi*-Exercises" and also known as *Qigong liaofa* 氣功療法 (Healing Methods through *Qi* Exercises), describes a movement of longevity and semi-meditative practices that has swept China since the 1950s. Followers undertake many different activities, including gymnastics, breathing techniques, the guiding and circulation of *qi*, as well as quiet meditations and visualizations (see Miura 1989; Heise 1999). These have been used successfully in health maintenance and the treatment of chronic ailments, especially those of the digestive and respiratory systems.

Among the newer Qigong masters, Liu Guizhen 劉貴珍 (1920-1983) is best known. When he was twenty, he developed a stomach ulcer which he cured with the help of Qigong. After 1949, he created his own specific method known as *Neiyang gong* 內養功 (Exercises of Inner Nourishing) and engaged in its clinical study. As this revealed a high rate of success, he founded the first Qigong clinics—one in Tangshan in 1954, the next in Beidaihe in 1956. Here he had phenomenal successes treating large numbers of patients, suffering mainly from chronic gastrointestinal diseases. His amazing results earned him several awards from the Ministry of Health, and in 1956 he was received by Chairman Mao. In 1957, his ground-breaking bestseller *Qigong liaofa shijian* 氣功療法實踐 (The Practice of Qigong Therapy) paved the way for the increasing popularity of Qigong among the masses (Wang 1989, 509; Miura 1989, 335; Heise 1999, 94-96).

However, despite the popularity of the newly named Qigong and the various efforts of placing it on a "scientific" basis, some still believed that all these practices were merely a fad based on superstitious and idealistic nonsense. The traditional connection of longevity techniques with religion was very much on people's minds, and it was often more important than their visible successes in the healing of diseases. Pressure against Qigong increased during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), when the clinics in Tangshan and Beidaihe were demolished and many Qigong masters were persecuted (Wang 1989, 517).

After the Cultural Revolution, Qigong masters developed new practices of their own, placing a greater emphasis on body movements. Such techniques, like Guo Lin's 郭林 "Xin qigong liaofa" 新氣功療法 (New Qigong Treatment), which was specifically used to treat cancer, and Yang Meijun's 楊梅君 "Dayan qigong" 大雁氣功 (Wild Goose Qigong) of the early 1980s, were officially propagated and rapidly

became popular among broad segments of the population.This new wave of popularity was accompanied by an increasingly mechanistic understanding of the body and of *qi*. In 1977 and 1983, research institutes in Shanghai and Beijing developed special sensors to measure the *qi* radiated by a Qigong master. They found that *qi* resembled infrared rays, electromagnetic waves, static electricity, magnetism or the flow of tiny, subatomic particles. This discovery proved that the concept of *qi* had a materialistic basis (see Miura 1989).

In 1980, Zhao Jinxiang 趙金香 (b. 1934) started teaching his "Hexiang zhuang" 鶴翔壯 (Crane Pattern) to a small group of people in a Beijing park, from where it spread widely. Statistics of the Chinese Qigong Association show that in 1983 there were over five million practitioners, and by 1986 their number surpassed ten million, more than half the Qigong practitioners in the country (Zhao 1986, 1). The "Crane Pattern" begins with a set of intentional body movements, which take about thirty minutes and are a mixture of breathing exercises, slow Taiji type movements and traditional gymnastics. This is followed by about fifteen minutes of intensive restfulness or meditation, and then another ten to fifteen minutes of "unintentional" body movements during which the practitioner goes into a sort of trance. The "Crane Pattern" is easy to learn and takes very little space. Practitioners can feel their *qi* rather quickly and soon experience healing benefits.

However, since 1984, it has provided serious grounds for concern and controversy. First the question arose whether unintentional body movements really arose spontaneously or whether they were evoked semi-consciously on the basis of the earlier part of the exercises. Then more and more people were found trapped in the involuntary, trance-like state of the unintentional movements. Some even fell into psychotic states and had to be confined or hospitalized (Landmann 1989, 87-93). The issues sparked not only medical but also considerable political controversy. This subsided late in 1986 when the practice of unintentional body movements was replaced by a new method called "Zizai Qigong" 自在氣功 (Self-resting Qigong), which focuses more on the restful aspect of the exercises (Zhao 1987).

Later, in the mid-1980s, the practice of emitting outer *qi* (*fa waiqi* 發外氣) became more prominent. A Qigong master who has cultivated his own *qi* to a superior level, directs it—usually through his palms—towards a patient to strengthen the latter's *qi*, loosen his inner blockages and reestablish a harmonious balance of energies (see Miura 1989; Heise 1989, 165-67). The Qigong of the 1990s, by contrast, is characterized more by a renewed consideration of religious aspects of the practice. In earlier periods it was considered wrong to point out the Daoist or Buddhist precursors of certain exercises; now many techniques are

described as immortality practices or are closely linked with ancient Chinese, Buddhist or Tibetan concepts. On the other hand, this religious revival occurs mostly on a rather low, popular level and is favored by religious sects trying to gain adherents. They often use Qigong techniques to acquire psychic or paranormal faculties (*teyi gongneng* 特異功能), which then gain notoriety in the media and greater popular exposure. This in turn attracts followers and brings financial benefits to sect leaders.

The most recent example of such a sect is a group that calls itself Falun gong 法輪功 (Dharma Wheel Exercises). Founded in 1992 by Li Hongzhi 李洪志 (b. 1952), it claims to have 100 million followers today, 70 million in China alone. In April 1999, about 15,000 members assembled in silent protest before the center of China's political power, the largest public demonstration since the Tiananmen massacre of 1989. Their demands for official recognition of their group were partially met by a startled government.

The phenomenal success of Li Hongzhi and his sect indicates the religious and spiritual vacuum China faces in the light of its rapid economic and technological development. This is increasingly filled by volatile mixtures of longevity or Qigong practices and popular religious beliefs. The social and political implications of such mixtures are as yet unknown, however in August, 1999, the government prohibited the Falun gong organization, arresting many prominent leaders and confiscating their writings.

TEXTS

THE MEDICAL MANUSCRIPTS. In the past twenty years a number of important tombs have been discovered dating from the Western Han dynasty and containing valuable manuscripts. Texts found include several important medical texts, known as the "medical manuals," which present almost the entire spectrum of longevity techniques and methods of *qi* cultivation. They include breathing exercises, gymnastics, dietetics, sexual techniques and advice on the execution of daily activities such as sleeping, washing and combing. In antiquity, these comprised a key part of medical expertise. As Donald Harper points out, "The Mawangdui and Zhangjia shan macrobiotic texts describe a kind of baseline macrobiotic hygiene for the elite that focuses on care of the body, not on the more philosophical and mystical programs of the "Neiye" 內業 chapter of the *Guanzi* 管子, *Zhuangzi* or *Laozi*, in addition, the texts'

goal of long life is not identical to the *xian*-cult goal of immortality and transcendence" (1998, 114).

Based on the legacy of Han medical and immorality ideas, religious Daoism developed its own longevity theories and practices, coexisting with the popular hygienic and medical traditions that both influenced it and borrowed from it. Most techniques remained longevity-centered, but became more specialized as part of the preparation of advanced spiritual practices; others came to form the foundation of exorcistic and ritual methods.

MAWANGDUI MANUSCRIPTS. In 1973, fifteen medical manuscripts, written on silk, bamboo and strips of wood, were excavated from the Mawangdui 馬王堆 tomb no. 3 in Changsha (Hunan). The burial is dated to 168 B.C.E., while the redaction of the manuscripts can be placed in the third century B.C.E. (Harper 1982, 2: 15, 1998, 4). They are predominantly recipe literature, and six of the fifteen texts can be directly related to the medical tradition of nourishing life. Two, the *He yinyang* 和陰陽 (Conjoining Yin and Yang) and the *Tianxia zhidao tan* 天下至道談 (Discussion of the Perfect Way in All Under Heaven), mainly focus on techniques of sexual cultivation. Two others, the *Yangsheng fang* 養生方 (Recipes for Nourishing Life) and the *Shiwen* 十問 (Ten Questions), also have sections on sexual techniques, but also include practical advice on how to nourish life with the help of breathing techniques, dietetics and drugs (Harper 1998, 22-30; Stein 1999, 50-65). One of the two last manuscripts is a treatise called ***Quegu shiqi*** 卻穀食氣 (The Rejection of Grains and Absorption of *Qi*); it deals mainly with techniques of eliminating grains and ordinary foodstuffs from the diet and replacing them with medicinal herbs and *qi* through special breathing excercises. The text repeatedly contrasts "those who eat *qi*" with "those who eat grain" and explains this in cosmological terms:

> Those who eat grain eat what is square; those who eat *qi* eat what is round. Round is heaven; square is earth. (Harper 1998, 130).

The last manuscript is commonly called ***Daoyin tu*** 導引圖 (Gymnastics Chart). It contains color illustrations of human figures performing therapeutic gymnastics. Some of the recognizable captions refer to the names of exercises already mentioned in the *Zhuangzi*, such as "bear-hanging" (*xiongjing* 熊經) and "bird-stretching" (*niaoshen* 鳥伸).

The main concern of these texts can be summarized in a quotation from *Shiwen*:

> Yao asked Shun: "In Under-heaven what is most valuable?"
> Shun replied: "Life is most valuable."
> Yao said: "How can life be cultivated?"

> Shun said: "Investigate yin and yang!"
> (Harper 1998, 399; Zhou and Xiao 1989, 379)

The idea that life is the highest good, here placed in the mouths of the mythical rulers Yao and Shun, is found in similar words in the philosophical text *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals of Mr. Lü), dated to the third century B.C.E. (ch. 2). In the manuscripts from Mawangdui, however, we have for the first time exact descriptions and instructions of how life, compared to the ruling of a country, should be regulated and ordered (*zhi* 治). In this context, breathing techniques, circulation of *qi*, gymnastics and dietetics play an especially important role, but particular attention was paid to sexual practices. Their special position is explained as follows:

> When a person is born there are two things that do not need to be learned: the first is to breathe and the second is to eat. Except for these two, there is nothing that is not the result of learning and habit. Thus, what assists life is eating; what injures life is lust. Therefore, the sage when conjoining male and female invariably possesses a model. (*Tianxia zhidao tan*; Harper 1998, 432; Zhou and Xiao 1989, 431).

This makes clear that eating and breathing were seen as natural processes that served to replenish and maintain the vital forces; they have to be supported with specific techniques. The position of sexuality is more ambivalent: a form of the union of yin and yang, it is one variation of the continuous exchange of the cosmic polarities, but it must never decline into the purely instinctual realm, because that would harm the vital forces. One the one hand, sexual hygiene is therefore seen as one of the most effective ways to strengthen the *jing* 精, "essence," one of the fundamental powers of life; on the other, the collection and storage of *jing* require the strict control and discipline of sexual desire (Stein 1998, 57). In contrast to later sexual texts, the Mawangdui manuscripts show little sense of one-sided exploitation between men and women, but present a concept of mutuality between the sexes (Wile 1992, 77).

The remaining medical manuscripts from Mawangdui deal with more technical medical questions, such as the cauterization of the eleven conduits and the diagnosis of their disorders. They include five texts, one of them in two editions, representing an early stage of the system of conduits, earlier than the theory canonized in the *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor, see below). There are also three recipe manuals and one text that focuses on childbirth (Harper 1999, 22-30).

Both types of texts, although presented separately here, belong to the preventive and therapeutic knowledge of early Chinese medicine. Their connection is also documented by the fact that the *Daoyin tu* is presented

as part of a dietetic manuscript, and another on the cauterization of conduits. This textual combination might indicate a complementary understanding: together with purification through diet on the inside and attainment of health through cauterization of conduits on the outside, the state of *qi*-harmony is attained through gymnastic exercises (Harper 1982, 14).

ZHANGJIA SHAN MANUSCRIPTS. The Western Han tomb no. 247 near Zhangjia shan 張家山 (Jiangling, Hubei) is about 200 km north of Mawangdui, also in the old country of Chu (see Wenwu 1989). The burial is dated to 186 B.C.E; the tomb contained two medical manuscripts written on bamboo slips. The first is the ***Maishu*** 脈書 (Conduit Book), consisting of several texts with lists of ailments and descriptions of eleven conduits. The collection is closely related to the Mawangdui conduit texts and like them includes a short statement on practices of nourishing life (see Harper 1999, 31-33; Wenwu 1989; He and Lo 1996, 91).

The other manuscript bears the title ***Yinshu*** 引書 (Document on Pulling). It begins with the description of a daily and seasonal health regimen, including hygiene, dietetics, regulation of sleep and movement as well as adequate times for sexual intercourse. After that, the text details fifty-seven gymnastic exercises, including massages. Some exercises are preventative, others more curative. The third and last part of the *Yinshu* deals with etiology and the prevention of diseases. The most important factors that cause diseases, according to this work, are climatic excesses such as the heat of summer (*aestus*), moisture (*humor*), wind (*ventus*), cold (*algor*), rain and dew. An unstable diet, excessive emotions and a lifestyle inappropriate to the season are also named as possible causes of an imbalance of *qi*. The text recommends various therapies, such as breathing exercises, bodily stretches and the careful treatment of the interior *qi*. It says: "If you can pattern your *qi* properly and maintain your yin energy in fullness, then the whole person will benefit" (*Wenwu* 1990, 86).

It is interesting to note that the text makes a distinction between "upper class people" who fall ill because of uncontrolled emotions such as rage and excessive joy, and lower ones whose conditions tend to be caused by excessive labor, hunger and thirst. It further notes that the latter have no opportunity to learn the necessary breathing exercises and therefore contract numerous diseases and die an early death. Obviously longevity techniques were very much the domain of the aristocracy and upper classes.

Comparison of the *Yinshu* and the *Daoyin tu* shows relatively few correspondences, and both gymnastic and breathing exercises in the

Yinshu are associated with a more differentiated etiology. The *Yinshu* may therefore represent a later development of the techniques, showing their historical unfolding (Peng 1994; Engelhardt 1999; Stein 1998a, 65-78). The text as a whole indicates a preeminence of prevention, the maintainance of health and avoidance of diseases through dietetics and hygiene in everyday life. In this respect it is close to the ideas presented in the *Huangdi neijing* and might be considered its direct forerunner.

Huangdi neijing 黄帝内经 (Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor; see Veith 1972; Yamada 1979; Keegan 1988; Ren 1986), dat. first century B.C.E., is extant in three medieval recensions: *Suwen* 素問 (Basic Questions), *Lingshu* 靈樞 (Divine Pivot) and *Taisu* 太素 (Grand Basis). In addition, there is a later question-and-answer volume, called *Nanjing* 難经 (Classic of Difficult Issues; see Unschuld 1986b). With this corpus, the cosmological doctrine based on yin-yang and five phases, the so-called system of correspondences, reached its culmination. The work provides a view of the relationship between the cosmos, the environment, the human body and its emotions. It describes their interconnected physiological and pathological processes, diagnosis and therapy (Sivin 1993). Rather than to details of therapy it refers to acupuncture, moxibustion and drugs as well as to gymnastics, massages and dietary regulation.

The basic premise of longevity practices is to maintain the vital forces for as long as possible and avoid diseases. It permeates the entire corpus like a red thread. The work gives clear expression to the idea that the life and being of humanity are special and precious and must be preserved by all means:

> Heaven covers above, earth supports below. Among the myriad beings, none is more precious than the human. The human being lives through the *qi* of heaven and earth, as he fully matches the regular patterns of the seasons. Whether ruler, lord or ordinary man, each and everyone strives to complete his body. (*Suwen* 25.1)

Compared with the earlier medical manuscripts, the *Huangdi neijing* reveals a more stringent system that describes the relationships between human beings and the cosmos in greater sublety and with a higher degree of abstraction.

> To follow the orderly pattern of yin and yang means life; to act against it means death. ... The sage does not treat those who are already ailing, he treats those who do not yet ail; he does not treat what is already chaotic, he treats what is not yet in chaos. (*Suwen* 2.3)

The first two chapters of the *Suwen*, especially, bear a strong imprint of the early immortality cult; they outline an ideally regulated life of the

perfected and sages of old, completely in accordance with the Dao and easily attaining a hundred years. However, these good times are over now, and people today do not know how to cultivate their life (ch. 1). This is why the physician must intervene, but an able doctor can recognize a disorder in its germination state, by identifying certain changes in the *qi*. Thus he can control and regulate it early on (26.2). Both physicians and Daoists were concerned to recognize the germination of disorders and even the subtlest movement in the patterns of *qi*. Daoists of later ages in particular strove to know the subtlety of the Dao and thus gain the ability to protect their bodies from diseases and refine them toward higher states of perfection.

The concepts of the *Huangdi neijing* exerted a strong influence on the later development of Daoism, and many later scriptures integrate parts of the medical correspondence system into their doctrines.

FROM HAN TO TANG. After the Han, medical works tended to be relatively extensive monographs focused on specific topics. Unlike the *Huangdi neijing*, which still treated the entire spectrum of traditional medicine, these are specialized medical works on diagnostics, acupuncture or various treatment methods. A similar development occurred in the literature on longevity techniques. However, many works of this period were lost and survive only in fragments and citations.

Ji Kang's essays. An exception to this rule is two essays by Ji Kang 稽康 (223-262), a member of the famous "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove." He wrote the *Yangsheng lun* 養生論 (On Nourishing Life) and later a reply to its criticism, the *Danan Yangsheng lun* 答難養生論 (Answer to [Xiang Xiu's] Refutation of "On Nourishing Life"). In contrast to many of his contemporaries, Xi Kang professes a strong belief in the reality of immortality. However, he says, not everyone can attain it because it requires a special gift that manifests itself in the presence of an extraordinary *qi*. Yet even without this special *qi*, by practicing various longevity techniques one can extend one's life to several hundred years (Henricks 1983; Holzman 1957). Both essays are representative examples of aristocratic and literary concerns with immortality, influenced by Daoism and Chinese medicine, yet not immediately originating in either.

Yangsheng yaoji 養生要集 (Compendium of Essentials on Nourishing Life, 10 sects., lost) is attributed to Zhang Zhan 張湛 of the fourth century, a member of an aristocratic clan of north Chinese origins. His grandfather was involved in the political unrest at the end of the Western Jin and came south as an exile, then served under the Eastern Jin in the capital of Nanjing. Zhan himself at one time occupied the post of imperial secretary under this dynasty (see Sakade 1986; Stein 1999, 98-105).

The text was probably lost in the late eighth century and is not found in any Tang bibliographies (Barrett 1980, 172). A relatively large number of fragments of citations are found in the *Ishimpô*, a Japanese collection of Chinese medical works dated to 984 (see Hsia, Veith and Geertsma 1986). The ten sections of the text were:

> 1. Strengthening the vital spirits; 2. Caring for the *qi*; 3. Keeping the body strong; 4. Guiding and pulling; 5. The properties of language; 6. Proper diet; 7. The arts of the inner chamber; 8. Rejection of harmful habits; 9. Medicinal drugs; 10. Various prohibitions.

This list makes clear that the work did not focus merely on bodily cultivation but was also concerned with spiritual perfection. It did not just discuss specific longevity techniques, such as breathing, gymnastics and sexual hygiene, but also had instructions on daily habits and activities to be undertaken in a regular rhythm matching the patterns of nature.

The *Yangsheng yaoji* is important in the history of longevity techniques for three reasons: it cites from a number of earlier works that have otherwise been lost; it presents a model for many later works which treat it as a standard textbook (see Despeux 1989); and it is the earliest known text to systematize and classify the various longevity practices into one integrated system. The translated fragments (esp. Stein 1999) show that the author was not a typical follower of Daoist immortality but rather was concerned with spreading the foundations of "dietetic regimens as the key to an order in all sections of life" (Stein 1999, 248). He wished to teach people a way of individual life that would extend life and prevent diseases.

Yangxing yanming lu 養性延命錄 (Record on Nourishing Inner Nature and Extending Life, CT 838, *Yunji qiqian* 32, 24 pp.), is attributed to Tao Hongjing or Sun Simiao but most recently dated to the mid-Tang (Mugitani 1987). Some of its essential ideas may well go back to earlier periods. The text is divided into six sections (four of which appear in the *Yunji qiqian*):

> 1. General principles; 2. Dietetics; 3. Various prohibitions; 4. Absorption of *qi* and the healing of diseases; 5. Massages and gymnastics; 6. Sexual practices.
> According to the preface, the text was compiled on the basis of the *Yangsheng yaoji*, from which the author excised what he deemed superfluous or redundant. Scholars disagree as to whether it rests solely on this precursor or also reflects later influences (Despeux 1989, 233; Stein 1999, 109).

Zhubing yuanhou lun 諸病源候論 (On the Origins and Symptoms of Medical Disorders, 50 j.), was compiled upon imperial orders by an

editorial committed under the guidance of Chao Yuanfang 巢元方, dat. 610. This is a work of unprecedented scope. For this first time, it presents a systematic treatise on the etiology and pathology of Chinese medicine. It distinguishes four major groups of diseases (inner, outer, women's and children's), sixty-seven lesser categories and 1,739 specific diseases (arranged according to different causes and symptoms; for a translation of ch. 10, see Rall 1962).

Each item discusses the cause of the disorder in question, its developmental process and major clinical symptoms. Following this, the text usually has a citation from a text called *Yangsheng fang* 養生方, which presents general rules on nourishing life, the prevention of certain diseases, hygienic measures, diets, sexual techniques and potential harm through emotions. This new classification of longevity techniques is a big step forward in their development (see Despeux 1989; Ding 1993; for translations, see Obringer 1997, Despeux and Obringer 1997).

The text introduces its instructions on longevity practices under the heading "Gymnastic Methods of the *Yangsheng fang*." Many of these can be traced back to earlier texts, such as the *Daoyin yangsheng jing* 導引養生經 (Scripture of Gymnastics and Longevity, CT 818), which may date from the sixth century but has come down to us in a Song-dynasty edition (Despeux 1989, 230). Other early materials include the *Daolin shesheng lun* 道林攝生論 (Master Daolin's Discourse on Protecting Life, CT 1427) and the *Yangxing yanming lu*. As Catherine Despeux has shown, it seems that on the whole the *Yangsheng fang* is largely identical with the *Yangsheng yaoji*, or at least a work based on it, whose ideas were also presented in other medieval works (1989, 236).

Qianjin fang 千金方 (Prescriptions Worth a Thousand Gold [Pieces], 30 j.), is by Sun Simiao, dat. 652 (see Sivin 1968; Despeux 1987; Unschuld 1994). This, and the longer, revised version *Qianjin yifang* 千金異方, completed around 682, are among the most important sources on Chinese traditional therapeutics; they are still being used to train traditional physicians today. The *Qianjin fang* is a huge compendium of all medical knowledge of the period and the oldest that has survived in its entirety. It includes all areas of medicine, as well as ethical principles for physicians and general principles of diagnosis and therapy (see Unschuld 1975, 18-24). Other major topics include pharmacological therapy (chs. 2-25), dietetics (ch. 26; see Engelhardt and Hempen 1997 Engelhardt 2000), longevity techniques (ch. 27; partial trl. in Valussi 1996), pulse diagnosis (ch. 28), as well as acupuncture and moxibustion (chs. 29-30; trl. Despeux 1987).

Longevity techniques here form an integral part of the medical system; special emphasis is placed on preventive measures such as a good

and regular diet. In chapter 26, the author discusses the effects of different foodstuffs in some detail, contrasting them with the often harmful influences of various drugs. "The nature of drugs is hard and violent," he says, "just like that of imperial soldiers. Since soldiers are so savage and impetuous, how could anybody dare to employ them recklessly?" (26.464; Unschuld 1986, 209). Under the heading *Yangxing* 養性 (Nourishing Inner Nature), chapter 27 deals with the whole range of longevity techniques: general rules for a good life, gymnastics, massages, breathing techniques, dietetics, various prohibitions and sexual practices. The section on massages and gymnastics in particular shows considerable Indian influence. Catherine Despeux has shown how similar this chapter is to the older *Daolin shesheng lun* 道林攝生論, which probably dates from the fourth century. The same section also cites heavily from the *Yangsheng yaoji* (1989, 231; Engelhardt 2000).

Fuqi jingyi lun 服氣精義論 (Discourse on the Essential Meaning of the Absorption of *Qi*, CT 830, *Yunji qiqian* 57; 9 sects), by Sima Chengzhen, dat. 730 (see Engelhardt 1987). The two editions of the text are complementary, together presenting the nine sections:

> 1. Absorption of the five sprouts; 2. Absorption of *qi*; 3. Gymnastics; 4. Talisman water; 5. Taking drugs; 6. Precautions; 7. The five orbs; 8. Healing diseases; 9. Symptoms of diseases.

The work relies heavily on Shangqing sources together with major medical works such as the *Huangdi neijing*, and groups all the various longevity techniques around the central notion of absorbing the *qi*. The highly concrete instructions on specific exercises are supplemented by theoretical medical knowledge of the five orbs, the healing of diseases and the awareness of symptoms. In this integrated exercise system all techniques have to support each other, being arranged in different combinations to meet the needs of specific practitioners. It shows the degree of medical knowledge that was necessary in the early stages of religious attainment.

Ishimpō 醫心方 (Essential Medical Methods, 30 j.), by Tamba no Yasuyori 丹波康頼 (912-995), dat 984 (see Sakade 1989; Rosner 1989, 26; Hsia, Veith and Geertsma 1986). This is the oldest extant work on traditional Japanese medicine, of particular value since it cites passages from 204 different ancient sources, some Japanese and Korean, but most Chinese, imported from the Sui and Tang courts. Since many of these works were lost in China proper (such as the *Yangsheng yaoji*), the work is indispensable for the study of early Chinese medicine.

The *Ishimpō* continues the traditional Chinese system and closely follows the division of diseases presented in the *Zhubing yuanhou lun* and the presentation of causes, symptoms and cures found in the *Qianjin fang*.

The first twenty-five chapters present pharmacological therapies, acupuncture and moxibustion, focusing on the healing of various diseases; the last five chapters are dedicated to methods of long life. Thus chapter 26 presents facial treatments, magical methods and discusses abstention from grains. Chapter 27 describes many different daily regimens such as breathing techniques, mental cultivation, gymnastics, clothing and the arrangement of living quarters. Chapter 28 deals for the most part with sexual practices, again recouping a great deal of textual material otherwise lost (see Ishihara and Levi 1968; Wile 1992). The two last chapters treat diets and the way of healthful eating.

The longevity practices outlined in the *Ishimpô* cover the full range of traditional Chinese methods, with one exception: the taking of mineral drugs. As Sakade has pointed out, it seems that "the religious zeal associated with certain traditions of longevity in China is replaced here by a concern for the welfare of the patient, but ... not to the entire exclusion of all Daoist thought and practices" (1989, 9).

SONG AND BEYOND. After the Tang, writings on longevity practices and Daoist medical techniques proliferated and became much more specialized due to the general progress in economy, technology, and infrastructure. In medicine, several new schools and traditions developed, each with its own take on the longevity question. Later works tend to be more voluminous and highly technical, one medical specialist addressing another. Longevity techniques, on the other hand, spread widely in the population and, with new mass printing technology available, were increasingly described in popular treatises for the illumination of the masses. Typically these treatises summarize and advertise techniques already well established, so that little new is added to the catalog of efficacious practices. On the Daoist side, finally, longevity techniques and medical knowledge were integrated into the newly flourishing system of inner alchemy, which is highly complex and sophisticated and has its own extensive body of texts. For a description of these works, and the longevity techniques described in them, see the contribution "Inner Alchemy."

WORLDVIEW

THE BODY. "In every time and place the interior of the living human body has been a work of the imagination, fashioned from social ideals as well as from physical data" (Sivin 1995, 12). Every culture has constructed its view of the body with a different combination of cognitive ingredients. While the classical European body was primarily built of visible and anatomical structures, organs, tissues and liquid humors, the

early Chinese body was thought to consist mainly of vaguely defined bones and flesh traversed by circulating vital forces. The main interest of the Chinese was not anatomical, but concerned the body's system of functions in various schemata and projections that aligned the human body as a microcosm with the physical features of the world or universe as macrocosm. The intimate, dynamic relationship between the body and the universe, also described in early philosophical texts, is made clear in the *Huangdi neijing*:

> In the year there are 365 days; human beings have 365 joints. On the earth there are high mountains; human beings have shoulders and knees. On the earth there are deep valleys; human beings have armpits and hollows in back of their knees. On the earth there are twelve cardinal watercourses; human beings have twelve cardinal circulation conduits. In the earth there are veins of water; human beings have defensive *qi*. On the earth there are wild grasses; human beings have their body hair. On the earth there are daylight and darkness; human beings have their [times for] lying down and getting up. (*Lingshu* 71.2; see Sivin 1995, 18).

Medical texts describe the body in detail, focusing particularly on its functions and its relationships to the macrocosm as the basis for diagnosis and therapy. The body, both in medicine and Daoism, was seen as a replica of the cosmos and its functions as the counterpart of the administration of the state (see Sivin 1995; Despeux 1996). In accordance with their concern for longevity and immortality, Daoists focused more strongly on the practical aspects of the body's nurturing and refinement; they saw the body not only as an integrated network of flowing energies, but also as the residence of the gods and a "vessel of the Dao" (Kohn 1991). Their goal was to refine the body to a point where it overcame its ordinary limitations and turned into part of the Dao, encompassing the symbolic body of the entire universe.

The medical and Daoist concepts of the body can be described as complementary. Both outline bodily processes and express them in similar metaphors and in relation to the order of space and time (see Despeux 1996).

Terms. There are several terms that denote the body in its different aspects. First there is *shen* 身, which always involves the personality in addition to the physical body and may refer, in some contexts, to the person in general and to the body as individual identity (see Kohn 1989, 197). The term also implies the idea of dynamic movement. The *Shiming* 釋名 (Explanation of Names, dat. 2nd c.) defines *shen* as "something that can bend and stretch" (Despeux 1996, 88).

Unlike *shen*, *ti* 體 refers to the concrete body or its structure, that is, the body as an organized pattern. It does not primarily focus on the exact number or definition of its separate parts; rather, the term indicates

that the entire body is an integrated system of inherently multiple aspects. *Ti* can also mean "embodiment" and may refer to an individual's personification of something, for example, the Dao, thus indicating the final goal of religious Daoist cultivation.

Xing 形, next, means "shape" or "form" and denotes the physical, visible form of the body. A mainly material entity, this *xing* is often contrasted with *qi*, the invisible emanation of everything in constant unfolding. Thus *xing* refers to the visible body, its outline, but has no relevance in terms of a concrete, anatomical understanding of it. More important here is the notion of the bodily form as a sort of "vessel" or "residence" of the Dao.

The three terms, not clearly distinguished in the texts, have in common that they describe the body as an integrated system of functional correspondences. Mental, psychological and spiritual faculties, which in Western view determine the personality, in this system are merely another aspect of the integrated pattern of the body. In general the idea that "body" is a subset of "person" is characteristic of Chinese thought, where the body-mind dichotomy, so typical for Western thinking, has no place (see Despeux 1996, 88; Sivin 1995, 14; Engelhardt 1987, 8).

COMPONENTS OF THE BODY. The main components that determine the bodily form are *qi* 氣 (vital energy), *xue* 血 (blood), *jing* 精 (essence, structive potential), *jinye* 津液 (body fluids), *shen* 神 (spirit) and *qing* 情 (emotions, feelings). These vital forces or fluids circulate between the limbs, the head and a group of systems in the center of the body, the so-called *zang* 臟 (inner organs, orbs) that control the metabolic and other vital processes.

Qi is of central importance in the body because it is the foundation of all life and fills both the human body and the cosmos. Early associations of the word are diverse, but tend to cluster around images of mist, fog, dampness and cloud formations. The word also refers to the air we inhale and the breath we exhale, as well as to the general vitality within us. This multiplicity of meanings is unified by the underlying idea of a streaming, penetrating and expanding force that fills all. The importance of *qi* is already explained in the *Zhuangzi*:

> The birth of a human being amounts to an accumulation of *qi*. When it has accumulated, birth takes place; when it has dissipated, death takes place. (ch. 22; Sivin 1987, 48).

This passage does not speak of the material substance of the body but refers strictly to the energies that make the vital functions possible. The physical vitality of a baby, therefore, is drawn from the *qi* that fills the cosmos before birth; at the moment of birth, it begins to dissipate. From

this conception derives the idea of replenishing and maintaining the vital forces through longevity techniques and the avoidance of excesses and diseases, desires and emotions.

Qi as the sum of the vital energies is partly inborn and partly absorbed from breath and food. Both, the prenatal or "before heaven" (*xiantian* 先天) and the postnatal or "after heaven" (*houtian* 後天) types must be nourished by various practices. The *Baopuzi* says:

> Human beings live in *qi*, and *qi* fills human beings. From heaven and earth to the myriad beings, all need *qi* to live. Whoever can guide the *qi* will nourish his body on the inside and protect himself against harmful influences on the outside. (5.96; see Ware 1966, 105)

Both the vital resources of the body's internal order and the agents of disorder opposed to them are made of *qi*; they are dynamic agents of change. Orthopathic *qi* (*zhengqi* 正氣) maintains and renewes the orderly changes that comprise the body's regular physiological processes. Heteropathic *qi* (*xieqi* 邪氣) causes transgressions that violate this normal order; it is disorderly and dysfunctional.

In the medical context, these types of *qi* are only two among many. Others specify the function and show what the *qi* relates to or what it does. For instance, there is the division between constructive *qi* (*yingqi* 營氣) and defensive *qi* (*weiqi* 衛氣). The former is made of the pure part of inhaled air. It circulates of the conduit system and protects the inner sphere of the body. The latter is less pure and moves outside of the conduits, defending the body's periphery (see Sivin 1987). Daoism subscribes basically to the same system, but in Daoist texts the various kinds of *qi* are often personified. The defensive *qi*, for example, appears in the form of a troop of soldiers or generals who stand at the frontline, fighting off disease and other bad influences (Despeux 1996, 93).

Conduits. How, then, does *qi* circulate and spread through the body? Basically it flows through the so-called conduits or meridians (*jingmo* 經脈) that pervade the entire body like a network of rivers and lakes. The *qi* flows, in a cyclical rhythm, from the body's center to the extremities (hands and feet) and back, passing through twelve major conduits associated with the yin and yang orbs (see Kaptchuk 1983).

These conduits have formed the main organizational framework of Chinese medicine and traditional concepts of the body since the first century B.C.E. (see *Lingshu* 10). They run for the most part just below the skin; those related to yin orbs are on the inside of the extremities, while those connected to yang orbs are on their outside. In addition, each conduit has a number of clearly defined places, often dips in their course, where they are accessible from the outside. These, the so-called acupuncture points or foramina (*kongxue* 孔穴; *qixue* 氣穴), are employed

to influence the flow of *qi* with the help of needles, moxa or massages. They are "caverns" of *qi* that allow both its entry and exit; they are important in the body's relationship with the greater universe. Accordingly, some of these points are, in certain Daoist texts, defined as the residences of the gods.

Orbs. The main conduits of *qi* are associated with and named after twelve vaguely defined orbs (*zangfu* 臟腑; organs or visceral systems of function) located in the deep interior of the body. There are six yin and six yang orbs, among which five of the yin orbs (of the liver, heart, spleen, lungs and kidneys) are of central importance. Exactly what their physical correlates are, or precisely where they are located, was not a major concern for Chinese physicians. According to medical doctrine, the orbs are less anatomical features than offices in the body's administration. In Daoism, they often appear as residences of the gods who, like the officials in medical discourse, are responsible for a specific body function. To give an example:

> The cardial [heart] orb is the seat of the ruler, from whom issues the clear orientation of spirit. The pulmonary [lung] orb is the seat of the trusted minister, from whom issues the orderly rhythm. The liver orb is the seat of the chief general, from whom issues all planning and strategy. The felleal [gall bladder] orb is the seat of the central rectitude, from whom issues all firm decision-making. The pericardial orb is the seat of the lesser messengers, from whom issues all desires and joys. And the lienal [spleen] and stomach orbs are the seat of intermediate storage, from whom issue the five tastes. (*Suwen* 8.1; see Porkert 1988)

Like officials in the state administration, the orbs had to take care of the harmonious function of all the different aspects of the body. As the text says:

These twelve officers must never fail to support each other. If the ruler is wise, the subjects live in peace; if one nourishes one's life in this way, one can attain long life and avoid all harm. (*Suwen* 8.2)

Jing. "As the *qi* of a person forms his root, so the *jing* forms his trunk," Heshang gong explains in his commentary to the *Daode jing* (ch. 59). Originally the term *jing* 精 meant "to sort rice," "to select," "to refine," from which derived the meaning "pure part" or "essence." As is already made clear in the *Xianger* 想爾 commentary to the *Daode jing*, this "essence" represents "another aspect of the *qi*, one that has separated from the Dao" (ch. 21) and, after entering the human body, forms the person's "germ of life" or structive potential.

Thus *jing* is the indeterminate aspect of *qi*; it is *qi* in transition from one determinate form to another (Sivin 1987, 164). One the one hand, it appears as the male or female reproductive essence thus representing the

power at the origin of life that carries vitality from parent to offspring; on the other, it is the essence that the body takes from food before it is assimilated to the individual's vital processes, thus standing for the basis of physical growth and development (Sivin 1987, 164-65). As the most important basis of both prenatal and postnatal vitalities, *jing* must be carefully collected and preserved. A deficiency will cause weakness and disease; a complete exhaustion leads to death.

Jing is particularly harmed by uncontrolled, excessive sexual activity, but this does not mean that practitioners of longevity techniques should embrace celibacy. Rather, they are encouraged to engage in sexual techniques whose aim is to revert the flow of the *jing* from down and out to up and in, thus using it to "nourish the brain" (*huanjing bunao* 還精補腦). Sexual hygiene thus is among the most efficacious ways to strengthen the *jing*. At the same time, its proper execution requires a strict control and disciplined activation of the sexual desires (see Kohn 1993a, 153; Wile 1992). Most commonly undertaken in conjunction with a partner, these sexual practices for the preservation of *jing* are internalized in inner alchemy, and different models are established for men and women.

Shen. This part of the body's energies is often translated as "spirit." It describes the psychological and divine aspects of human nature, which are essential for the successful attainment of long life and immortality. The body, especially in Daoism, is seen as the residence or vessel of the spirit. Thus the *Huainanzi* says:

> The bodily form [*xing*] is the residence of life; the *qi* fills this life while the *shen* controls it. If either of them loses their proper position, they will all come to harm. (ch. 1)

Shen 神 therefore can be described as an energetic constellation that ranks above *qi*; it represents the divine, unfathomable aspect of the person. In Daoist texts, it is often contrasted with *gui* 鬼 (demons), which are elements associated with darkness, earth and yin, psychological factors that pull people deeper into illusion and worldliness. The two are also represented by a group of three yang (*hun* 魂) and seven yin souls (*po* 魄), represented as stout, upright officials and crude, half-animal creatures (see Kohn 1997).

The tradition of longevity techniques places great emphasis on "nourishing the spirit" (*yangshen*). Already the *Zhuangzi* says:

> To be pure and unadulterated, at rest, one and unmoving, relaxed and without intentional action [*wuwei*], just going along with the course of nature—this is the way of nourishing the spirit. (Stein 1999, 131; see also Watson 1968, 167)

It is a basic prerequisite for all successful practice to find peace and purity of spirit by limiting all conscious wishes, desires and outward striving. Excessive emotions are considered a major factor in the origin of diseases, each harming a particular orb or visceral system of *qi*. Thus too much anger will harm the liver orb and excessive joy taxes the heart orb. This harm is done through unwarranted activities of the *qi*. As the *Suwen* says:

> Anger causes an excessive rising of the *qi*, while joy disperses it too much. Sadness leads to squandering of *qi*, and fear causes it to sink down too far. (ch. 39)

HEALTH. The practice of longevity techniques means mainly to preserve vitality and fend off potentially harmful influences. In this it is close to the basic conditions of health in medicine. Chinese physicians use terms such as "normal," "harmonious" and "relaxed" to describe the healthy condition of the body and its functional systems. For instance, the *Lingshu* uses the word *pingren* 平人 to indicate "a person whose body functions normally" (Sivin 1987, 96). Nonetheless, this state of "normal health" seems to be rather volatile and has to be balanced and cultivated at all times. The surface of the body must be strong in order to keep the vital substances in and the pathological factors out; at the same time, it must also be open to allow vital energies to be admitted and properly directed and stored in the inner orbs and flow throughout the body in an orderly pattern. For this reason, all functions of the body have to be constantly regulated and adapted to the spatio-temporal movements of nature. Inseparable from this process, moreover, is the maintainance of a balance in the mental and emotional spheres.

The pursuit of health and self-cultivation has to begin with

> using the fresh and casting out the old, so that there is a free flow in the interstices of the flesh (*couli* 腠理). The vitalities are renewed daily, heteropathic *qi* is expelled and a full span of life is attained. (*Lüshi chunqiu* 3.5b; Sivin 1987, 49)]

Thus, health and longevity are the results of daily renewal. In all cases, constant vigilance and regular maintenance are necessary. Physicians, then, focus mainly on preserving or restoring this balanced state of health, while Daoists use it as a first step toward transforming body and spirit toward the purity of the Dao.

PRACTICES

GYMNASTICS (*daoyin* 導引, lit. "guiding and pulling") appear first in a passage of the *Zhuangzi*, where they are explained as a method "to guide the *qi* to make it harmonious and to stretch [pull] the body to make it supple" (ch. 15; Engelhardt 1987, 125). They are later developed in medical and Daoist texts (see Despeux 1989), and include physical exercises and self-massages that regulate the flow of *qi* in the conduits while expelling pathogenic factors. In conjunction with breathing exercises, they serve to cure diseases and prolong life.

Gymnastics are also prominent in medical manuscripts, notably the *Yinshu* and the *Daoyin tu*. While the *Zhuangzi* still treats them as a means of "nourishing the physical form," these texts emphasize their therapeutic efficacy and are very specific in their instructions. For example, a *Yinshu* section on curing stiff shoulders says:

> If the pain is located in the upper part [of the shoulder], one should rotate it carefully 300 times. Should it be found more toward the back, then one should pull the shoulder to the front 300 times. (Wenwu 1990, 85; see also Engelhardt 1998a)

The instructions distinguish carefully according to the location of the problem and have detailed specific exercises for all sorts of different cases. Most generally, the exercises treat problems of the senses and the outer functions of the body, focusing on pain relief and the increase in overall mobility.

BREATHING EXERCISES (*tugu naxin* 吐古吶新, lit. "expelling the old and taking in the new"). Ways of controlling and regulating the breath also appear first in the *Zhuangzi*. They serve to make people inhale refined, vital *qi* while exhaling its impure, gross counterpart. One specific variant is the method of exhaling on special sounds like *xu* 呴, *hu* 呼 or *chui* 吹 (already described in the *Yinshu*). The effect of the various breathing methods is to control excessive emotions and harmful outer influences such as "moisture" and "heat" (Engelhardt 1998a, 15). To the present day, modern Qigong has a category of breathing techniques summarized under the term *tuna gong* 吐吶功.

Breathing methods and the "guiding of *qi*" (*xingqi* 行氣) are first mentioned in this connection in the late Warring States period, when an inscription describes an initial downward movement of *qi*, followed by its transformation and return upwards. This practice, later called *xiao zhoutian* 小周天 (microcosmic orbit), has counterparts in the Mawangdui medical manuscripts (Harper 1998, 126).

ABSTENTION FROM GRAINS (*quegu* 卻穀, lit. "eliminating grains," *bigu* 辟穀, lit. "avoiding grains). Already the *Zhuangzi* notes that

immortals "do not eat the five grains but live on the wind and the dew" (ch. 1). A description of this dietary technique as one part of a long-life program appears in the Mawangdui manuscript *Quegu shiqi*, which explains how to eliminate grains and ordinary foodstuffs from the diet and replace them with medicinal herbs and *qi* inhaled with special breathing exercises. The underlying idea is first clarified in the *Huainanzi*, which says: "Those who eat *qi* achieve spirit illumination and are long-lived; those who eat grain have quick minds and are short-lived" (ch. 4; see Harper 1998, 131). Later, in religious Daoism, abstention from grain was also related to purging the three corpse-worms (*sanshi*) from inside the body—a necessary first step towards undertaking a Daoist program of cultivation (Maspero 1981, 333-35; Kohn 1997; Eskildsen 1998).

TALISMAN WATER (*fushui* 符水). Another way of replacing ordinary food with more refined and subtle substances was the absorption of talisman water, the ashes of a talisman dissolved in water. First described in the Mawangdui text *Wushier bingfang* 五十二病方 (Recipes for Fifty-Two Ailments), it was believed efficacious as a remedy for the effect of the infamous Gu poison (Harper 1998, 301). Later, among the Celestial Masters, talisman water became a major means of the healing of diseases, commonly associated with the recitation of spells and other ritual activities. Over the centuries it was used to clean the eyes, mouth and ears and has played a role in the ritual purification that preceded longevity exercises. It was also applied against illness and to the present day plays an important role in Daoist ritual (Engelhardt 1987, 141-146).

SEXUAL PRACTICES (*fangzhong* 房中, lit. "bed chamber"). This first appears in the bibliographic chapter of the *Hanshu* (ch.30), denoting a category of medical literature referring to sexual techniques. The editors comment: "Those who abandon themselves [to sexual pleasure] pay no heed [to the precepts in the manuals], thus they fall ill and harm their lives" (Wile 1992, 16). Sexual cultivation already played an important role in the discovered manuscripts from the third century B.C.E. and is denoted by different terms, such as *jinnei* 進內 (approaching the inner [chamber];" Harper 1998, 339) and *rugong* 入宮 (entering the palace; Harper 1998, 110). Later the term *fangzhong shu* 房中術 (arts of the bed chamber) became the general appellation of all forms of sexual hygiene and techniques.

CLAPPING THE TEETH (*kouchi* 叩齒). The characteristic connection of health effects and religious ideas is also clear in the notion of clapping the teeth. The *Yinshu* requires this as a daily hygiene, claiming that it prevents tooth decay (Harper 1998, 110). In religious Daoism of the third and fourth centuries, it appears as an effective way of calling upon the gods and as a method of protection against demonic *qi*,

without, however, ignoring the practical, preventive effect of strengthening the teeth (Stein 1999, 139).

CLENCHING THE FISTS (*wogu* 握固). This indicates an accompanying technique, often undertaken after or in between the various other practices of long life or in conjunction with scriptural recitation. The term appears first in the *Daode jing*, which says: "[The infant] has flexible bones and soft muscles; he clenches his hands into fists" (ch. 55). As already emphasized in the *Zhuangzi*, the practitioner uses this method to imitate the behavior of an infant and closes his hands to prevent the expulsion of inner *qi*. By doing so, he can control the vital powers he had at birth and has since lost. The closing also serves to keep harmful influences at bay (ch. 23; see Engelhardt 1987, 291).

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