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Origins of Daoist Iconography

ABSTRACT

It has been commonly thought that the origins of early Daoist imagery in sculpture lay in Buddhist art and that Daoist art became fashionable during the Northern Wei dynasty when confronted by the competition of the foreign faith of Buddhism. By investigating a group of Daoist stelae executed for domestic shrines during the fifth to sixth centuries and by surveying the development of a particular type of divine imagery from the Western Han to the Wei-Jin periods (second century B.C.–fourth century A.D.), this essay argues that the origins of Daoist iconography are deeply rooted in traditional Chinese representations of divinities. The essay also demonstrates that a significant impetus to the evolution of earlier Daoist icons was provided by the specific needs of Daoist religious practices, in addition to social factors and the impact of Buddhist art.

FIG. 1 (NEAR RIGHT).

Ink rubbing of a Daoist stele with Tianzun, dedicated by daoshi Zhang Xiangdui, dated A.D. 513, height 67 cm, width 53 cm (after Matsubara, Chūgoku bukkyō, 30)

FIG. 2 (FAR RIGHT).

Daoist stele, dedicated by Gai family, dated A.D. 515, height 43.5 cm, width 20 cm, Osaka Municipal Museum of Art (after Matsubara, Chūgoku bukkyō, pl. 60-b).

FIG. 3 (NEAR RIGHT BELOW).

Daoist stele, dated to second decade of sixth century, height 47 cm, width 46.5 cm, Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Köln (after Ashton, Introduction, pl. 23-1).

FIG. 4 (FAR RIGHT BELOW).

Daoist stele, dated A.D. 506, height 52 cm, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago (after Sirén, Chinese Sculpture, pl. 128-a).



THE ORIGINS OF THE IMAGERY in Daoist sculptures of the Northern Dynasties period (A.D. 439–581) are commonly thought to lie in the Buddhist art prevalent in China when Daoist votive stelae became popular. I argue here, however, that early Daoist sculpture is not simply derived from Buddhist art but is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese representations of divinities. By investigating a group of Daoist stelae executed for domestic shrines during the Northern Dynasties and then surveying the development of a particular type of divine imagery from the Han dynasty to the Wei-Jin period (second century B.C. to the fourth century A.D.), I demonstrate that Daoist sculpture of the early sixth century was influenced by earlier religious and artistic practices. I subsequently propose that a significant impetus to the evolution of early Daoist icons was provided by the specific needs of Daoist religious practices, in addition to social factors and the impact of Buddhist art.

The Daoist sculptures discussed here are mainly from the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534), though one example from the succeeding Northern Zhou period (557–581) is also considered. As the inscriptions on extant or recorded works show, almost all Daoist stelae of the Northern Dynasties represent Laojun 老君 (Venerable Lord, or the deified Laozi 老子) or Taishang 太上 Laojun (Highest Venerable Lord) as well as Tianzun 天尊 (Heavenly Worthy).¹ Most of these works were made in present-day Shaanxi province and the surrounding area—a fact that may be explained in several ways. First of all, from the beginning of the fifth century this region was dominated by the so-called Xin Tianshi Dao 新天師道, or New Celestial Daoist sect, under the leadership of Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之.² The influence of Daoism is strong in Fengyi 馮翊 (in present-day Lin-tong), near modern Xi'an, where Kou was born. According to official historical accounts, in 425 Emperor Taiwu 太武 of the Northern Wei (r. A.D. 424–452) invited Kou and his disciples from Mt. Song to live at the capital, performing rites and prayers at the prescribed hours every day. Kou later convinced the emperor to establish Daoism as the state religion. In 431, altars and officiating priests were set up in every provincial seat to supervise local practices. In 439, Kou Qianzhi persuaded the

emperor to adopt the title *Taiping zhenjun* 太平真君, or Perfect Ruler of Great Peace, for the regnal period 440 to 451. In 440 a magnificent five-story altar was built southeast of the city under Kou's direction. A spectacular religious ceremony followed by a special amnesty inaugurated this new reign.³

In addition to Kou Qianzhi and his followers in the capital, another Daoist school flourished somewhat later in Louguan, near Chang'an (in present-day Xi'an). Known as the Louguan Dao 樓觀道 (Way of the Louguan), this school may also have been influenced by Kou Qianzhi. Louguan was traditionally thought to be where Yin Xi 尹喜, who witnessed Laozi's departure from China and asked him to write a book on his philosophy entitled *Daodejing* 道德經 (Scripture of the Dao and the virtue), built a multistoried building (*lou* 樓) by “knotting grass.” Later, when a temple was erected there, it took its name from his structure. During the Northern Dynasties, Louguan was the center of Daoism in the northeast, attracting novices and adepts from the Wei River valley in the vicinity of Chang'an.

In this period southern China was under the influence of the Lingbao 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure) sect and of Shangqing 上清 Daoism, a sect that took its name from the highest of three heavens where its gods dwelt—the Realm of Clarity. Originally competing with the foreign faith of Buddhism, these sects quickly gained adherents among the Chinese elite in the south, many of whom had recently moved from the north to escape the threat of conquest by non-Chinese peoples. The new schools combined the Daoism of the northern capitals with the local shamanistic cults of the south.⁴ The practice of using images in sacrificial or devotional ceremonies also became popular.⁵ The interaction between southern and northern Daoism may have left an imprint on the general activity in religion and art in northern China, as discussed below.

DAOIST STELAE OF THE NORTHERN DYNASTIES

Almost all the Daoist sculptures still extant from the Northern Dynasties are stelae, and these consist of two distinct types: one monumental, the other quite

small. The two types differ not only in size and form but also in iconography and religious function. A large-scale stele was normally commissioned by a group of donors from a clan or commune. It served as a divine image to intercede with a god for blessings, a symbolic encouragement to desired ritual behavior, and a pictorial guide to help illiterate adherents in communal religious practices. Such stelae were thus always erected on roadsides or in other public places. The smaller-scale domestic stelae, which are the focus of this study, were generally dedicated by families and accommodated in domestic shrines as aids in personal worship.⁶

The most characteristic early specimens of small-scale Daoist stelae are a group of stone works, possibly all from the Shaanxi area, that were executed in the early sixth century. These stelae typically represent a central seated figure with two smaller attendants, all placed against a leaf-shaped background slab or a plain niche decorated with various motifs.

The location of one of these stelae (fig. 1), dating to the second year of Yanchang (A.D. 513), is no longer known, but the essential features of its deity and its decorative pattern in the Northern Wei mode can be determined from an ink squeeze taken by the eminent scholar Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1868–1940).⁷ This stele, excavated from Jingyang in Shaanxi province,⁸ has a chairlike form, with the deity seated in the center holding a fanlike accessory called *zhuwei* 墜尾 (discussed in detail below) in his right hand. A pair of tall *zhenren* 真人, or “realized beings,” stands on either side. The main figure wears a high cap and traditional Chinese robe fastened around the waist with a girdle. The edges of the sleeves are sharply defined with finely incised curved lines, in contrast with those on the upper part of the robe, where the pleats are broader, gently overlapping from one level to the next. Two dragons interlock near the apex of the stele, their tails framing the head of the deity. Small circular emblems above the dragons’ heads on either side probably represent the sun and moon or heavenly constellations. The top outer edge of the leaf-shaped slab is decorated with flame motifs rising to a pointed top. At the base, two standing donors flank a large *boshan* 博山 incense burner. Below is an inscription identifying the stele as having been com-

missioned by the *daoshi* 道士, or Daoist practitioner, Zhang Xiangdui 張相隊 and his family and as representing Tianzun. The figure is a refined example of Northern Wei craftsmanship, with delicately carved drapery. One notable feature of this stele is its use of contrast, as in the shape of Tianzun’s sleeves versus those of the attendants or the crowded incised lines versus the broad overlapping pleats.

In another stele (fig. 2), dating to the fourth year of Yanchang (515), a figure is seated against a leaf-shaped slab, which is decorated with scroll motifs rising to a point.⁹ He wears a cap and robe with large triangular sleeves falling over the front of the seat to form two pennants. He is depicted with a moustache, and his raised right hand holds a small *zhuwei*. His eyebrows are delineated with a fine incised line. On either side are two adoring figures in secular costume. Dragons coil above the deity with their heads turned back and upward, accompanied by two small circular wheel-like emblems reminiscent of the traditional decorative motifs on late Zhou bronze vessels.¹⁰ The front of the base is decorated with a *boshan* incense burner and two donors, with five incised names referring to the Gai 盖 family discernible beside them. No special information about the origin of this stele is currently available. I include it with the Shaanxi group because it has certain features in common with the statues discussed here and nothing that would justify separate classification.

A third stele could be included in this group as its differences from the other two are minor (fig. 3).¹¹ Leigh Ashton infers from the term *Yongkang* 永康 in the inscription that “the possible year is A.D. 464,”¹² yet the manner of the script suggests that the inscription is later. Stylistically, this statue is so similar to those described above that they could well have come from the same workshop. The modeling of the head and hands, the lines of the drapery, the treatment of the sleeves, the decorative motifs on the leaf-shaped slab (serpentine dragons, medallions) are almost identical. Hence, this stele must have come from the area of modern Shaanxi province and date to the second decade of the sixth century.

Another image, with a partially broken back slab, also has the characteristic three-figure configuration (fig. 4).¹³ A deity with a *zhuwei* in his right hand sits



FIG. 5 (FAR LEFT).

FIG. 6 (NEAR LEFT).

flanked by two smaller attendants, all three on a stepped platform whose topmost level extends to either side and is supported by two monsters. Despite damage to the background slab, the herringbone pattern of two dragon tails is visible next to the heads of the attendants. According to its inscription, the stele was made in A.D. 506.¹⁴ Significantly, the dress of its figures shows marked stylistic differences from those of a later date. The robes are trimmed along the hem, and the sleeves are wide but smaller in comparison to the voluminous Chinese-style robe that was becoming fashionable in the north. The attendants wear a tight-sleeved short overcoat with trousers beneath it, akin to the traditional dress of the Wei Tartars. These garments could be regarded as marking a transitional style following on the voluminous Chinese-style robe; stylistically, they link the traditional dress of the Wei Tartars, the so-called *kuzhe* 穀褶, and the Chinese style of *baoyi bodai* 襄衣博帶.¹⁵

Another type of stele is generally carved with a broad niche on the front that contains a seated deity flanked by two standing attendants, against a blank

background. One such stele, formerly in a Japanese collection but now in the U.S., is dated to the first year of Zhengguang, or 521 (fig. 5).¹⁶ A deity seated within a shallow pointed-arch niche is flanked by two standing attendants with hands raised as in adoration. The figure wears a cap and robe that opens at the neck to show the rounded collar of an undergarment. His eyebrows are delineated with a fine incised line like those of the Gai family figure. As usual, he holds a *zhuwei* in his right hand, and he touches his right foot with his left hand. The drapery is tucked in around the knees and forms a series of concentric pleats, like ripples on water, a method greatly favored in Northern Wei figural execution. At the top, between the usual serpentine dragons, are two medallions, one with a toad clearly inscribed in it. These undoubtedly represent the sun and moon, as do the wheel-like emblems on the stele of 513 described above.

In another example of this type (fig. 6),¹⁷ the deity, seated on a platform under a Chinese-style tiled-roof niche, wears a cap and holds a *zhuwei* in



FIG. 7.
Daoist stele with Laojun, dated A.D. 567, white marble, height 25–30 cm, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C. (photo author).

the right hand. He is flanked by two attendants. Although no date can be detected, his sleeves, which fall in winglike folds over the pedestal, are a distinctive characteristic of the early drapery style in Shaanxi. Two medallions appear on either side of the upper part. Below the niche, to the right, are two donors in adoring attitudes.

A third example has a rather later date—the second year of Tainhe (567) in the Northern Zhou dynasty (fig. 7). The front niche is enclosed by a rectangle in which the upper frame forms a finely carved canopy consisting of a row of lotus petal patterns, followed by a double-chevron pattern, then by a pleated silk design, and finally a looped curtain. Each edge of the rectangle is decorated with tassels; pearls and *bi* 璧 discs hang from the ends of the canopy.¹⁸ The square niche again con-

tains a deity flanked by two attendants. The presentation of the central figure, capped, bearded, with raised right hand holding a *zhuwei*, closely resembles those discussed above, differing only in the addition of a three-legged armrest (*yinji* 隱几) on which the figure leans. This is typical of the iconography of Daoist images in the Northern Qi (550–577) and Northern Zhou periods. The deity is backed by a double nimbus consisting of a round halo decorated with an engraved floral pattern and an ovoid aureole. His throne rests atop a very high pillar, like those in the Xi Wangmu 西王母 (Queen Mother of the West) scenes of the late Han (first–second century A.D.). An incense burner is carved in low relief on this plain throne base. On each side stands an attendant holding a *hu* 筍 tablet. Below are two squatting lions with their heads turning outward.

The identification of the deity in this stele as Laojun, inferred from his iconography, is confirmed by the inscription: “In the nineteenth day of the sixth moon of the second year of Tainhe (567), *daomin* Zhi Yuanzun made a Laojun image, for the benefit of his late parents.” The title *daomin* 道民, or Daoist layman, commonly used by Daoist disciples in the Northern Dynasties period, differs significantly from that used by Buddhist adherents (*fodizi* 佛弟子). *Daomin* may have become the special name for Daoist disciples during the Jin dynasty (A.D. 265–420),¹⁹ given that the author of one extant Jin document, “Xie Taifu tie 謝太傅帖 (A note by Xie Taifu),” called himself *daomin*.²⁰ The term later became popular and is found throughout the writings of Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (A.D. 406–477), a great southern Daoist master.²¹ In the north, Kou Qianzhi, working to convert the unpredictable dynamism of primitive Daoism into an established church in the early fifth century, required his disciples only to name themselves *daomin*, as we read in *Laojun yinsong jiejing* 老君音誦誠經 (The orally recited classic of prohibition of Laojun), a compendium of the revelations that the Taishang Laojun bestowed upon the Celestial Master Kou in 415.²²

All these stelae usually consist of three figures, placed in a flat niche or simply in relief against a background slab, which is framed at the top by

intertwined serpentine dragons. The large figure in the middle, seated with legs crossed or tucked under him, has a tall cap on his head, holds a *zhuwei* in one hand, with the other hand held in various positions, and sometimes leans on a *yinji*. The side figures, smaller and often roughly executed, again wear tall caps and stand in secular costume with arms folded. The spaces around the background slab or niche are filled with accessory ornaments, frequently including circular emblems, which in some cases contain a bird or toad, indicating that they represent the sun and moon. Similar iconography appears on a number of monumental stelae executed during the fifth and sixth centuries. The earliest known extant stele associated with such iconography dates to the first year of Shiguang (424) by inscription.²³ On the front of that stele, a Daoist deity and the Buddha Sakyamuni sit side by side inside a shallow niche (fig. 8). The Daoist figure on viewers' left wears a Han-style robe with long sleeves. His raised right hand holds a *zhuwei*.

Such scholars as Osvald Sirén and Matsubara Saburō maintain that Daoists used Buddhist iconography, adapting it to their own purposes when they made religious images: "The Daoists tried to make up for their want of a specific iconography by borrowing from the Buddhists."²⁴ Similarly, later scholars propose that Daoist sculpture was influenced by Buddhist models of the same period, which were crude imitations of their Indian prototypes. Jean M. James comments, "Carvers of Daoist images borrowed freely from Buddhist works";²⁵ Yoshiko Kamitsuka remarks, "Taoist steles and images, it seems, were thus primarily an offshoot of Buddhist sculptural activity in the North."²⁶ Wu Hung asserts that Daoists used Buddhist iconography in the design of the large figures carved in cliffs at Mount Kongwang in Jiangsu, which date to the second and third centuries A.D.²⁷ I believe such views represent an oversimplification.

It is true that there is ample evidence for an intermingling of Daoist and Buddhist ideas and imagery in the sculptures of the Northern Dynasties, whether products of the interaction between Daoist and Buddhist texts or of the influence of Buddhist images on Daoist types, or indeed that of

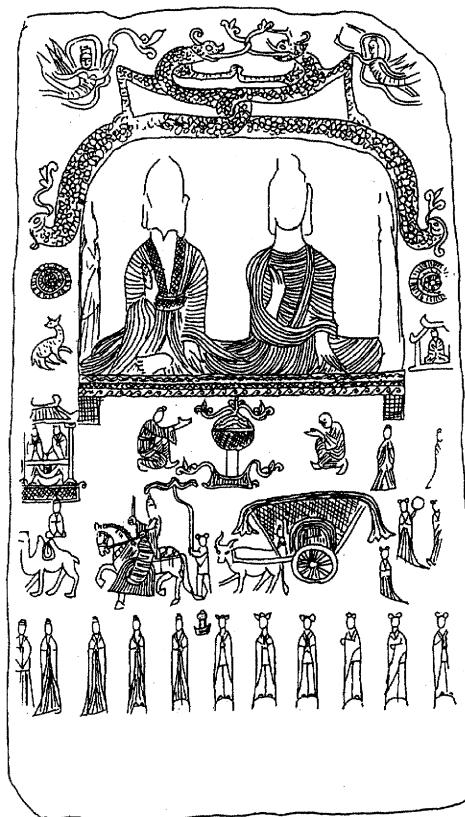


FIG. 8.
Line drawing of the front side of Buddhist/Daoist stele dedicated by Wei Wenlang family, dated A.D. 424, height 131 cm, width 72–66 cm, Yaoxian Museum, Yaoxian, Shaanxi.

Daoist images on Buddhist types. Yet the typical Daoist icons of the period, examined above, did not generally correspond in either configuration or iconography to any known examples of Buddhist art in or beyond China, least of all to Buddhist images from India.²⁸ Furthermore, these sculptures were essentially made in accordance with prevailing religious iconography and hence lack signs of individual creativity. Although there are minor differences among them, the forms are still dictated by an overriding artistic concept. Parallels among images of different periods, places, and artistic conventions suggest that their designers or carvers were following an iconographic formula or an earlier prototype.

DIVINE IMAGERY FROM THE HAN TO THE WEI-JIN

Tracing the early development of a particular form of divine imagery from the Han (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) to the Wei-Jin period (A.D. 220–420) will clarify the

FIG. 9.

Line drawings of the jade figure unearthed from the tomb of Prince Liu Sheng at Mancheng in Hebei, late second century B.C. (after Institute of Archaeology and Hebei Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau, Mancheng hanmu, 140, fig. 98).



FIG. 10 (NEAR RIGHT).

Stone statue of the Herdsman, height 258 cm, late second century B.C. (after Zhongguo meishu quanji, 2:pl. 34).

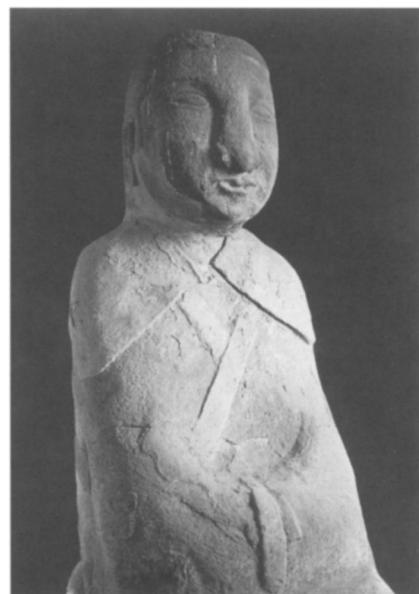


FIG. 11 (FAR RIGHT).

Stone statue of the Weaver-girl, height 228 cm, late second century B.C. (after Zhongguo meishu quanji, 2:pl. 35).

FIG. 12 (NEAR
RIGHT).

*Stone statue of male figure, height 174 cm, early sec-
ond century B.C.
(after Wenwu 1988, 5:91, fig. 1).*



FIG. 13 (FAR RIGHT).

*Stone statue of fe-
male figure, height
160 cm, early sec-
ond century B.C.
(after Wenwu 1988, 5:91, fig. 2).*

vexed question of the origins of Daoist iconography. During the Han dynasty, in Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Sichuan, Shaanxi, Henan, and perhaps all over China, a fairly uniform pictorial vocabulary was employed in divine art relating to the worship of transcendent beings, immortals, sacrifice to Shangdi 上帝 (Lord on High), and service to the dead. The origins of Daoist iconography can be detected in the following examples.

A small jade figure excavated in 1968 from the tomb of Prince Liu Sheng 劉勝 at Mancheng in Hebei can be dated to at least as early as 113 B.C., the year of Liu's death (fig. 9).²⁹ The figure is seated *en face* with his legs tucked up under him (*jizuo* 跪坐) and hands leaning on a *ji* 几. On its base the figure bears the following inscription: "In virtue of the Old Jade Man, the Lord will extend life by nineteen years." This jade is unusual in its original location in the tomb (inside the coffin), its imposing frontal pose and iconography, and its accompanying inscription. The "jade suits" that encased the prince and his consort and were believed to prevent the decay of corpses have also been unearthed. Among a large number of other treasures from this tomb are a magnificent *boshan* incense burner, which has been construed as representing an intermediary realm between heaven and this world, and a pair of bronze vessels with an inscription that reads: "May you have long life without illness; may you have ten thousand years." All these factors suggest that the jade figure was a sacred deity with talismanic powers who would protect the prince and princess from decay and assure their journey to immortality.³⁰ If such an inference is valid, we can say that iconographically this figure greatly resembles a god and may have been copied from the large image of the supreme deity used in sacrificial ceremonies.³¹

In Chinese theology, a single supreme power, Shangdi or Lord on High, was accompanied by a multiplicity of lesser gods who could be worshipped simultaneously for different purposes. Two constellations were worshipped during the Han, principally by women, to assist them in the art of decorative floral needlework: the Herdsman (*niulang* 牛郎) and the Weaver-girl (*zhinu* 織女).³² A pair of huge statues resembling the two divinities is still

preserved in Chang'an county, Shaanxi province.³³ One, though seriously worn and damaged, obviously represents the deity seated frontally with his head apparently turned to the right (fig. 10). A better idea of the figurative format can be gleaned from the figure of the seated goddess, who conceals her hands inside long, wide sleeves (fig. 11). Scholars have concluded that the pair of sculptures may have been commissioned in 120 B.C., when Emperor Wudi 武帝 (r. 140–87 B.C.) commissioned a man-made lake, the Kunmingchi in Shanglin Park.³⁴ The statues were probably erected on the lakeside, as Ban Gu 班固 (A.D. 32–92) recounts in *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Han dynasty).³⁵

In addition, China has a strong tradition of using ancestral images in sacrificial and devotional ceremonies. A pair of over-life-size stone statues was excavated in 1985 at the village of Xiaoanshe 小安舍, near Shijiazhuang in Hebei. The male (fig. 12) and female (fig. 13) figures are seated in *jizuo* posture, *en face*, with hands raised touching their breasts.³⁶ Their proportions are distorted, with big heads on relatively small bodies. From a stylistic point of view, the sculptures certainly belong to the early Han period. According to some Chinese scholars,³⁷ they may be the ancestral images of Zhao Tuo 趙佗, the king of Southern Yue, and his consort, carved at the command of Emperor Wen 文帝 in 179 B.C., when he decreed that their tomb be erected in Zhaolingpu 趙陵鋪, located only 3 kilometers from the village where the sculptures were found.³⁸ Like the statues of the Herdsman and Weaver-girl, such giant sculptures—huge, frontal, and calm—are intended to portray divine beings that attract attention and command respect or inspire worship.

In *Lunheng* 論衡 (Balanced discussions), Wang Chong 王充 (A.D. 27–ca. 97) tells the story of Jin Ridi 金日磾, the princely heir of King Xiu Tu 休屠, who went with his mother to submit to the Han. A few years later he achieved the rank of chief commandant of the cavalry. When his mother died, Emperor Wudi ordered her portrait to be painted in the Ganquan Palace with the inscription "Consort of King Xiu Tu."³⁹ On one occasion Jin Ridi accompanied the emperor to the Ganquan Palace, and as he stood paying his respects, he turned toward the picture and



FIG. 14.
Reconstruction of the stone relief from Wuliangci, Jiaxiang, Shandong, showing the story of Jin Ridi (after Feng and Feng, Jinshisuo).



FIG. 15.
Reconstruction of the stone relief from Wuliangci, Jiaxiang, Shandong, showing the story of Ding Lan (after Feng and Feng, Jinshisuo).

FIG. 16.
Drawing of the painting on a lacquer bowl from a tomb at Lelang in Korea, showing Xi Wangmu seated upon a pillar with an attendant, dated A.D. 69 (based on Harada, Lo-Lang, pl. 57).



FIG. 17.
Ink rubbing of a stone relief from Suide, Shaanxi, Eastern Han period (after Zhongguo meishu quanji, 18:fig. 83).



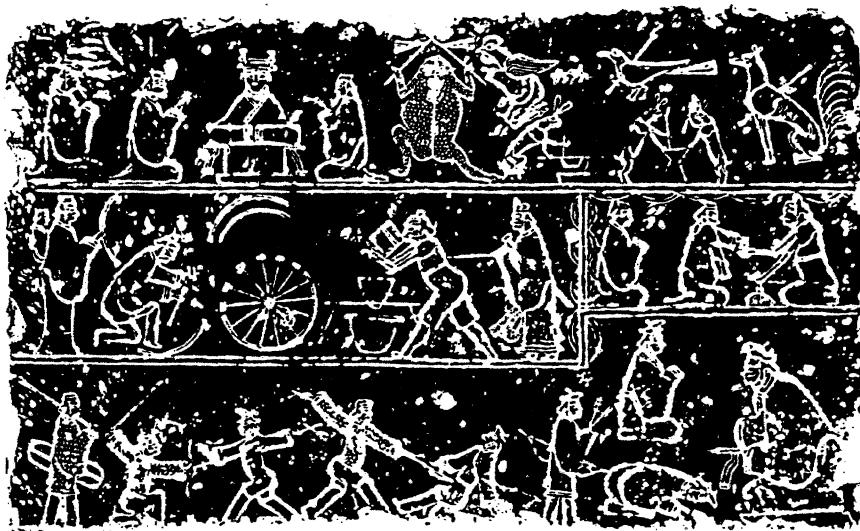


FIG. 18.

Ink rubbing of a stone relief from Jiaxiang, Shandong, Eastern Han period (after Zhongguo meishu quanji, 18:fig. 11).

started to weep, his tears running down his garment.⁴⁰ The scene of Jin facing his mother's portrait is found in *Jinshisuo* 金石索 (An index to bronzes and stone carvings), based on the stone carving of Wuliangci 武梁祠 in Jiaxiang, Shandong.⁴¹ The reproduction shows a portrait sculpture of a woman on the right, with Jin kneeling in front of her on the left to pay homage. She is represented *en face* on a pedestal with her big sleeves resting at the front (fig. 14).⁴² Undoubtedly, this posture and attitude are copied from the standard model for offering shrines within the royal family and would closely resemble ancestral portraits in the imperial Ganquan Palace.

Liu Xiang's 劉向 (77–6 B.C.) *Xiaozi zhuan* 孝子傳 (Biographies of filial sons) and other contemporary or later texts record a story from Emperor Xuan's 宣帝 reign (r. 73–49 B.C.) in which Ding Lan 丁蘭, from Yewang in the Henei district, carved a wooden statue resembling his deceased mother. He treated this effigy as if it were the living embodiment of his mother. If the effigy looked pleased when a neighbor came to borrow something, he would lend it; if she looked displeased, he would not.⁴³ In Sun Sheng's 孫盛 *Yiren zhuan* 異人傳 (Lives of extraordinary men) the statue represented not the mother but the father of Ding Lan.⁴⁴ The *Jinshisuo* contains a similar representation, after stone engravings of the Wuliang offering shrine. In this version, Ding Lan kneels in front of the wooden statue, and his wife kneels behind him.⁴⁵ The figure is seated *en face* (in

Ding's view) on a pyramidal pedestal (fig. 15). In position and attitude it is very close to the portrait of Jin Ridi's mother. Considering this story's wide circulation and its many versions, we may conclude that it was common practice to erect statues resembling the deceased and offer sacrifices to them.

During the Han dynasty, the idea of immortality became an avid national concern,⁴⁶ and the iconography under discussion found its fullest expression in the representation of immortal beings in many media, including murals, lacquer paintings, stone reliefs, clay tiles, and bronze mirrors. Xi Wangmu, or Queen Mother of the West, a goddess regarded as magically able to confer longevity,⁴⁷ and her consort Dong Wanggong 東王公, or King Father of the East, are the most popular deities represented in this art. One of the earliest depictions of Xi Wangmu appears on a painted lacquer bowl, dated A.D. 69, made in Sichuan province and found in a tomb in the Han dynasty colony of Lelang 樂浪 in Korea (fig. 16).⁴⁸ She wears a cap and sits facing forward, with a female attendant kneeling at her side on a spotted mat, which rests atop a flat-topped pillar. In a stone relief from Suide 綏德, Shaanxi, Xi Wangmu is depicted seated upon a throne, attended by several figures who present the branch of an herb or plant, which presumably possesses magical properties (fig. 17). A similar scene is represented in the relief from Jiaxiang, Shandong, which shows Xi Wangmu seated with hands leaning on a *ji* (fig. 18).⁴⁹

In Sichuan province, Xi Wangmu is always represented sitting on a seat formed by the bodies of two animals, their heads protruding on both sides like the arms of a chair, accompanied by other attributes. In some examples, there can be no doubt that the seat is formed by a dragon and a tiger. One of the most elaborate is found on a tomb brick from Xinfan 新繁, Sichuan (fig. 19).⁵⁰ Here the Queen Mother, accompanied by attendants and worshippers, is seated on a canopied throne with the head of a tiger on her left and the tail of a dragon on her right. This scene is organized in a tight hierarchical structure, like a religious icon. Xi Wangmu also appears on the west gable of the Wuliang offering shrines at Jiaxiang, wearing an elaborate crown (fig. 20) and flanked by four winged figures in long skirts, two of them soaring. On the opposite gable, two winged male immortals in short gowns flank Dong Wanggong. The one standing on the left holds an unidentified object in both hands; the other kneels and raises his right hand, paying homage to the god. In addition to these human attendants, both Xi Wangmu and Dong Wanggong are flanked by divine animals and birds.

Numerous depictions of the divinities survive in the form of mirror decoration. In addition to Xi Wangmu and Dong Wanggong, the deities depicted may also include *sanhuang* 三皇, the three primeval ancestors and legendary heroes, and *wudi* 五帝, the Five Celestial Emperors.⁵¹ As exemplified by figure 21, dated by inscription to A.D. 105,⁵² the three divinities on this and other mirrors are placed on seats, and all wear contemporary robes and three-pronged caps. They face forward, with faces framed by gently curved ribbons attached to their shoulders. In a type of mirror popular during the Jian'an period (A.D. 196–220), a number of seated deities are depicted in rows (fig. 22),⁵³ all wearing the characteristic large decorative collar. Such a large number of divinities assembled in tiers on one mirror creates an appearance of order, perhaps a vision of the immortals' world, Heaven.

Several characteristic attributes emerge from the iconographic evidence described above. Some of them correspond to descriptions in literature; others display the local style; and some concern

individual features of the statues. Thus, the central figure is represented (a) seated in a solemn frontal pose; (b) with a cap or headdress; (c) with voluminous robes in a noble style; (d) with hands concealed inside long, wide sleeves lying in front, sometimes upon a *ji*; (e) with two pairs of ribbon-like, gently outward-curving wings attached to their shoulders, which might depict cloud vapors (*yunqi* 雲氣); and (f) on a throne, sometimes resting upon a flat-topped mountain pinnacle, perhaps accompanied by a dragon and a tiger or displayed under a canopy. The attendants are (a) animal or human, represented primarily in profile and in smaller proportions; (b) standing or kneeling in respectful attitudes of homage; and (c) flanking the central figure. Furthermore, the pictures are symmetrical, with the visual focus on the divine image. The lesser deities or minor figures flanking the central figure establish the position of the major deity within the religious hierarchy. The solemn, frontal pose of the central divine figure would invite worshippers into a religious experience with their god.

This brief survey of the development of a particular type of divine imagery from the Han period reveals that Daoist figure types in the Northern Dynasties period evolved chiefly from the earlier imagery of traditional divinities.⁵⁴ The pose of the seated deity, *en face*, with symmetrically flanking attendants, recalls certain images of heavenly deities and holy ancestors, popular divinities such as Xi Wangmu and Dong Wanggong of the Han dynasty. The dragon and tiger—two of the symbols of the four cardinal directions—had been popular long before. Other auspicious animals like the bird, which has supposedly

FIG. 21 (NEAR RIGHT).

Drawing of a bronze mirror showing three divinities placed around the knob, dated A.D. 105 (after Umehara, Kan sangoku rokucho, pl. 6).

FIG. 22 (FAR RIGHT).

Bronze mirror showing divinities arranged in tiers, Eastern Han period (after Umehara, Kan sangoku rokucho, pl. 96).



FIG. 19.

Ink rubbing of the design on a pottery tile from Xinfan, Sichuan, Eastern Han period (after Zhongguo meishu quanji, 18:fig. 248).



FIG. 20.

Ink rubbings of reliefs on two gables of Wuliangci at Jiaxiang, Shandong, showing the paradise of Xi Wangmu and Dong Wanggong, Eastern Han period (after Zhongguo meishu quanji, 18:fig. 4, and Feng and Feng, Jinshisuo).



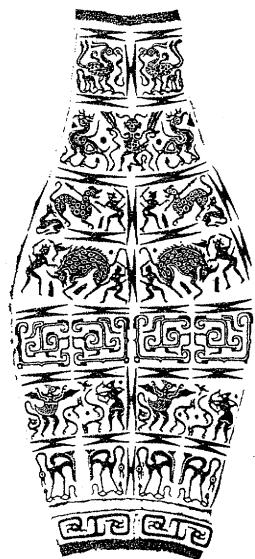


FIG. 23.
Ink rubbing of decoration on a bronze hu vessel unearthed at Liuligou, Henan, sixth-fifth century B.C. (after Guo Baojun, Shangbiaozhen yu Liuligou (Beijing: Kexue Press, 1959), pl. 93).



FIG. 24.
Ink rubbing of decoration on a bronze dagger-axe, Qi, unearthed at Jingmen, Hebei, fifth-third century B.C. (after Wenwu 1963, 1:64–65).

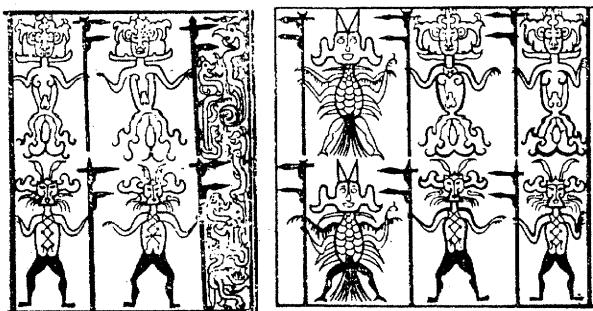


FIG. 25.
Drawing of the coffin painting from Zeng Houyi's tomb, Hubei, dating from 433–400 B.C. (after Archaeological Institute and Hubei Provincial Museum, Zeng Houyi mu, fig. 21).

functioned as either protector or communicator since antiquity, and ornaments such as circular emblems can be found very early in the decoration of bronze vessels. Such symbols, which recur in

early Daoist sculpture, reflect the strength of earlier beliefs.

In his illuminating study of the ideology of early Chinese pictorial art, Wu Hung labeled the frontality and symmetry of the carvings in the Wuliang offering shrine their “iconic composition,” in contrast to their “episodic composition.” He concluded that iconic composition in Eastern Han art, as represented by the Xi Wangmu picture in Wuliangci, was derived from Indian Buddhist art and became popular in the first century A.D.⁵⁵ The evidence provided above, however, strongly suggests that China had a religious iconography long before the arrival of Buddhism or the beginning of Indian influence. Indeed, the emphatic frontality and symmetry of the divine figure can be traced back earlier than Han divine art. Symmetry and frontality were typical principles of the decoration of Shang-Zhou bronzes, as illustrated by two late Zhou bronzes (figs. 23–24). Early examples appear not only on bronze vessels but also on jade figures from the Shang to the Zhou period⁵⁶ and in coffin paintings such as the one in Zeng Houyi’s 曾侯乙 tomb (433–400 B.C.), Hubei (fig. 25).⁵⁷

Unlike Wu Hung, I therefore conclude that Chinese pictorial art had a strong tradition of using a symmetrical and frontal composition to represent divine figures. This tradition stems from the early representation of heavenly spirits in late Zhou pictorial art and owes little directly to Indian influence. Moreover, it was the newly arrived Buddhist art that initially absorbed compositional elements from established concepts in contemporary Chinese divine representation to portray Buddhist figures, so that these foreign divinities could be viewed by Chinese devotees as sacred figures equal in stature to Xi Wangmu or Dong Wanggong and might thereby become objects of worship.

THE TRANSITION TO DAOIST IMAGERY

How did the Han imagery of popular divinities change into the later icons of organized Daoism during the Northern Dynasties? Obviously, change or transition in the iconography of religious idols must



be discussed not only on the level of art. It must have coincided with changes in social, religious, and intellectual practices. These interests are sometimes described in literary sources, but they are as readily discernible in the physical structure of the artworks themselves.

In the late Han period proponents of organized Daoism were searching for the magical elixir of life, for longevity and immortality. Soon Daoism acquired a cultic pattern, a supreme god, a canon of scriptures, temples, priests, and practices modeled on traditional Chinese popular cults. Although late Han sculptures that have been identified as Daoist are rare, several carvings dating from the late Han to

FIG. 26 (FAR LEFT).

Cliff sculpture of Xi Wangmu (X68) at Mount Kongwang in Lianyungang, Jiangsu, dating from the late Han to the early Three Kingdoms period (after Wenwu 1982, 9:66, fig. 1).

FIG. 27 (NEAR LEFT).

Cliff sculpture of Daoist deity (X1) at Mount Kongwang in Lianyungang, Jiangsu, dating from the late Han to the early Three Kingdoms period (after Wenwu 1981, 7:pl. 2:1).

FIG. 28.

Cliff sculpture of Daoist deity (X66) at Mount Kongwang in Lianyungang, Jiangsu, dating from the late Han to the early Three Kingdoms period (after Wenwu 1981, 7:pl. 2:2).

early Three Kingdoms period (second–third century A.D.), carved on the living rock in Mount Kongwang near Lianyun Harbor on the Yellow Sea in north-eastern Jiangsu province, are considered to have Daoist associations.⁵⁸ At this site, No. X68 shows an image seated frontally against a shallow cave on the uppermost of the carvings (fig. 26). The figure wears a cap and conceals both hands inside long sleeves. A carved lamp bowl in the terrace in front of the figure indicates that this image used to be the object of worship.⁵⁹ Both No. X1 (fig. 27) and No. X66 (fig. 28) show an undeniable similarity to No. X68 in pose but display more lifelike, humanized features.⁶⁰ They may represent Daoist deities—their divinity

demonstrated by the smaller flanking figures paying homage to them. Judging from these examples, the iconography of Daoist divine figures of the late Han still bears witness to the strong influence of the contemporary imagery of popular divinities. The familiar figural pose—seated *en face*—is recognizable as that of Xi Wangmu and Dong Wanggong and other popular deities in various media. The presence of animals follows the long tradition of depicting divinities accompanied by auspicious creatures. Certain well-known early or contemporary versions of such themes would have served as models, which in the more isolated art of the provinces might long have been reproduced with little change.

The quest for immortality and the practice of representing immortals in Han pictorial art was accompanied by a nationwide tendency to copy the imagery of divinities prevalent in metropolitan areas. Provincial artists followed metropolitan models in decorating tombs, shrines, and other structures dedicated to the divinities, with local people creating their own ancestors' portraits by copying the iconography of divine representations. This tendency can be easily detected in the so-called homage scenes in funerary art, in which the deceased is depicted as the principal figure, seated and receiving homage from descendants, former servants, and subordinates. One such scene is found in the main hall of an elaborate pavilion carved on a stone slab excavated at Weishan-Liangcheng, Shandong (fig. 29).⁶¹ Dated by inscription to A.D. 139, it depicts a couple sitting *en face* in cross-legged positions, elaborately costumed, with their large sleeves in front. Four men on the right bow toward the master while holding a *hu* tablet in both hands. Two ladies in beautiful dresses appear on the other side. The idealized architectural structure, stylized in sharp geometric forms, has many fantastic decorative elements. A similar scene is illustrated by a stone relief from Jiaxiang, Shandong, dating from the late Han period (fig. 30). In this case, the pavilion is guarded by a pair of dragons above the roof. As a whole, the scene shows a higher degree of compositional symmetry than figure 29 and thus more closely resembles a religious icon.

Similar compositional elements appear in a later Han tomb mural unearthed at Anping 安平 in

Hebei and dated by inscription to A.D. 176 (fig. 31).⁶² The deceased is depicted *en face*, seated under a canopy, surrounded by a screen and several attendants in secular costume. His raised right hand holds a fanlike accessory called a *bianmian* 便面.⁶³ According to the archaeologist, a *ji* armrest was originally depicted in front of him but is now worn away. Another similar homage scene has been found in a carving from Anqiu 安丘 in Shandong. The figure in this scene is seated upon a rectangular bench, or *ta* 榻, surrounded by a wind screen (fig. 32). One other homage scene, found in a tomb mural at Xianxian 夏縣, Shaanxi province, dates from the second century. The deceased's portrait occupies the middle section of the east wall, under a canopy, seated frontally (fig. 33).⁶⁴ He is depicted with a moustache and wearing a flat-topped cap. Much smaller figures on his right bow toward the master and pay homage to him. A similar homage scene is found on the main wall of a late Han tomb excavated at Xin'an in Henan. The deceased is seated in frontal pose behind a *ji*, his hands sealed in his sleeves (fig. 34).⁶⁵

Such homage scenes from the Han or post-Han period were found widely in China, and they are compositionally very similar to representations of divine beings. The standard design always contains the following elements: a single or double massive figure seated frontally in a pavilion or a wind screen or under a canopy, with hands concealed inside long, wide sleeves in front or with a raised right hand holding an accessory such as a *bianmian*, sometimes with a *ji* before him. Several attendants or officials, sometimes holding a *hu*, *zhuwei*, or other object, are depicted making gestures of obedience toward the central figure. An idealized environment consisting of such elements as fantastic architecture, elaborate decoration, or auspicious animals surrounds the scene.

The parallel between homage scenes and Han imagery for divinities suggests that such portraits of the deceased followed an iconographic formula from a then-current prototype. Such portraits sometimes became almost indistinguishable from representations of immortals.⁶⁶ In one case, a stone coffin in Sichuan shows the deceased wearing a *sheng* 勝 headdress, a well-known attribute of Xi Wangmu

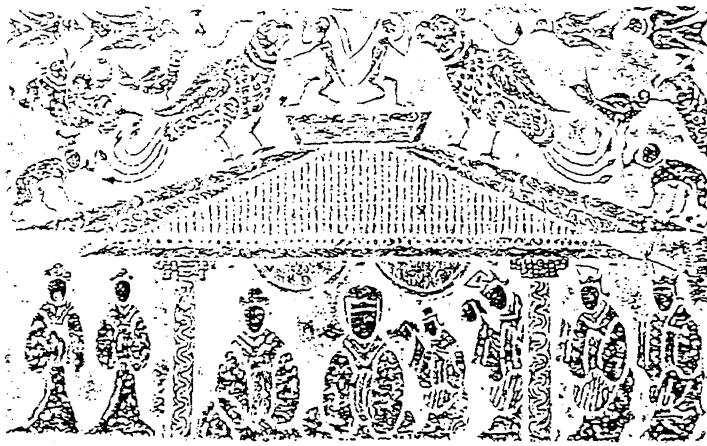


FIG. 29.

Ink rubbing of stone relief from Weishan-Liangcheng, Shandong, showing homage scene, dated A.D. 139 (after Zhongguo meishu quanji, 18:fig. 48).

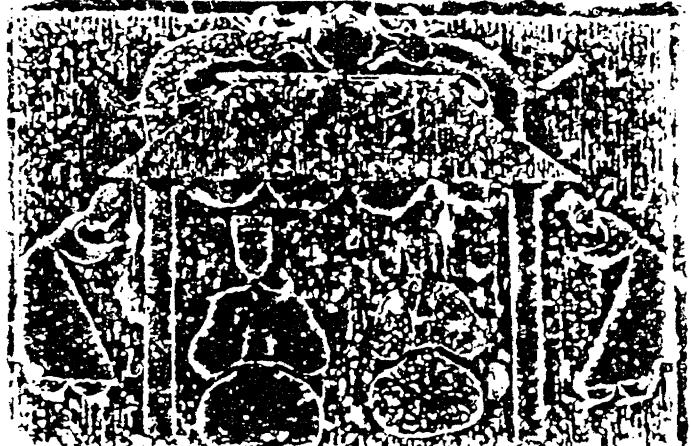


FIG. 30.

Ink rubbing of stone relief from Jiaxiang, Shandong, showing homage scene, late Han (after Doi Yoshiiko, Chūgoku kodai no gashoseki [Ancient Chinese stone reliefs] [Tokyo: Dohosha, 1986], pl. 141).



FIG. 31.

Drawing of tomb mural in Anping, Hebei, showing homage scene, dated A.D. 176 (after Hebei Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau, Anping donghan mu, fig. 40).

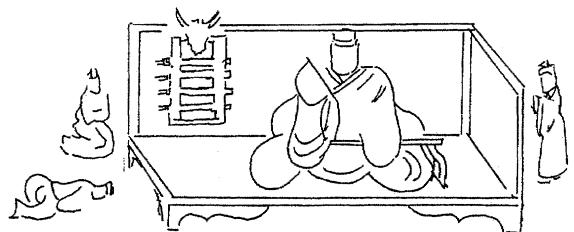


FIG. 32.

Drawing of homage scene represented in stone relief from Anqiu, Shandong (after Wenwu cankao ziliao 1955, 3, inside of back cover).

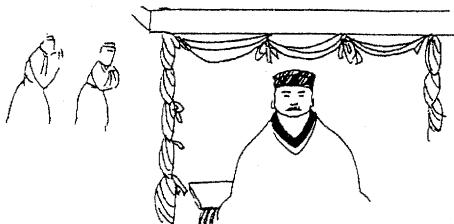


FIG. 33.

Drawing of tomb mural excavated in Xiaxian, Shanxi, showing homage scene, dating from A.D. 147–189 (based on Wenwu 1994, 8:39, pl. 12).

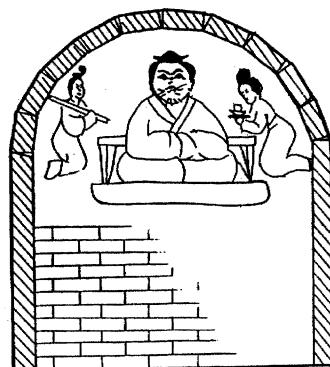


FIG. 34.

Drawing of tomb mural excavated in Xin'an, Henan, showing homage scene, late Han (after Huang and Guo, Yuoyang hanmu bhua, 192, pl. 5).

(fig. 35).⁶⁷ In one other homage scene from the Wuliang offering shrine, a principal lady flanked by others presenting their respects to her on the upper floor of the pavilion so closely resembles Xi Wangmu and her attendants that some scholars have interpreted the scene as representing the visit of King Mu 穆天子 to the Queen Mother of the West.⁶⁸

The most important stimulus for transmission of the models of the divine at the local level is the widespread desire for longevity and immortality. To the deceased, the tomb was not a replica of his previous life but an idealized model of the secular world and an imitation of paradise. In addition, the descendants of the deceased hoped their sacred ancestors would confer wealth, blessing, and longevity upon them. Therefore, even if those central figures did not represent such divinities as Xi Wangmu or Dong Wanggong, they still inhabited a realm above the real world. They were masters of the shrines or tombs, but in this context they had already been transformed into immortal beings.

The practice of copying current divine figural imagery to represent the ancestral image in funeral art continued after the Han dynasty. One example occurs in the tomb of a Chinese official, Dongshou 冬壽, uncovered in 1944 at Anak in Hwanghae province, now in North Korea.⁶⁹ Dongshou had served one of the Murong chiefs who were racial cousins of the Tuoba. When his patron was disastrously defeated in A.D. 336, he fled to the Koguryo kingdom, where he was welcomed and transferred his services to the Korean king. Since this king was an ally of the Eastern Jin regime in the south, Dongshou was given a long, Chinese-style title. He died in A.D. 357 after twenty-two years in Koguryo. His painted image on a wall of his grandiose stone tomb shows him sitting in a frontal pose in voluminous robes under a cloth canopy decorated with tassels; several smaller attendants are shown outside (fig. 36). He is depicted with a moustache and wearing a flat-topped official cap, with his raised right hand holding a *zhuwei* and his left hand resting upon a *yinji*. His wife is shown in smaller scale, seated in three-quarter pose under a similar canopy painted in receding view. According to Chinese archaeologists, the Anak tomb closely follows the model of the

Yinan tomb in Shandong in terms of stone structure, overall size, and multiroom plan. It differs in that it lacks a sculptured façade and is decorated with wall paintings instead of engravings. Clearly, Dongshou's descendants fashioned his tomb and his portrait following the pattern prevalent in central China. Similar homage scenes from murals of the Koguryo tumulus suggest that this imagery was popular during the second half of the fourth and early fifth centuries.⁷⁰ Two very similar scenes are found in tomb murals in Yun-taizi 雲臺子, Chaoyang (fig. 37),⁷¹ and Shang-wangjia 上王家, Liaoyang (fig. 38),⁷² both from Liaoning province and dated to the Eastern Jin period (A.D. 317–420).

Another homage scene shows metropolitan influences reaching Houhaizi 后海子, Zhaotong 昭通, Yunnan province, in the far southwestern part of China. Both the construction and mural arrangement of this tomb, dating to 398, follow the pattern current in northern China during the Eastern Jin. The deceased, Huo Chengsi 霍承嗣, a high-ranking official of the districts, is depicted in the center of the back wall, seated upon a rectangular bench, or *ta*, underlain by a toothlike decoration and “wearing a small cap and a deep red robe representing a Daoist garment” (fig. 39). His raised right hand holds a *zhuwei*, while his left hand touches his foot.⁷³ Larger than his attendants, he appears godlike—imposing, frontal, and static. The location of this tomb demonstrates that the theme and style of funerary art that had formerly flourished in central China had by now spread to remote frontiers.

The iconographic similarities of these examples from various regions suggests that there must have been a common theological ground, a popular prototype, a fusion of aesthetic values and tastes. Doubtless these tomb portraits of the deceased, like those of the late Han, were modified under the influence of a popular iconography, that of the immortals. This evidence further implies that, although at present hardly any Daoist icons of the Wei-Jin period are known, the paintings found in tombs may be closely related to contemporary Daoist imagery.



FIG. 35.

Ink rubbing of stone relief on one side of sarcophagus excavated in Sichuan, Eastern Han period (after Kaogu yu wenwu 1988, 2:pl. IV-3).



FIG. 36.

Line drawing of wall painting from Dongshou's tomb at Anak, North Korea, showing portrait of Dongshou, dated A.D. 357 (after Kaogu 1959, 1:27-35, fig. 5).



FIG. 37.

Line drawing of wall painting from tomb at Chaoyang, Liaoning, showing portrait of tomb master, fourth century (based on Wenwu 1984, 6:pl. 5:2).



FIG. 38.

Line drawing of wall painting in tomb at Liao Yang, Liaoning, showing portrait of tomb master, fourth century (after Wenwu 1959, 7:61, fig. 8).



FIG. 39.

Drawing of wall painting from Huo Chengsi's tomb at Zhaotong, Yunnan, showing his portrait, dated A.D. 398 (after Wenwu 1963, 12:1-6, pl. 1:1).



FIG. 40.
Homage scene from tomb in suburb of Luoyang, Henan, showing one attendant holding a zhuwei in his right hand, late Han (after Huang and Guo, Luoyang hanmu bihua, 192, pl. 5).

Although still reflecting a strong late Han influence, the iconographic formula for divinities of the Wei-Jin period differs significantly from that of the preceding period. Images of deities from the pre-Han period all appeared wild, with awe-inspiring features. In the Han, these images became conventionalized, and their wild characteristics were much less apparent. Such attributes as wings, which symbolized wild power, were transformed to *yunqi*, or vapors. But in the Wei-Jin period such wild attributes were completely eliminated. This change indicated a new attitude toward divinities, which can no longer be characterized as fear or awe.

The prevalence of the *zhuwei* and *yinji* in tomb portraiture of the Wei-Jin period and their rarity in Han divine art make it clear that changes in iconographic features are linked to cultural and social changes. A *zhuwei* is made of the tail hair of the *zhu* 麋, defined in the Han *Erya* 爾雅 dictionary as a deerlike animal. According to modern Chinese zoologists, *zhu* is a type of deer, namely *tuolu* 駝鹿 (elk?) or *sibuxiang* 四不象 in Chinese.⁷⁴ In general, a *zhuwei* is a small fanlike object with a handle made of a slim piece of wood or ivory and the tail hair of the *zhu* deer implanted on one end. The origin of the *zhuwei* is not clear, but it is already present in late Han texts and funerary art.⁷⁵ In an homage scene found in a late Han tomb in a suburb of Luoyang, Henan, the figure of one attendant holds a *zhuwei* in his right hand (fig. 40).⁷⁶

During the Wei-Jin period, when metaphysics preoccupied the country, *qingtan* 清談, or “pure conversation”—a special type of rhetorical discussion about philosophical and other subjects—was much in vogue among the cultured upper classes.⁷⁷ The literati and elite favored holding the *zhuwei* as an elegant accessory when they attended *qingtan* meetings, a kind of salon where they held their debates and displayed their ability to speak abstrusely and laconically.⁷⁸ Indeed, such pastimes reached beyond the gentry. The *zhuwei* became the favorite accessory of both Daoist practitioners and Buddhist monks,⁷⁹ even of army men. It is said that when Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (A.D. 181–234) directed a battle, he wore a brown kerchief and held a *zhuwei*, looking so smart that even his adversaries admired his gentlemanly demeanor!⁸⁰ In another case, general Wang Jun 王浚 bestowed a *zhuwei* upon Shi Le 石勒, a warlord and later king of the Late Zhao (r. 319–332) who has been described by historians as an ignorant man. Shi hung it on the wall and paid homage to it day and night.⁸¹ In this context, it becomes clear that it would not have seemed unusual for Dongshou and Huo Chengsi, both military officials, to be represented holding a *zhuwei*. Suffused with literary, social, and political overtones, this object replaced such Han attributes of immortals as *bianmian*, becoming the favorite accessory of deities in the Wei-Jin period.

The *ji* is another attribute that illustrates changes in representation of immortals from the Han to the Wei-Jin era. The function of the *ji*, not only as a piece of furniture but as an object imbued with ritual and political implications, had been recognized since early antiquity. During the Zhou dynasty, a special official was appointed to arrange for its use. The ritual text *Zhouli* 周禮 regulated how five different kinds of *ji* would be prepared for different ritual and political affairs.⁸² The jade *ji* was specially reserved for the Son of Heaven, providing him with an armrest and, more importantly, giving him a solemn appearance.⁸³ Zhang Hua 張華 (A.D. 232–300) later endorsed this function by saying, “A leaning-*ji* is in fact not used for leaning. Its purpose is to establish *li* 禮 (propriety).”⁸⁴ *Ji* was also a symbol showing rulers’ filial piety: the *ji* and *zhang* 杖 (walking stick) were given to the elderly by the court in the eighth moon of the year.⁸⁵ This practice, employed in the early part of the dynasty, established a cultural and political heritage that was regularly adopted by later generations. During the Han dynasty, while connotations associated with its *li*, or propriety, continued,⁸⁶ the *ji* became an object imbued with imperial honor, to be given by rulers not only to the aged but to other devoted courtiers as well.⁸⁷ In addition, a sense of mystery now accrued to the *ji*, which was associated with Xi Wangmu. Han literature and art represented the Heavenly Queen as seated leaning upon a *ji* and wearing a *sheng* headdress.⁸⁸ The *ji* also appeared in portraits of the deceased composed in imitation of imagery of the immortals.

But the *ji* in the funerary art of the Wei-Jin period and Daoist stelae of the Northern Dynasties differed from earlier examples. Whereas the *ji* in early Xi Wangmu iconography consisted of a rectangular tabletop with two rows of curved feet at its ends (fig. 41),⁸⁹ by the Wei-Jin period it had three curved feet supporting a long narrow arc-shaped rest (fig. 42). Such an armrest, now called *yinji*, became extremely fashionable during this period. To sit leaning upon a *yinji* while engaging in *qingtan* was thought to endow a man not only with a noble appearance but also with an aura of the spirit of antiquity (*gufeng* 古風). It is said that before Cao Cao 曹操 (A.D. 155–220) ascended the throne, when he

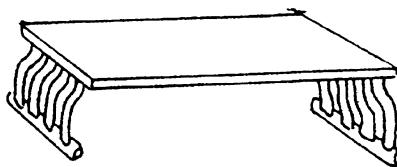


FIG. 41.

Line drawing of a ji, from slab carving of Xi Wangmu image excavated at Yinan, Shandong, late Han period (based on Nagahiro, Kandai gazo, 29, fig. 29).



FIG. 42.

Pottery model of a yinji on a bench ta, from tomb at Nanjing, Jiangsu, fourth century A.D. (after Wenwu 1979, 9:67, fig. 3).

conquered a city, he picked a blank screen and *yinji* from among the captured equipment, sent them to Mao Jie 毛玠, a famous scholar in charge of selecting officials for Cao’s government, and said: “You have the air of an ancient scholar (*guren zhifeng* 古人之風); I should give you this rare antiquity (*guren zhiwu* 古人之物).”⁹⁰ The poetic, religious, and political implications of the *yinji* must have continued into the Southern and Northern dynasties, as Cao Cao’s words were often repeated.⁹¹

Thus, the Wei-Jin transformation of iconography relating to divine imagery reflects current political, religious, and philosophical trends that led to a new social and cultural configuration, as well as to changes in art. The new iconography of divinities at once duplicated features of the *qingtan* adept and developed from earlier divine imagery.

These tomb portraits are iconographically very similar to the Daoist icons prevalent in the early sixth century, described above. Clearly the Daoist images of the Northern Dynasties grew out of early representations of the divinity and continued the iconographic and compositional traditions that already existed in the Wei-Jin period. *Zhuwei*, the favorite accessory of the *qingtan* adept, was now formally adopted as an important iconographic feature of the Daoist deity, not as an item of fashion but because of its leadership connotations. Since a *zhu* was believed to be the largest deer in a herd, the other deer would naturally follow the *zhu*’s tail when running.⁹² *Zhuwei* therefore became a favorite accessory for Daoists during the

Six Dynasties period (A.D. 220–589). According to *Jinshu* 晉書 (History of the Jin dynasty), the Daoist adept Wang Yan 王延 “always engaged in discussions about Laozi and Zhuangzi 莊子, and as he spoke would hold a *zhuwei* with a jade handle.”⁹³ *Zhuwei* was naturally linked with magic Daoist power. Wu Meng 吳猛, a native of Yuzhang豫章 near Mount Lu, was a powerful Daoist adept in the Jin dynasty.⁹⁴ On one occasion when he returned to his hometown on the Yangzi River, a huge surf was raging. He did not board a ship but touched the water with a *zhuwei* and safely crossed over on foot.⁹⁵ The biography of Zhang Rong 張融 in *Nan Qishu* 南齊書 (History of the Southern Qi) mentions that when the eminent Daoist Zhang Rong was a child, Lu Xiujing, the renowned Daoist master from the same hometown who had great expectations of him, left him a *zhuwei*.⁹⁶ Finally, in Daoist texts, the *zhuwei* had a touch of mystery. Tao Hongjing 陶宏景 relates in *Zhen'gao* 真誥 that, forty-four years after his death, Zhang Lu 張魯, the leader of Tianshi Dao, had his coffin forced open by a flood. The body was clearly alive; he walked out and sat on the bed, holding a *zhuwei* to cover his face, and smiled, then passed away again when people shouted at him. He was later reburied.⁹⁷ Perhaps from its associations with Xi Wangmu and with old age, *ji* or *yinji* derived a new symbolic meaning of recluseness and immortality, in addition to nobility, during the Six Dynasties period. It is said that “during his many years’ cultivation of the Dao, Ge Hong 葛洪 (A.D. 283–343) always sat leaning upon a *ji* made of white *wutong* 梧桐 (Chinese parasol tree). When he eventually ascended to heaven in bright daylight, his *ji* turned into a white tiger with two heads and three legs.”⁹⁸ *Yinji* was often paired with *zhuwei*. When Kong Zhigui 孔稚珪 (447–501), an eminent scholar and Daoist, retired from government to live reclusively, Emperor Gaodi 高帝 (r. 479–482) of the Southern Qi sent him a *yinji* and a *zhuwei*, nearly repeating the words of Cao Cao cited above.⁹⁹ Against the background of these legends, it becomes clear why *zhuwei* and *yinji* occupy important roles in the iconography of Daoist compositions and eventually became two distinct attributes of Daoist deities.¹⁰⁰

In arguing that Daoist imagery grew out of the experience of Buddhist art, some scholars have confused the *zhuwei* with the Buddhist fly-whisk. Nevertheless, a *zhuwei* in the Chinese context differs from the instrument held by a bodhisattva, or celestial, or those used in monastic life, a *fuzi* 拂子 or *vyajana* in the terminology of the Buddhist sutras.¹⁰¹ A *fuzi* is made of horse or yak tails or, as described by Xuanzang 玄奘, the eminent monk of the Tang dynasty, of Kaza grass. In Buddhist art, bodhisattvas are occasionally shown holding a similar staff, a fly-whisk that can be traced back to Indian art of the first century B.C. The Yakshi and Yaksha holding a fly-whisk made of a yak’s tail are not rare. The fly-whisk is, like the umbrella, a sign of honor; its presence suggests that these earth spirits were worshipped or perhaps stood as an honor guard for a shrine or a carved symbol of the Buddha.¹⁰² Xuanzang relates from another perspective how he found the Buddha’s broom in a monastery in the district of Balkh (*Fuheguo* 傅喝國). His description of this broom of Kaza grass (*jiashe-cao* 迦奢草), about two feet long and seven inches in circumference, with a handle (set with pearls), suggests that the broom has a longstanding history as a Buddhist implement and that it had largely the same design then as it has now.¹⁰³ According to J. Prip-Møller, the fly-whisk in Buddhist monasticism is a sign of leadership and a manifestation of the vow not to kill. It is used to ward off flies, mosquitoes, and other insects without killing them.¹⁰⁴

Broadly speaking, Daoist iconography was not derived from Buddhist imagery but sprang directly from an original Chinese prototype. Yet during the formative period of Daoist iconography Buddhist art admittedly helped move what already existed toward its culmination. Daoists adopted certain elements from Buddhist art because they were already familiar and because Buddhist beliefs and representations had merged with Daoist notions and indigenous Chinese motifs from popular cults. In addition, the changed style of drapery also reveals a mutual influence between Buddhist and Daoist sculpture. In this group of sculptures, note the design of the long, wide sleeves, which are mostly drawn in energetic curves and end in sharp winglike lobes,

spread out like pennants on both sides of the legs to very striking effect and in contrast with the lower part of the robes, which are stretched tightly over the legs. This elegant garment seems to reflect the contemporary style of Buddhist art, seen first in wall painting and developed in Yungang and Longmen in the late fifth century.¹⁰⁵

At that time, large-scale Buddhist sculptural programs were sponsored by imperial or noble families in or near the metropolitan centers. When the capital or one of the large metropolitan subcultures had developed sufficient political clout, its influence could spread into artistic affairs as well. Other regions would struggle to imitate its stylistic lead. The activities of the Daoist sculptor were no exception.¹⁰⁶

FUNCTIONS OF DAOIST ICONS IN THE NORTHERN WEI

Some scholars have concluded that Daoist art became fashionable during the Northern Wei dynasty when confronted by the competition of the foreign faith of Buddhism, whose missionary efforts were just then making great inroads all over China. While traditional Chinese scholarship puts forward the sociological proposition that people make images to protect themselves from war and natural disasters,¹⁰⁷ modern Western scholars assume that “The primary reason for Daoist sculpture was the desire to emulate the Buddhist popularity.”¹⁰⁸ Indeed, the fifth century was a particularly chaotic era characterized by famine, destruction, and heavy taxes, causing people to turn readily to the idea of a supreme god, the Laojun who would relieve them from their misery. On the other hand, the threat from Buddhism certainly gave Daoist art the impetus to develop and become fashionable, and the evolution of Daoist image-making paralleled that of contemporary Buddhist art. Yet it is not enough to emphasize one or two possible causes for the origins of Daoist images, such as social conditions or the impact of Buddhist art, while neglecting others, especially the demands of Daoist religious practices.

Thus the origins of Daoist images can be further illuminated by comparing the functions that

traditional divine icons served before Daoist and Buddhist icons appeared in China to those served by Daoist images. At the risk of oversimplification, the traditional sacred image can generally be said to have functioned in three ways. First, it might have talismanic qualities. That is, if people set up an image and performed a devotional ceremony, prostrated themselves before it and worshipped it regularly, the deity represented would protect them and their families from evil. This was the primary motivation for the ancient Chinese use of images during the Han and Wei-Jin periods.¹⁰⁹ Second, an image could be used to lure spirits, communication with whom might facilitate immortality. The belief in the power of images to produce practical results is demonstrated in a passage from Sima Qian’s 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記 in which the *fangshi* 方士, or necromancer, Li Shaowen 李少文 directed Emperor Wu (r. 140–87 B.C.) to build the Palace of Sweet Springs, which included a terrace chamber painted with pictures of Heaven, Earth, the Grand Unity, and all the other gods and spirits. Here Li Shaowen set forth sacrificial vessels in an effort to summon the spirits of Heaven.¹¹⁰ Third, an image resembling the sacred figures might encourage desirable behavior. Portraits wielded significant coercive power, presenting both ruler and subject with precedents to follow or to be invoked as admonitions against moral deviance. *Wuyue chunqiu* 吳越春秋 (The annals of Wu and Yue) relates that “Deeds can be represented in pictures; virtue can be manifested through sculptures.”¹¹¹ It is said that when Confucius visited the *mingtang* 明堂, or Bright Hall of Zhou, he saw statues resembling ancient sovereigns, sages, and other personages, each showing good and evil features and carrying consequences for the rise and fall of nations.¹¹² Virtuous or villainous rulers were either praised or blamed as a means of defining a universal moral code.

The advent of Buddhist art in China added a new function to the use of the holy image. Chinese Buddhists linked the use of holy images to their future life through *gongyang* 供養, or personal devotion (Sanskrit *pujana*), and *gongde* 功德, or

accumulation of merits (Sanskrit *guna*). The former referred to the act of setting up a domestic shrine, making offerings, and paying homage to the icon; the latter alluded to the act of donation by which religious monuments were erected and placed in temples or at street corners as public shrines. Both were based on the Buddhist notion that through these meritorious acts the donor earned remission of sins and acquired salvation for himself, his ancestors, and members of his family.

What was the particular Daoist, as distinct from Buddhist, use for visual manifestations of the divine, and how far did Daoists evolve during the Northern Wei from traditional ideas about the function of a divine image? To answer these questions, several factors need to be taken into account. Although by the third and fourth centuries Daoist religious art was for all practical purposes fully developed, it was not until the Northern Wei period that the use of images became popular in the north. In the course of this development, Kou Qianzhi's religious reformation played a key role.¹¹³

In a gesture that recalls traditional religious practices in China, Kou's Daoist reformation placed a high value on what he called *zhaigong libai* 齋功禮拜 (ritual and adoration). He told his disciples that Taishang Laojun had given him a message: "People on the earth are reaching a *kalpa*, and the preaching of the doctrine among them is very difficult. You have to persuade men and women to erect altars and shrines where they should worship morning and evening, as if a pious father (*yanfu* 嚴父) is presiding over them at home."¹¹⁴ The essential purpose of emphasizing such practices was to achieve personal immortality, as Kou proclaimed, "The perfect Dao of longevity is received from the immortals and Saints in the form of secret bequests which have never appeared in writing. If one does not participate in the *zhaigong libai*, and communicate with the spirits (*tongshen* 通神), how can one entice deities to descend on earth on dragons and escort one to heaven?"¹¹⁵ "The practitioners should burn incense, and engage their pious and pure minds. Eventually they will be aware of the interplay of their true spirits with the transcendental beings."¹¹⁶ Dedicatory inscriptions on many extant Daoist stelae

commissioned by ordinary adherents of the Northern Wei period confirm such a system of beliefs:

。。。 (姚) 伯多父母兄弟，妻息大小，尊道為主，學以長生，神仙為侶。。。所願如意，壽命長延。。。此種福□，長入天堂。。。 Boduo, his parents, brothers, wives, children and all householders, will worship the Dao, recognize its primary importance, and learn the way of longevity in order to be companions of the immortals. . . . May everything turn out as we wish, [especially] the preservation of life. . . . As the result of such blessings, [we] shall enter heaven forever.

—stele dedicated by Yao Boduo and brothers, dating to 496; Yaoxian Museum, Shaanxi province

。。。邑子茲茂盛，師徒普延年，同疇照劫壽，練質願更仙，皇帝統無窮，國與身長存。。。 May there be long life for all members of the *yi* commune and their descendants, may the life of teachers and their students be prolonged. . . . May they become immortal after they have cultivated their souls, may the emperor's reign be endless, may there be long life for the state and the individual.

—stele dedicated by Wang Shenjie 王神傑 and others, dating to the first year of Shengui [518]; Lintong Museum, Shaanxi province

。。。願張安世人身家眷，合無大小，無病少痛，延年益壽。。。 May Zhang Anshi himself and all householders of his family be without illness, may their life be prolonged.

—stele dedicated by Zhang Anshi's 張安世 family, dating to 518–520; Yaoxian Museum, Shaanxi province

。。。願合邑亡過師尊父母，長志天闕，托化紫蓮。。。 May all members of the *yi* commune, their late teachers and parents, dwell in heaven or in [the divine realm of] the pole star.

—stele dedicated by Qi Shuanghu's 錦雙胡 family, dating to the third year of Shenggui [520]; Yaoxian Museum, Shaanxi province

This emphasis on the function of divine images in personal worship and Daoist cultivation was not invented by Kou Qianzhi but was deeply rooted in Daoist religious ideology. Early Daoists believed that the body, like the greater world, was inhabited by a host of deities who corresponded to gods in the greater world. If the spirits left the body, a man would fall seriously ill. If, however, these spirits stayed in their place, it would be possible to achieve immortality. To summon the departed spirits back, adherents were instructed to hang images of corresponding deities in fragrant halls to encourage the spirits to reenter their bodies. Such practices must have been current in the area along the eastern coast of China where Grand Peace Daoism was dominant during the late Han, since they are related in *Taipingjing* 太平經 (Classic of the Grand Peace), the holy text of this school.¹¹⁷ In southwest China, similar practices were possibly also prevalent among certain circles of Daoists during the same period. *Laozi xiang'erzhu* 老子想爾注 (Xiang'er's commentary on Laozi) warns that “There is a false practice abroad of adopting a form of the Dao, describing its costume and features, as well as its size, in order to visualize it.”¹¹⁸

From then on, many Daoist writers applied themselves to establishing a theory of meditation and visualization. They believed that if the adept learned to visualize, recognize, and properly address the deities, he was entitled to ask them for blessings and thus prolong his life. “Maintain concentration and guard the One (*cunshen shouyi* 存神守一).” “Guard the One and visualize the True One; then you are able to communicate with the spirits,” announced Ge Hong, author of the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (He who embraces simplicity) and documenter of the occult tradition of south China.¹¹⁹ Through meditation and visualization, Daoists sought an interior, ecstatic vision that would enable them to visualize and internalize the gods. Such contact enabled adepts not only to obtain help in curing illnesses by driving away toxins or “evil spirits”

in the body but also to acquire an inner elixir through spiritual enlightenment, eventually producing within themselves an ethereal and immortal body. *Baopuzi* declared: “Through the practice of meditation and inner visualization, after seven days and nights, one shall see immortals.”¹²⁰ Among the gods, Laojun was paramount. *Baopuzi* described his appearance and costume, as well as those of the attendants around him, proclaiming that “The desire to see Taishang Laojun is achieved by concentration, inner visualization, and by chanting the name of Laojun” and that upon seeing Laojun, one’s life would be prolonged, ones heart would be as shining as the sun or moon, and one would obtain insight into all matters.¹²¹

Thus images of deities were designed to attract the corporal deities back to the body and to help evoke corresponding images in meditation. I propose that such practices promoted the transition from the earlier representations of divinities popular in various media to the small, domestic Daoist images used in daily religious practices. The early prevalence of displaying images for meditation and visualization in the areas along the eastern coast of China and in Sichuan adds credence to this proposition. It is commonly accepted that such Daoist movements were the prototypes of the New Celestial Daoist sect developed in the north under the leadership of Kou Qianzhi.¹²²

After Kou’s reformation, elaborate sacrificial rites involving charms, altars, and all the other paraphernalia of the Daoist arts in the north seem to have been emphasized. It was then that the use of images not of the popular divinities but of a deified Laozi and Tianzun first achieved great popularity in religious sacrifices or devotional ceremonies. As the author of *Suishu* 隋書 (History of the Sui dynasty) relates: “After that Daoist acts were practiced widely, and every emperor, when he came to the throne, had to receive a charm booklet, considering it an ancient practice. Statues of Tianzun and other divinities were carved and displayed at important ceremonies.”¹²³

Different kinds of Daoist adherents were doubtless motivated differently in their use of an



FIG. 43.

Line drawing of detail from lacquer painting on cover of wooden coffin, excavated from tomb at Guyuan, Ningxia, showing Xi Wangmu (left) and Dong Wanggong with the Milky Way between them, Northern Wei period (based on Wenwu 1984, 6:54, fig. 34).

icon of Laojun or Tianzun, since the new ideology of northern Daoism interwove a variety of traditional ideas. Many dedicatory inscriptions from Daoist sculptures show a pragmatic perspective: the prayers are concerned with temporal blessings, such as the wish for a peaceful life, good harvest, wealth, and happiness. Indeed, the ignorant might worship a Daoist icon as a talisman to protect them from evil or grant them great fortune. The man concerned with ethics might pay homage to it as embodying moral principles and encouraging better behavior. The profound believer might observe it as a tangible aid to identifying himself with the universal truth, the Dao, or its incarnations, the Laojun and Tianzun; meditating before such an image made the devotee one with the deity. The disciple who devoted himself to both Daoism and Buddhism might mix some of these motivations and further undertake personal devotion in order to accumulate merit. But above all, it was the

essential Daoist religious goal of achieving immortality and Kou's reformation that focused further attention on the Daoist arts. I believe, taken together, these forces are responsible for the rise of this type of domestic image during the Northern Wei dynasty.

The fact that the image was intended as the object of adoration and observation in daily worship, and as an aid to meditation and visualization, caused the icon to acquire a new seriousness and broader application as an instrument for religious purposes. Naturalism in these Daoist stelae is minimal, while clear-cut angles, geometric forms, and tense linear rhythms produce icons in every way suited to spiritual purposes.

Additional evidence for this point may be drawn from the evolution of the Xi Wangmu figure in this period. The familiar Han images of Xi Wangmu and Dong Wanggong continued to be produced during the Northern Wei period. Closely resembling contemporaneous Daoist stone works, a lacquer painting

on the cover of a wooden coffin dating to this period shows Xi Wangmu and her consort seated separately inside small pavilions (fig. 43).¹²⁴ Each is flanked by two attendants (the one standing to the left of Xi Wangmu no longer exists). In the middle of each roof ridge stands a long-tailed bird with outspread wings. Above the shrines and flanking the front end of the *tianhe* 天河, or Milky Way, are two circles enclosing a bird and hare, which are the popular symbols of the sun and moon. The combination of ideas from different religions and beliefs reflects the popularization of new phenomena during the Northern Wei period. Iconographically, the familiar Han format seems to continue: they wear tall hats and long-sleeved Chinese-style robes, with hands joined in voluminous sleeves. But in comparison with the previous compositions on the same theme, this lacquer painting appears more terse and refined, along the lines of an icon used for religious purposes.

Changes in format and iconography of the traditional theme of Xi Wangmu perhaps typify the transition from earlier depictions of divinities to Daoist icons of the Northern Wei period. Notably, Xi Wangmu and her consort were absorbed into the pantheons of some Daoist schools of the Six Dynasties.¹²⁵ Their images were now needed for meditation, visualization, and worship by Daoist adherents, so new variations were introduced, their format and iconography altered to suit new needs. □

Notes

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1. The term *Yuanshi Tianzun* 元始天尊 (Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Beginning) on Daoist sculpture first appeared in the 570s. The only example with this name in a group of more than eighty extant or recorded Daoist sculptures is a stele in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, dedicated by the brothers of Li Yuanhai 李元海 and dating to A.D. 572. See Liu Yang, "Manifestation of the Dao: A Study in Daoist Art from the Northern

Dynasties to the Tang (5th-9th Centuries)" (Ph.D. diss., SOAS, University of London, 1997), appendix 2.

2. See Ren Jiuyu et al., *Zhongguo Daojiaoshi* (The history of Chinese Daoism) (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Press, 1990), 199–229; Qing Xitai et al., *Zhongguo Daojiaoshi* (The history of Chinese Daoism) (Chengdu: Sichuan Renmin Press, 1996), 1:398–552; R. B. Mather, "Kou Chien-Chih and the Taoist Theocracy," in *Facets of Taoism*, ed. Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 103–22.

3. See Wei Shou 魏收 (506–572), *Weishu* 魏書 (History of the Wei dynasty) (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1974), 3048–55; Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643), *Suishu* (History of the Sui dynasty) (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1973), 1094.

4. For the Shangqing and Lingbao sects, see Michel Strickmann, "The Mao Shan Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy," *Toung Pao* 63 (1977): 1–64; Stephen Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein*, ed. Michel Strickmann (Brussels: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1983), 2:434–86, and "The Purification Ritual of the Luminous Perfected," in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 268–77, at 269ff.; Isabelle Robinet, *Taoist Meditation: The Mao-Shan Tradition of Great Purity*, trans. Julian F. Pas and Norman J. Girardot (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

5. Extant Daoist sculptures are rare (one specimen found at Chengdu in Sichuan dates to the Southern Liang period [502–557]; see *Wenwu* 1998, 11:color pl. 4:2), but abundant iconographic materials in the Daoist and Buddhist literature dating from this time make it certain that many existed.

6. For studies of Daoist stelae of the Northern Wei dynasty in general, see Matsubara Saburō, *Chūgoku bukkō chōkokushi kenkyū* (A study in the history of Chinese Buddhist sculptures) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1966); Arthur John Pontynen, "The Deification of Laozi in Chinese History and Art," *Oriental Art* 26.2 (1980): 192–200; "The Dual Nature of Laozi in Chinese History and Art," *Oriental Art* 26.3 (1980): 308–13; "The Early Development of Taoist Art" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1983); Ding Mingyi, "Cong Qiang Dulejian Zhou Wenwang fodao zaoxiangbei kan beichao daojiao zaoxiang (Catching a glimpse of the Northern Dynasties Daoist sculpture from the Buddhist/Daoist stele dedicated to King Zhouwen by Qiang Dule)," *Wenwu* 1986, 3:52–62; J. M. James, "Some Iconographic Problems in Early Daoist-Buddhist Sculptures in China," *Archives of Asian Art* 42 (1989): 71–76; Liu, "Manifestation of the Dao," 72–212; Stanley Abe, "Northern Wei Daoist Sculpture from Shaanxi Province," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 9 (1997): 69–84; Stephen Bokenkamp, "The Yao Boduo Stele as Evidence for the Dao-Buddhism of the Early Lingbao Scriptures," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 9 (1997):

55–68; Yoshiko Kamitsuka, “Lao-tzu in Six Dynasties Taoist Sculpture,” in *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching*, ed. Livia Kohn and Michael LaFargue (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 63–88.

7. Matsubara, *Chūgoku bukkyō*, 30; Omura Seigai, *Shina bijutsu shi: Chosohen* (History of Chinese fine art: Sculpture), 2 vols. (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankokai, 1980), pl. 621.

8. Wang Chang 王昶 (1725–1806), *Jinshi cuibian* 金石萃編 (A concise collection of bronzes and stone carvings) (Beijing: Jingxuntang, 1805), *juan* 27, p. 38. The inscription on this stele reads: 延昌二年 / 歲在癸巳，三 / 月卯朔廿九 / 癸未，相為眷屬，造 / 天尊一區， / 諸大小 □□ 從心。 / 息男胡女 / 息男舍 □ / 息女羅朱 / 胡妻楊興女。道士張相隊一心。 / 相妻她馳姬 / 相妻鄭 □□。 This and all subsequent transcriptions were recorded and punctuated by the author, with □ representing an illegible character.

9. Matsubara, *Chūgoku bukkyō*, pl. 60-b; Osaka Municipal Museum of Art, *Chinese Buddhist Stone Sculpture: Veneration of the Sublime* (Osaka: Osaka Municipal Museum of Art, 1995), fig. 89. The stele is in the collection of the Osaka Municipal Museum of Art.

10. See Hayashi Minao, *Shunju Sengoku jidai seidoki no kenkyū—In Shu seidoki soran* 3 (Yin-Zhou bronze studies: Bronzes from the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States period, pt. 3) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobun Kan, 1989), 420–21.

11. Leigh Ashton, *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Sculpture* (London: E. Benn, 1924), pl. 23-1; Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century* (London: E. Benn, 1925), pl. 128-b.

12. Ashton, *Introduction*, 61.

13. Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture*, pl. 129-b; Matsubara, *Chūgoku bukkyō*, 19, fig. 26.

14. Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture*, “Descriptions of the Plates,” 33.

15. Cf. Shen Congwen, *Zhongguo gudai fushi yanjiu* (A study of ancient Chinese costumes) (Hongkong: Shangwu Press, 1981), 138–45.

16. Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture*, pl. 128-a; Omura, *Shina bijutsu shi*, pl. 622. The inscription for this stele reads: 正光二年， / 四月戊 □， / 朔一日戊戌， / 造石像一 / 區。 / □舉 / 家口廿人， / 龍華三會， / 諸願在初首。

17. Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture*, pl. 125-a.

18. Such a design is also common in Buddhist sculpture, as seen in cave 13, Yungang; see Mizuno Seiichi and Nagahiro Toshio, *Yun-kang: The Buddhist Cave-Temples of the Fifth*

Century A.D. in North China: Detailed Report of the Archaeological Survey Carried out by the Mission of the Toho Bunka Kenkyusho, 1938–1945, 16 vols. (Kyoto: Kyoto University [Kyoto Daigaku], Jimbun Kagaku Kenkyusho, 1952–56), 10:pls. 5–6 and, for the outside walls of caves 11–13, pl. 83. These are traditional Chinese prototypes, which might have been inspired by the *lianqian wen* 連錢文, or “chained-coin pattern” with jade and precious stone inlays, known from the wall decoration of Han palaces. Citing southern literary evidence, Wai-kam Ho concluded that this traditional motif was probably adopted in the Six Dynasties in the design of bronze hangings and banners for Buddhist shrines and pagodas. See Wai-kam Ho, “Notes on Chinese Sculpture from Northern Chi to Sui. Part I: Two Seated Stone Buddhas in the Cleveland Museum,” *Archives of Asian Art* 22 (1968–69): 7–39, at 27. The inscription for this stele reads: 天和六年六月十 / 九日，道民侄元遵 / 導為先亡父 / 母造老君一區。

19. There was no such term among early Daoists of the late Han period. For instance, the Tianshi Dao in Sichuan referred to its followers as *mimin* 米民 or those of a certain rank as *jijiū* 祭酒. Such terms are found in Li Ying 李膺, *Shuji* 蜀記 (Records of Shu), cited by Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) in *Erjiao lun* 二教論 (Discussions on the two religions); see Daoxuan, *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (The anthology to magnify and illuminate the Dharma), *juan* 8, in *Taishō shinshū Taizōkyō* (The Tripitaka in Chinese), ed. J. Takakusa and K. Watanabe (Tokyo, 1927), 52:536. Cf. Chen Shou 陳壽 (233–297), *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (History of the Three Kingdoms period) (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1959), “Biography of Zhang Lu.”

20. Duan Fang (1861–1911), *Taozai cangshiji* (Records of the stone carvings in the Tao studio collection) (Shanghai, 1909), *juan* 15. Wang, *Jinshi cuibian*, *juan* 35, offers another example of *Liu daomin* from the Jin era, but his sources are unclear.

21. Lu Xiujing, *Lu xiasheng daomen kelue* 陸先生道門科略 (Master Lu’s abbreviated classification of Daoist rites), in *Daostist Cannon Zhengtong daozang*, comp. 1445, suppl. 1607 (rpt. Shanghai: Hanfenlou, 1923–26; Taipei, 1962), 761:7a. The earlier example can also be seen in a title deed for land (A.D. 470) preserved in a text entitled *Guilin* 桂林, in which the owner also called himself *daomin*. See Chen Yuan et al., ed., *Daojia jinshi lue* (A concise collection of inscriptions on Daoist bronzes and stone carvings) (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1988), 12.

22. See Yang Liansheng, ed. and annot., “*Laojun yinsongjiejing jiaoshi* (Annotated *Laojun yinsongjiejing*)”, *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica, Taipei* 28A (1956): 17–54, at 45.

23. The stele, now in the Yaoxian Museum, Shaanxi, is dedicated by the Wei Wenlang 魏文朗 family.

24. See Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture*, 51.

25. James, "Some Iconographic Problems," 72.
26. The view was generally shared by Western and Chinese scholars; see Matsubara, *Chūgoku bukkyō*, 29–36; Ding, "Cong Qiang Dule jian Zhou Wenwang," 52–62; James, "Some Iconographic Problems," 73; Yoshiko, "Lao-tzu in Six Dynasties Taoist Sculpture," 66.
27. Wu Hung, "Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art," *Artibus Asiae* 47 (1987): 263–303.
28. The Buddhist sage Vimalakirti is an exception. In Buddhist art of the fifth and sixth centuries, this figure shows an undeniable similarity in iconography to these Daoist deities. For the view that the iconography of this figure was modified under the influence of popular imagery of the immortals and Daoist divinities, see Liu Yang, "Leaning upon an Armrest: Gu Kaizhi's Vimalakirti and a Popular Daoist Iconographic Formula," in *The Admonitions Scroll: Ideals of Etiquette, Art and Empire from Early China*, ed. Shane McCausland (London: British Museum and Percival David Foundation, forthcoming).
29. Institute of Archaeology and Hebei Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau, *Mancheng hanmu fajue baogao* (A report on the excavation of the Han tomb in Mancheng), 2 vols. (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1980), 140, fig. 98.
30. For a description and discussion of jade suits and their ideological and ritual meaning, see Edmund Capon, *Princes of Jade* (London: Cardinal, 1973). According to Ge Hong (ca. A.D. 280–340), during the reign of Emperor Jing 景帝 of the Wu kingdom (r. 258–280), soldiers unearthed a tomb in Jiangling (in present-day Nanjing) in which they found a jade figure held in the deceased's arm. Ge commented, "The function of such a practice was to protect the deceased from decay with the aid of the jade figure." See Wang Ming 王明, ed. and annot., *Baopuzi* (He who embraces simplicity) (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1980), 332.
31. The sacrificial offering to Shangdi or Taiyi 太一 (Grand Unity) in Han times was accompanied by the display of images. *Shiji* relates that Emperor Wu "built the Ganquan Palace, in which was a storied chamber painted with pictures of Heaven, Earth, the Grand Unity, and all the other gods and spirits." See Sima Qian, *Shiji* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962), 1355–1404. Jeffrey Riegel, "Kou-Mang and Ju-shou," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 5 (1989–90): 80–83, considers this jade figure the earliest representation of Dong Wanggong.
32. By the time the sacrificial odes of the *Shijing* 詩經 were collected, the story of the Herdsman and the Weaver-girl had already emerged, as seen in "Dadong 大東" of the Xiaoya 小雅 section. During the Han dynasty the story was a popular motif in both literature and art. For the story, see Yuan Ke, *Shenhua xuanyi baiti* (A hundred ancient myths interpreted in modern language) (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Press, 1980), 83–88. See also E. T. C. Werner, *Myths and Legends of China* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1922), 18–91.
33. Editorial Committee for Treasures of Chinese Arts, ed., *Zhongguo meishu quanji* (Treasures of Chinese arts), 60 vols. (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1985–89), vol. 2: *Sculpture*, pls. 34–35.
34. Gu Tiefu, "Xi'an fujin suojian de Xi Han shidiao yishu (The art of Western Han stone carvings preserved at the area around Xi'an)," *Wenwu cankao ziliao* 11 (1955): 3–11; Shaanxi Provincial Museum, ed., *Xi'an lishi shulue* (A concise history of Xi'an) (Xi'an: Shaanxi Renmin Press, 1959), chaps. 3, 5.
35. See Ban Gu, "Xidufu 西都賦 (An essay on the western capital)," in Fan Ye 范曄 (398–445), *Houhanshu* 後漢書 (History of the later Han) (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1965), 1348. See also Zhang Heng 張衡 (A.D. 78–139), *Xijingfu* 西京賦 (An essay on the western capital)," in *Zhaoming wenxuan* 昭明文選 (Anthology of essays selected by the prince Zhaoming), ed. Xiao Tong 蕭統 (A.D. 501–531) (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1985), 36.
36. *Wenwu* 1988, 5:91, figs. 1–2.
37. Tang Chi, "Zhongguo shiqian zhi Qin-Han de shidiao-yishu (The art of sculpture in China from the prehistoric period to the Qin-Han dynasties)," in *Ancient Chinese Buddhist Sculpture: The C. K. Chan Collection*, ed. C. K. Chan (Taipei, 1989), 213–18, at 216.
38. Sima, *Shiji*, 2970; Ban Gu, *Hanshu* (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1962), 3849.
39. The story of the famous golden statue captured by the Han general Huo Qubing 霍去病 in the region of Kara-nor also relates to Xiu Tu. In the earliest sources this statue is called "the golden man [used by] the King of Xiu Tu in sacrificing to Heaven." See Sima, *Shiji*, juan 18; Ban, *Hanshu*, juan 68 and 94.
40. Wang Chong, *Lunheng*, ed. and annot. Liu Pansui (Beijing: Guji Press, 1957), 331. Cf. Alfred Forke, *Lun-heng* (rpt. New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1962), 354–55. The same story is recorded in great detail in Ban, *Hanshu*, 2959–60.
41. The original carving of the story in Wuliangci is seriously damaged. According to a surviving cartouche, the missing image is a portrait of Jin's father, the King of Xiu Tu. Apparently the designer of Wuliangci deliberately altered the identity of the deceased from female to male. The *Jinshisuo*'s reproduction agrees more with the literary record than with the original Wuliangci carving. Cf. Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 298.
42. Feng Yunpeng 馮雲鵬 and Feng Yunyuan 馮雲鶴, *Jinshisuo* (Shanghai: Wenxin ju, 1821), *Shisuo* 石索 (Section on stone carvings), 3:10.

43. Liu Xiang's text is preserved in *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Imperially reviewed encyclopedia of the Taiping era), comp. Li Fang 李昉 (925–996) et al. (983; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1960), *juan* 396, p. 1832. Other versions of the story appear in Gan Bao 千寶 (active ca. A.D. 350), *Soushenji* 搜神記 (In search of the sacred), ed. and annot. Wang Shaoying (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1979), 249.
44. This record is quoted in *Taiping yulan*, *juan* 1909. For Sun Sheng (fourth century A.D.), see Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578–648), *Jinshu* (History of the Jin dynasty) (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1974), 2147.
45. An inscription above the statue indicates the picture's content: "Ding Lan: / When both his parents passed away, / He erected a wooden statue resembling his father. / A neighbor came to borrow something; / Only after having reported [to the statue] did [he] lend it [to the person]." See Feng and Feng, *Jinshisuo, Shisuo*.
46. On the Han quest for immortality, see Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1979) and *Chinese Ideas of Life and Death: Faith, Myth and Reason in the Han Period* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1982); Yu Yingshi, "Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25 (1964–65): 80–120.
47. The earliest reference to this belief is in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, which relates that the ancient hero Yi 羿 obtained this drug from Xi Wangmu, but his wife stole it and flew away with it to the moon. See Liu An 劉安 (?–122 B.C.), *Huainanzi*, annot. Liu Wendian (Shanghai: Shangwu Press, 1926), *juan* 8.
48. Yoshito Harada, *Lo-Lang: A Report on the Excavation of Wang Hsu's Tomb in the "Lo-Lang" Province* (Tokyo: Toko-Shoin, 1930), pl. 57.
49. Shandong Provincial Museum and Shandong Provincial Institute of Archaeology and Cultural Relics, *Shandong huaxiangshi xuanji* (Selection of the stone reliefs from Shandong) (Jinan: Qilu shushe Press, 1982), fig. 181.
50. *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, vol. 18: *Painting*, fig. 248.
51. For a comprehensive study of the *sanhuang* and *wudi*, see Gu Jiegang and Yang Xiangkui, *Sanhuang kao* (A study of San-huang) (Beijing: Harvard and Yanjing Institute, 1936).
52. Umehara Sueji, *Kan sangoku rokuchō kinen kyo zusetzu* (Selection of dated bronze mirrors of the Han, Three Kingdoms, and Six Dynasties period) (Kyoto: Imperial University, 1944), pl. 5.
53. Umehara Sueji, *O-Bei ni okeru Shina kokyo* (Selected relics of ancient Chinese bronze from collections in Europe and America) (Osaka: Yamanaka & Co., 1933), pl. 96. The mirror is in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
54. For a more detailed survey, see Liu, "Manifestation of the Dao," 1–70.
55. Wu Hung, *Wu Liang Shrine*, 133–41.
56. See Hayashi, *Shunju Sengoku jidai seidoki no kenkyū*, 305, fig. 11–8. For more examples, see Jessica Rawson, *Chinese Jade: From the Neolithic to the Qing* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), 43, fig. 31a–d; 282, pl. 19:1 and fig. 1. Apart from pictorial materials found in central China, the 1986 discovery of a number of bronze heads and a complete figure of the late Shang period in Sanxingdui, Guanghan, Sichuan, further supports this long tradition of iconic composition. Yet, as many scholars agree, the range and type of items found in the Sanxingdui sacrificial pits belonged to a culture whose beliefs and practices were quite unlike anything known to date. The evidence found at Sanxingdui is therefore excluded from this study.
57. Archaeological Institute and Hubei Provincial Museum, *Zeng Houyi mu* (The tomb of Marquis Zeng) (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1989), fig. 21.
58. Lianyungang Municipal Museum, "Lianyungang shi Kongwangshan moya zaoxiang diaocha baogao (An investigative report on the cliff sculptures in Mount Kongwang, Lianyungang)," *Wenwu* 1981, 7:1–7, fig. 1. Most of the 105 figures have been identified as Buddhist. This area, the sea coast at the border of present-day Shandong and Jiangsu provinces, was where *fangshi* and the school of immortality, as well as religious Daoism, originated and flourished. Around the end of the second century Taiping Dao came to dominate this area, followed during the Wei-Jin period by the Celestial Master sect, or Tianshi Dao. According to Chen Yinke, more than 90 percent of the followers of this sect were either natives of the coastal area or came from families living there. See Chen Yinke, "Tianshidaoyu binghai diyu zhi guanxi (The relation of Tianshi Dao to the eastern coastal districts)," *Chen Yinke xiansheng quanji* (Complete works of Mr. Cheng Yinke) (Taipei: Jiusi Press, 1977), 1:365–404. *Suishu* also states: "Followers of the Celestial Master sect are increasingly numerous as one reaches the Three Wu and coastal areas." See Wei, *Suishu*, 1094. Moreover, the Donghai district, where Mount Kongwang is located, was especially dominated by Daoism. Ge Hong, the most important Daoist personality of the time, was born in this region. The most convincing evidence relating the Mount Kongwang carvings to Daoism is the Temple of the Divine Master of the East Sea, whose name occurs frequently in important Daoist works such as the *Taipingjing* (The classic of the peace) and Tao Hongjing's 陶弘景 (465–536) *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 (Secret teaching for ascending to immortality) and *Zhen'gao* (Declarations of the perfected). Although now lost, this temple used to be located at the foot of Mount Kongwang. See Ding Yizhen, "Kongwangshan beiban keshi

kao (An investigation of the *beiban* carvings in Mount Kongwang)," *Wenwu* 1984, 8:30–33. Scholars believe that some of the carvings on the rocky cliffs of Mount Kongwang were related to this Daoist temple. See Yu Weichao and Xin Lixiang, "Kongwangshan moyao zaoxiang de niandai kaocha (A study of the date of the cliff sculptures at Mt. Kongwang)," *Wenwu* 1981, 7:8–15.

59. Because of the toad-shaped stone in the right foreground and bird-shaped stone in the left foreground, some Chinese scholars believe that this figure represents Xi Wangmu. See Li Hongfu, "Kongwangshan zaoxiang zhong bufeng ticai de kao ding (An interpretation of some cliff sculptures at Mt. Kongwang)," *Wenwu* 1982, 9:66, fig. 1.

60. *Wenwu* 1981, 7:pl. 2-1, 2.

61. *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, vol. 18: *Painting*, pl. 48.

62. Hebei Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau, *Anping donghan mu bihuamu* (Murals of Eastern Han tombs excavated in Anping) (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1990), fig. 40.

63. Yan Shigu 顏師古 of the Tang dynasty, in his annotation on *Hanshu*, provides an explanation of this object. See Ban, *Hanshu*, *juan* 76, "Biography of Zhang Chang," 3223.

64. Shanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology et al., "Shanxi Xiaxian Wangchun donghan bihuamu (The Eastern Han tomb and murals excavated at Wangchun in Xiaxian, Shanxi)," *Wenwu* 1994, 8:39, pls. 11–12.

65. Huang Minglan and Guo Yinqiang, *Luoyang hanmu bihuamu* (Tomb murals in Luoyang) (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1996), 181.

66. That is why J. M. James, "An Iconographic Study of Two Late Funerary Monuments" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1983), 84–91, identifies an homage scene on the west wall of the tomb at Feicheng, Shandong, as representing the life of the next world.

67. *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1988, 2:pl. 4:3. The *sheng*, or characteristic headdress, is one of Xi Wangmu's most important attributes; see Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, 104–5.

68. S. W. Bushell, *Chinese Art* (London: Board of Education, 1910), 1:fig. 16, legend. The homage scene is also illustrated in Wu, *Wuliang Shrine*, fig. 73.

69. See Hong Qingyu, "Guanyu Dongshoumu de faxian he yanjiu (About the discovery and study of the Dongshou tomb)," *Kaogu* 1959, 1:27–35, figs. 5–6. See also Korean Pictorial Co., ed., *Murals of Koguryo Tumulus* (Tonggyong: Choson Hwabosa, 1985), pls. 1–2.

70. See Korean Pictorial Co., ed., *Murals of Koguryo*, pl. 54.

71. Based on Archaeological Team of the Liaoning Provincial Museum, "Chaoyang yuntaizi Dongjin bihuamu (Murals of the Eastern Jin tombs excavated at Yuntaizi in Chaoyang)," *Wenwu* 1984, 6:29–45, pl. 5:2.

72. Li Qingfa, "Liaoyang Shangwangjia cun Jindai bihuamu qingli jianbao (A brief report on the excavation of the murals of the Jin tomb at Shangwangjia in Liaoyang)," *Wenwu* 1959, 7:60–62, fig. 8.

73. This description is based on an archaeological report published in *Wenwu*, yet the accompanying illustration does not show such features as the *zhuwei* and the hands. See Yunnan Provincial Archaeological Team, "Yunnan sheng Zhaotong Houhaiizi Dong-Jin bihuamu qingli baogao (A report on the excavation of the Eastern Jin tomb and murals at Houhaiizi in Zhao-tong, Yunnan province)," *Wenwu* 1963, 12:1–6, p. 2, and pl. 1.

74. See Tan Bangjie, "Guanyu zhenjia shibuxiang (About the true and false Sibuxiang)," *Guangming Daily*, 31 March 1980, p. 4.

75. Li You 李尤, "Zhuwei ming 塵尾銘 (In praise of *zhuwei*)," in *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Collection of imperial books in four bibliographic categories), comp. Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724–1805) et al. (1787; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1988), 889:134.

76. See Huang and Guo, *Luoyang hanmu bihuamu*, 192–93, pls. 5–6.

77. For *qingtan* activities, see Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 1959), chap. 3.

78. *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (A new account of tales of the world) recorded many such stories. See Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (420–479), *Shishuo xinyu*, annot. Yu Jiaxi (Shanghai: Guji Press, 1993).

79. Replying to a query about why the *zhuwei* was always beside him, the famous monk Fachang 法暢 said: "The honest will not accept it [if I give it to him], the greedy will not be granted it, therefore it is always beside me." See Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554), *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Lives of eminent monks), in *Taishō shinshū Taizōkyō*, 50:322–424, *juan* 4, p. 2059. See also Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xinyu*, *juan* 2, p. 111.

80. Pei Qi 裴啟 (Jin dynasty), *Yulin* 語林 (The forest of comments), quoted in the *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Categorized collection of literary writings), comp. Ouyang Xun et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1965), *juan* 67; see *Siku quanshu*, vols. 887–88.

81. Fang, *Jinshu*, *juan* 140, p. 2722, "Biography of Shi Le."

82. See Zhouli, in *Shisanjing* 十三經 (Thirteen classics)

(Beijing: Guoji Wenhua Press, 1995), vol. 1, section 3.

83. *Shangshu 尚書* (Classic of documents), in *Shisanjing*, vol. 1, is a text compiled in the late Shang and early Zhou; it describes how King Cheng 成王 (r. ca. 1042/35–1006 B.C.), dressed in imperial robes, was seated leaning on a jade *ji*. See “Guming 顧命,” in *Zhoushu 周書* (Book of Zhou) section.

84. Zhang Hua, “*Yiji ming 倚几銘* (In praise of the leaning *ji*),” cited in *Taiping yulan*, *juan* 710, p. 3163b.

85. See *Liji 禮記*, section 8, in *Shisanjing*, vol. 1. The custom continued during the Wei-Jin period. Emperor Wendi 文帝 (r. 220–226) once showed his respect for an aged official by giving him a pair of *ji* and *zhang*. See Chen Shou, *Sanguo zhi*, *Weizhi 魏志* (History of the Wei dynasty) section, *juan* 2. In the Jin dynasty, a courtier named Wei Shu 魏舒 was too old to attend an audience with the emperor, so a *ji* and a *zhang* were bestowed upon him, and his absence from the audience was excused. See Fang, *Jinshu*, *juan* 41, “Biography of Wei Shu,” p. 1187.

86. Use of the *ji* was strictly regulated, with emperors using the jade *ji*, while lords and marquises used the wooden *ji*. See Ge Hong, *Xijing zaji 西京雜記* (Miscellaneous record of the western capital), cited in *Taiping yulan*, *juan* 710, p. 3163.

87. For instance, when Emperor Guangwu 光武帝 (r. A.D. 25–57) had just come to the throne, he appointed a courtier from the preceding emperor’s reign and bestowed upon him a pair of *ji* and *zhang*. See *Dongguan Hanji 東觀漢記* (The eastern lodge record of the Han dynasty), cited in *Taiping yulan*, *juan* 710, p. 3162b.

88. See *Shanhaijing 山海經* (Classic of the mountains and seas), annot. Yuan Ke (Shanghai: Shanghai guji Press, 1980). *Hanwudi neizhuan 漢武帝內傳* (Unofficial account of Emperor Wudi), cited in *Taiping yulan*, vol. 4, *juan* 710, relates that Emperor Wudi made a special golden *ji* on which to place the *Wuyue zhenxingjing 五嶽真形經* (Classic of the true forms of the five mountains) that Xi Wangmu had bestowed on him.

89. Nagahiro Toshio, *Kandai gazo no kenkyū* (A study of Han dynasty stone reliefs) (Tokyo: Chuokoronsha, 1965), 29, fig. 29.

90. Chen, *Sanguo zhi*, 374.

91. For instance, when Emperor Gaodi (r. 479–482) of the Southern Qi gave a *yinji* and a *zhuwei* to Kong Zhigui (447–501), an eminent scholar from a Daoist family, the ruler nearly repeated Cao Cao’s words. See Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯 (ca. 386–534), *Nan Qishu* (History of the Southern Qi) (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1958), *juan* 48, “Biography of Kong Zhigui.” For the association of the Kong family with Daoism, see Chen, “Tianshidao yu binghai diyu zhi guanxi,” 385ff.

92. See *Mingyuan 名苑* (The pleasure of renown), a text as-

signed to the Six Dynasties period, cited in Wu Ceng (Song) 吳曾, *Nenggaizhai manlu 能改齋漫錄* (Extensive record of Nenggai Studio) (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1960), *juan* 2, p. 36; Yu Xin 庾信 (513–581), *Yuzishan ji 庾子山集* (Anthology of writings by Yu Zishan) (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1980).

93. Fang, *Jinshu*, *juan* 88, p. 2290.

94. Li Daoyuan 鄭道元 (?–527) commented: “Wu Meng is the man who attained the Dao by hiding himself in a mountain.” See *Shuijingzhu 水經注* (Annotated classic of waters), annot. Wang Guowei (Shanghai: Shanghai renming Press, 1984), *juan* 39. Gan Bao recounted the same story, adding: “His art of the Dao became widely known.” See *Soushenji*, *juan* 1, p. 13. For an account of Wu Meng’s life, see Fang, *Jinshu*, *juan* 96. See also K. M. Schipper, “Taoist Ritual and Local Cults of the T’ang Dynasty,” in *Tantric and Taoist Studies*, ed. Strickmann, 3:812–34, at 814–16.

95. See Fang, *Jinshu*, *juan* 95, p. 5620.

96. Xiao, *Nan Qishu*, 374.

97. In *Daozang yaoji xuankan* (Selection of important texts from the Daoist canon), ed. Hu Daojing et al. (Shanghai: Guji Press, 1989), 591.

98. *Kuajiji dianlu 會稽典錄* (Canonical record of Kuajiji), a text compiled during the Six Dynasties period. Cited in *Taiping yulan*, *juan* 710, p. 3163a. A Southern Song (420–479) scholar-recluse, Shen Linshi 沈麟士, was also reported to have a blank *ji* and a zither as accouterments of daily life. See Li Yanshou 李延壽 (fl. 612–678), *Nanshi 南史* (History of the Southern Dynasties) (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1974), *juan* 76, p. 1892.

99. See Xiao, *Nan Qishu*, *juan* 48, “Biography of Kong Zhigui.”

100. During the Tang dynasty, the *zhuwei* was replaced by a scepter (*ruyi 如意*) or *zhang 竹* in some Daoist images.

101. Cf. Mizuno and Nagahiro, *Yun-kang*, Text, 2:89.

102. See Roy C. Craven, *Indian Art: A Concise History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 46.

103. See Xuanzang, *Da Tang xiyuji 大唐西域記* (Records of the western region of the Tang dynasty), *juan* 1, *Taishō shinshū Taizōkyō*, 51:872c.

104. See J. Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 84.

105. As seen in the painted bodhisattva figures in cave 272, Dunhuang, which is generally dated from the period of the

Northern Liang dynasty, before Dunhuang was conquered by the Northern Wei in 439. Cf. R. Whitfield, *Dunhuang, Caves of the Singing Sands: Buddhist Art from the Silk Road* (London: Textile & Art Publications, 1995), 1:11, pl. 6; 2:272.

106. For instance, one of the most popular types of drapery in Longmen, different from the early type in which the drapery is tucked in around the knee, is that of the cross-legged figure seated on a throne over the edge of which falls the skirt of his robe, arranged in elaborate folds and pleats. In Yungang, such figures apparently appear in certain late caves—for instance, on the west wall, upper niche, cave XXVI, and on the lower north niche, cave XXIX. See J. O. Caswell, *Written and Unwritten: A New History of the Buddhist Caves at Yungang* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), 62. Daoist sculpture seems to have followed this change in style toward the end of the second decade of the sixth century.

107. Wu Shanshu 武善樹 states that “Since the Northern Wei, the use of images had been growing, due to the continuous wars and natural disasters that occurred when Buddhism was first introduced into China. Therefore people gathered together to pray to Buddha in order to save themselves from death or being wounded. . . . Beside Buddha’s images, people also carved appellations, such as *yizi* 邑子, *daoshi*, as well as their grandfathers’, parents’, brothers’ and children’s names on the stelae, in order to seek blessings for their country and themselves.” See Wu Shanshu, *Shaanxi jinshi zhi* 陝西金石志 (Record of the stone carvings and bronzes from Shaanxi), in *Shaanxi tongzhi* 陝西通志 (Extensive record of the history of Shaanxi province), comp. Shen Qingyai 沈青崖 et al., *juan* 18, p. 18, in *Siku quanshu*, vols. 551–56. Wu’s comment also applies to Daoist sculpture.

108. See Ashton, *Introduction*, 63.

109. For instance, *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (Records of customs) relates that during the Eastern Han period people worshipped two divine beings, Shentu 神荼 and Yulei 謁壘, who were believed to watch and control demons. This custom originated with the Yellow Emperor, who had prepared a ritual in which large peach-wood representations of Shentuo and Yulei were set up, tigers were painted on gates, and rush ropes were hung up to ward off evil demons. See Ying Shao 應劭 (fl. 189–194), *Fengsu tongyi*, annot. Wu Shuping (Tianjin: Renmin Press, 1980), 306.

110. Sima, *Shiji*, *juan* 28, p. 1388. See also B. Watson, trans., *Records of the Historian* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 2:42.

111. In *Siku quanshu*, 463:68.

112. *Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語 (The family conversation of Confucius), ed. and annot. Chen Shike (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian Press, 1987), 11:72.

113. On the importance of Kou Qianzhi’s role, see Mather, “K’ou Ch’ien-chih and the Taoist Theocracy,” 103–22; Fukui Kōjun et al., *Dōkyō no kisoteki kenkyū* (A basic study of Daoism) (Tokyo, 1952), 1.

114. Wei, *Weishu*, 3051–52. The English translation is cited from James Ware, “The Wei-Shu and the Sui-Shu on Taoism,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 53.3 (1933): 215–50, at 233, with a small alteration.

115. See Yang, “Laojun yinsong jiejing,” 51.

116. Yang, “Laojun yinsong jiejing,” 48.

117. See Wang Ming, ed. and annot., *Taipingjing hejiao* 太平經合校 (Annotated classic of the peace) (Beijing: Zhonghua Press, 1960), 13, 21, 27–28, 292.

118. The text is assumed to have been completed by Zhang Lu (early third century). See Rao Zongyi, ed. and annot., *Laozi xiang'erzhu jiaozhu* (Annotated Xiang’er commentary of Laozi) (Hong Kong: Tong Nam Press, 1956), 18.

119. See Wang Ming, annot., *Baopuzi, juan* 18, p. 279. The term *The One* recalls the Han worship of the Taiyi or Grand One as the highest god. The practice is also the focus of *Huangtingjing* 黃庭經 (Scripture of the Yellow Court), a text mentioned by *Baopuzi*, and was known from the mid-fourth century on. Cf. Isabelle Robinet, “The Book of the Yellow Court,” in Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*; see also Stephen R. Bokenkamp, ed., *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 149ff.

120. Wang, annot., *Baopuzi, juan* 18, p. 279.

121. See Wang, annot., *Baopuzi, juan* 18, p. 296. For a discussion of this practice, see Ren et al., *Zhongguo Daojiaoshi*, 137–39.

122. After Zhang Lu’s (successor of Zhang Ling 張陵, founder of the Celestial Master sect) surrendered to Cao Cao in 215, he and many of his followers moved north. It is reasonable to assume that some of the members of the late New Celestial Master school might have been adherents of the migrants from Sichuan. Kou Qianzhi’s relation to the eastern coastal area can be gauged from the fact that he spent many years of his youth in Donglai (in present-day Laizhou, Shandong), when his father was prefect of the district. Cf. Chen Yinke, “Tianshi dao yu binhai diyu zhi guanxi,” 377.

123. Wei, *Suishu*, 1094. The English translation is from Ware, “The Wei-Shu and the Sui-Shu on Taoism,” 248.

124. The coffin was excavated from a tomb at Guyuan, Ningxia, dating to the Taihe 太和 reign (477–499) of the Northern Wei dynasty. See Cultural Relics Bureau of Guyuan County,

“Ningxia guyuan beiwei mu qingli jianbao (A brief report on the excavation of the Northern Wei tomb at Guyuan in Ningxia),” *Wenwu* 1984, 6:46–56, pl. 34; Patricia Eichenbaum Karetzky and A. C. Soper, “A Northern Wei Painted Coffin,” *Artibus Asiae* 51.1/2 (1991): 5–20.

125. For the relation between Xi Wangmu and certain Daoist schools in Northern and Southern dynasties, see Suzanne E. Cahill, *Transcendence and Divine Passion: The Queen Mother of the West in Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 32–58.