

*Narrating Transcendents: Gender in Chinese
Hagiographies*

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A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of McMaster University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Recommended for Acceptance
By the Department of
Religious Studies

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September 2014

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Abstract

Chinese people, like those of many other cultures, understand themselves as belonging to a specific gender, one with social rules and positions that can be difficult to stray from. Such gender norms have existed in China for millennia. There are a number of ways to examine what these gender norms are (or have been), and a number of ways in which one can understand how they dictated the lives of the Chinese people they defined.

The present thesis is a translation and study of two Chinese hagiographical collections from the late Song or early Yuan Dynasty. These collections detail the exploits of Daoist transcendents. The first collection translated is concerned with male transcendents, the second with female transcendents. In translating these texts, I seek to understand how gender is portrayed in the lives of exceptional religious figures. As an examination of gender within a patriarchal—or at least male-dominant—society, I expected the female transcendents to be relegated, somehow, to a lesser station.

Through my translations I argue that, though they could not wholly extricate themselves from gender norms, religious Daoism, as portrayed in the hagiographies, offered both men and women from certain social obligations. These social obligations include such institutions as marriage and reproduction (for both men and women). The hagiographies also depict a greater sense of equality for Daoist women than they might have found otherwise. At its most ambitious, *Narrating Transcendents* serves to demonstrate the multivalent function of hagiographies as tools religious communities used to define and guide themselves.

Contents

Abstract / iv

List of Tables and Figures / viii

Acknowledgments / ix

Part One: *The Supplement to and Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror of Transcendents Who Embodied the Dao through the Ages: Their Context and Implications*

Introduction / 3

Zhao Daoyi and the Hagiographical Tradition in China / 5

Terms / 9

The *Xubian* / 17

The Men / 18

Zu Shu / 20

The *Houji* / 22

The Women / 23

Sun Bu'er / 25

Conclusion / 26

Part Two: *Translations*

Conventions / 31

Supplement to the Comprehensive Mirror of Transcendents Who Embodied the Dao

through the Ages: Fascicle Five / 33

A1. Zhang Daoqing / 33

A2. Xie Shouhao / 49

A3. Primordial Lady Zu / 56

A4. Perfected Lord Wang the Official of Fire / 59

A5. Huang of the Thundering Abyss / 62

A6. Lei Mo'an / 64

A7. Mo of the Moon Tripod / 71

A8. Jin the Disheveled-Headed / 74

Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror of Transcendents Who Embodied the Dao

through the Ages: Fascicle Six / 79

B1. Female Perfected Qian / 79

B2. Cao Wenji / 81

B3. Transcendent Lady Zhao / 85

B4. Transcendent Lady Zheng / 93

B5. Liu Yan / 95

B6. Perfected Yu / 96

B7. Woman of Mo Prefecture / 97

B8. Transcendent Lady Yu / 98

B9. Transcendent Lady Zhang / 101

B10. Xu Daosheng / 102

<i>B11. Chen Qiongyu</i>	/	103
<i>B12. Madam Wu</i>	/	106
<i>B13. Wu Yuanzhao</i>	/	108
<i>B14. Transcendent Lady Sun</i>	/	113
Bibliography	/	123

Tables and Figures

Table I. Comparative Data of Hagiographical Subjects / 28

Figure I. Locations Named in Hagiographies on Modern Map of China /

29

Acknowledgments

I will never be able to offer thanks to all of you to whom it is owed. I will start, however, with the obvious. First I must thank my advisor, James Benn. During my time at McMaster, Dr. Benn's tutelage has helped me to improve in near every area of my academic work. Without his endless encouragement and confidence in me throughout the past two years, I do not know that I would be writing this now. I also thank Mark Rowe, who, in two years, has improved my writing style more than any educator in the past twenty-four. Having served under him as a Teaching Assistant, and having witnessed his approach to educating undergrads, has formed my own pedagogy immensely—even if I have never truly put it to use. Thanks, too, must be offered to Shayne Clarke, whose own unparalleled precision with primary texts makes the comments he offered on the translation below all the more humbling.

I would also like to offer thanks to previous educators, especially Paul Rouzer. Dr. Rouzer was indispensable to my undergraduate education, and, without his guidance, I would never have entered graduate school. Even in graduate school, when I was no longer his student (or concern), Dr. Rouzer offered comments on translations and papers.

Many people at McMaster University have been of great help to me. Doreen Drew has answered countless foolish questions, and has helped to guide me through bureaucratic quagmires. Jennifer Nettleton has helped me with endless undergraduate and campus concerns. Sheryl Dick has likewise helped me navigate numerous international and graduate student issues.

My cohorts. Keenan, who has been my academic partner for ages. Gerjan, who watches the same shows and films, and listens to similar music. Jess, who provides entertainment, food, and a caring ear. Joe, who provides pedagogical tools, a couch to crash on, and more rides than I can ever repay. Chris Emms, whose sarcasm and co-vegetarianism (sorry!) made me feel ever welcome. Chris Handy, who was always ready to converse about matters no one else seemed interested in. Graham and Sarah Baker, who offered a room in their home when I was near-itinerant. I would thank all of you whom I have befriended in the department, but there is only so much space.

I must thank, of course, my family as well. My parents, who funded several international moves, who offered love, and who supported me endlessly, even if they do not understand why I study what I study. I must also thank my grandmother, Myrna, who quite literally funded two years of Canadian living through her generous gift.

And, finally, a thank you to Jessie. I will never be able to repay you for everything you have done for me in this time, but you can be certain I will try.

Part I

*The Supplement to and Continuation of the
Comprehensive Mirror of Transcendents Who Embodied
the Dao through the Ages: Their Context and
Implications*

Introduction

A biography is a dangerous thing. That is not to say that biographies are not useful, nor to say that they should be read cynically. It is, rather, to say that the diligent reader of biographies must mind the decisions made by a biographer. Working from tenable facts, a biographer, based on his or her disposition, can shape the biography's subject into a hero or villain. Both depictions, that glowing and that condemning, might be equally factual. The biographer is likewise able to choose which truths to share about his or her subject. (S)he can describe the smallest minutia, or detail only the most significant events of the figure's life. The biographer, often spatially and temporally removed from his or her subject, can write the biography to fit his or her needs. (S)he can spin the facts of the biographee's life to align with some political or ideological goal without duplicity. What a biographer writes, therefore, can tell us as much about the biographer as it can about the biography's subject.

The above holds equally true in the case of hagiographies,¹ those biographies written by religious biographers about religious figures for religious audiences. Through the contents of hagiographies, we can discern a great deal about the religious tradition in which they are set. We can learn who was considered important to a tradition and why, or what was epitomized as ideal religious practice. In a collection of hagiographies, the resolutions made by the author that we might consider range from which biographical details the biographer included for which subjects (and, concomitantly, for whom [s]he ignored those same details) to the deities and texts

¹ For a discussion on the decision to use "hagiography" as opposed to "religious biography," see the section "Terms" below.

described. This thesis is an exploration of what such editorial decisions can tell us about gender expectations in Song Dynasty China.

This project has two parts. Part I is a discussion of the two collections of Chinese hagiographies translated in Part II. The first of these collections, the fifth fascicle² of the five-fascicle *Supplement to the Comprehensive Mirror of Transcendents Who Embodied the Dao through the Ages* (*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian xubian*³ 歷世真仙體道通鑑續編⁴ [hereafter *Xubian*]), focuses primarily on male transcendents (*xian* 仙).⁵ The second collection, the sixth fascicle of the six-fascicle *Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror of Transcendents Who Embodied the Dao through the Ages* (*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian houji* 歷世真仙體道通鑑後集⁶ [hereafter *Houji*]), consists entirely of the hagiographies of female transcendents.⁷ In surveying the *Xubian* and the *Houji*, I argue that hagiographical depictions of male and female transcendents contain discernible, recurrent differences. I then explore

² Because I have only translated one fascicle from each, I am largely speculating about trends continuing through the collections on the whole.

³ In following with the custom of most scholars of my generation, all transliterations into English are done using the pinyin system. Any Wade-Giles used in quoted sources has been silently changed to the pinyin system for the sake of consistency.

⁴ HY 297. For the sake of non-specialists, the Chinese for all figures and texts named in Part II is provided there and omitted from Part I. The Chinese for any figures or texts discussed in Part I but not found in Part II is still found in the former. The Chinese for important terms will likewise be provided in Part I. For all known and extant Daoist texts, the Harvard-Yenching Number (HY #) will be provided. For all known and extant Buddhist texts, the Taishō Number (T #) or Xuzangjing Number (X #) will be provided.

⁵ For a discussion of the translation of *xian* as “transcendent,” see the section “Terms” below.

⁶ HY 298.

⁷ Suzanne Cahill claims that Du Guangting’s *Record of the Assembled Transcendents of Yongcheng* (discussed below) is the only text in the Daoist canon that focuses solely on female Daoists. This is erroneous. See Cahill, “Biography of the Daoist Saint,” 19.

what these differences can tell us about Daoist⁸ ideals for medieval men and women practicing Daoism.

Zhao Daoyi and the Hagiographical Tradition in China

Compiled between the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the *Xubian* and the *Houji* serve as addenda to the much larger *Comprehensive Mirror of Transcendents Who Embodied the Dao through the Ages* (*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體道通鑑⁹ [hereafter *Tongjian*]) and extend the chronology found in the *Tongjian* through the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). The three collections are attributed to the Daoist Zhao Daoyi¹⁰ 趙道一 (fl. 1294–1307),¹¹ though this attribution is questionable for the two later works.¹² Zhao, referred to in the *Tongjian* as Zhao Quanyang 趙全陽,¹³ was from Fengxin District 封新縣 in Longxing Urban Prefecture 隆興府.¹⁴ He is all but unknown outside of the above works, and the little we do know about him we learn from the biography provided in the preface to the *Tongjian*.

⁸ For a discussion of the terms “Dao,” “Daoist,” and “Daoism,” see the section “Terms” below.

⁹ HY 296.

¹⁰ After providing a full name, I will follow Western practice and refer to all Chinese figures by surname.

¹¹ See Boltz, *Taoist Literature*, 56.

¹² Given his dates and the dates of some of the figures found in the hagiographies, it seems unlikely that Zhao actually compiled the *Xubian* and the *Houji*. For more on this, see Boltz, *Taoist Literature*, 56–59.

¹³ Schipper and Verellen, eds., *Taoist Canon*, 887.

¹⁴ Located in today’s Jiangxi Province. See Schipper and Verellen, eds., *Taoist Canon*, 888.

The attribution of these texts to Zhao must come with an additional caveat. Though he did not cite the titles of his sources,¹⁵ we know that Zhao drew upon several earlier hagiographical collections when compiling the *Tongjian* and *Houji*.¹⁶ Much of Ge Hong's 葛洪¹⁷ *Biographies of Divine Transcendents* (*Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 [hereafter *Shenxian*])¹⁸ can be found in the fifth, eleventh through thirteenth, and thirty-fourth fascicles of the *Tongjian*.¹⁹ Ge himself was inspired by Liu Xiang's 劉向²⁰ earlier *Biographies of Famous Transcendents* (*Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 [hereafter *Liexian*]),²¹ some of which Zhao used in the third fascicle of his *Tongjian*.²² *Supplementary Lives of Transcendents* (*Xu xian zhuan* 續仙傳),²³ compiled by Shen Fen 沈汾,²⁴ appears in the thirty-sixth fascicle of the *Tongjian*. Similarly, many of the hagiographies found in Du Guangting's 杜光庭²⁵ *Record of the Assembled Transcendents of Yongcheng* (*Yongcheng jixian lu* 壩城集仙錄 [hereafter

¹⁵ See Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 384. For a discussion of how Chinese compilers of hagiographies may have gathered sources, see Shinohara, "Two Sources," 119–194; Verellen, "Evidential Miracles," 231.

¹⁶ It seems, however, that the *Xubian*, assuming Zhao did indeed compile it himself, is wholly original.

¹⁷ (283–343). For a biography of Ge Hong, see Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 13–17; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 442–443.

¹⁸ This text does not exist within the Daoist Canon. Though much of this work has been lost, there are several fragmentary versions extant. For a discussion of these, see Bumbacher, "Shenxian Zhuan," 800–807; Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 121–125; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 887–888.

¹⁹ Schipper and Verellen, eds., *Taoist Canon*, 889.

²⁰ A Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) Confucian scholar (77–8 or 6 BCE). See Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 653.

²¹ HY 294. For more on this collection, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 653–654; Schipper and Verellen, eds., *Taoist Canon*, 114.

²² Schipper and Verellen, eds., *Taoist Canon*, 889.

²³ HY 295. For more on this text, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 1123–1124; Schipper and Verellen, eds., *Taoist Canon*, 429–430.

²⁴ A somewhat mysterious figure who lived during the Southern Tang Dynasty (937–976).

²⁵ (850–933). For a biography of Du Guangting, see Cahill, *Divine Traces*, 12–14; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 385–388.

Yongcheng]),²⁶ which is devoted to female transcendents, are to be found in the *Houji*.²⁷

Hagiographies, then, were by no means neoteric in Zhao's time. And, though Zhao's works are impressively expansive, they are far from the largest or most eminent. Among the best-known Chinese hagiographical collections is the Buddhist *Biographies of Eminent Monks*. This collection is a four-part series comprised of the titular *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 [hereafter *GS*]),²⁸ the *Supplementary Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 [hereafter *XGS*]),²⁹ the *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 [hereafter *SGS*]),³⁰ and the *Great Ming Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Daming gaoseng zhuan* 大明高僧傳 [hereafter *DGS*]).³¹ The compiler of the first *Gaoseng zhuan*, Huijiao 慧皎,³² claimed that earlier Buddhist hagiographical collections were deficient, and it was “in the deficiencies of these works that [he found] the major justification for compiling a new collection.”³³ But, if he relied so heavily upon earlier Daoist hagiographies when creating his own work, what justification did Zhao have for his own compilations? The names of the *Tongjian* and its addenda might give us an indication.

²⁶ HY 783. For a translation and discussion of this text, see Cahill, *Divine Traces*.

²⁷ None of the hagiographies translated in Part II are found in the *Yongcheng*.

²⁸ T 2059. For a discussion of this text, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 10.

²⁹ T 2060.

³⁰ T 2061.

³¹ T 2062.

³² (497–554). For a discussion of Huijiao, see Kieschnick, *Eminent Monk*, 4–5.

³³ Kieschnick, *Eminent Monk*, 6.

“Comprehensive Mirror” 通鑑, seen in the titles of all three of Zhao’s collections, is a term found most famously in Sima Guang’s 司馬光³⁴ *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government* (*Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 [hereafter *Zizhi*]),³⁵ a Song Dynasty history of China published in 1084. The same term is also found in a Song Dynasty Buddhist text, Benjue’s 本覺³⁶ *Comprehensive Mirror of Buddhist Monastics* (*Shishi tongjian* 釋氏通鑑 [hereafter *Shishi*]),³⁷ published in 1270.³⁸ Each of these works sought to demonstrate a history through biographical works—the *Zizhi* providing a chronicle of dynastic China, the *Shishi* one of Buddhism. Though Zhao would not have drawn from either of these sources for content, their presence in the cultural landscape provided enough impetus for Zhao to compile what he saw as a hagiographical history of Daoism.

All this is to say that the environment in which Zhao compiled his collections was one with a long history of both biographical (imperial and otherwise) and hagiographical collections (both Buddhist and Daoist). I sit in much the same environment in regards to Western studies of hagiographical compendia. Studies of East Asian hagiographies, both in their general function³⁹ as well as in regards to

³⁴ A Song Dynasty historian and bureaucrat (1019–1086).

³⁵ For a discussion of Sima Guang and the *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government*, see Ji, “Supplementary Biography,” 201–211.

³⁶ This appears to be a monastic name. I have been unable to find any additional information on this figure.

³⁷ X 1516.

³⁸ According to the preface to the text itself, which reads, “[Compiled] in the season of chrysanthemum blossoms in the sixth year of the Xianchun 咸淳 reign period” (X 1516: 76.1a22) (translated from the Chinese).

³⁹ See, for example, Bathgate, “Exemplary Lives,” Campany, *Heaven and Earth*; Granoff and Shinohara, eds., *Monks and Magicians*.

specific works,⁴⁰ are abundant. Some are concerned with Daoist hagiographies, some with Buddhist. One review translates the purported auto-hagiography of the god of literature, Wenchang 文昌.⁴¹ Perhaps most important to the present study are those works that deal with the hagiographies of women.⁴² Though these latter works make an indispensable contribution to the scholarship of religion and gender, they tend to examine the women in question alone. In doing so, these works make the same blunder those studies focusing solely on men do—create a largely single-sex world. By comparing male and female hagiographies, then, I seek to provide something new: an understanding of gendered religious ideals and social realities as expressed through the exemplary lives of both sexes.

Terms

Hagiographies, most well known to Westerners in their Christian and Islamic guise, are to be found in religious traditions the world over.⁴³ Though their styles and contents necessarily change from region to region and tradition to tradition, their purpose remains consistent. What differentiates a hagiography from other biographies,

⁴⁰ See, for example, Bumbacher, “*Shenxian Zhuan*” (about the *Shenxian*); Campany, *Heaven and Earth* (about the *Shenxian*); Kieschnick, *Eminent Monk* (about the *GS*, *XGS*, and *SGS*).

⁴¹ See Kleeman, *A God’s Own Tale*. In this work, Kleeman translates one of two extant versions of the *Book of the Transformations of the Divine Lord of Zitong* (HY 170 *Zitong dijun huashu* 梓潼帝君化書).

⁴² See, for example, Bumbacher, “Abschied von Heim und Herd;” Cahill, *Divine Traces*; Cahill, “Practice Makes Perfect;” Tsai, Julius, “Reading;” Tsai, Kathryn, *Lives of the Nuns*.

⁴³ Here I break with the view of Mu-chou Poo, who seems to view hagiographies as existing solely to Christians of the Middle Ages. See Poo, *Personal Welfare*, 217.

including religious biographies, is its function.⁴⁴ Whereas the biography primarily informs and perhaps sways opinion, the hagiography “serves as both ‘model of’ and ‘model for’; it is both descriptive of and prescriptive for religious life.”⁴⁵ The hagiography provides an exemplar. For the religious audience reading the hagiography, the lives recounted are to be emulated, at least to some degree. The hagiographies, though perhaps fantastic, are no less true than other types of biography. The hagiography can shape “men’s notions, however implicit, of the ‘really real’ [...] [and] color their sense of the reasonable, the practical, the humane, and the moral.”⁴⁶ The religious biography, which may or may not be written by a religious figure or for a religious audience, does not necessarily serve these purposes.

These descriptive and prescriptive functions of the hagiography do not operate solely on the individual level. Hagiographies also shape the “really real” for and the morals of an in-group (in this case Daoists). As Stephan Bumbacher writes:

Societies habitually create ideals for their members, which, although in reality only very few [members] are capable of meeting, nevertheless have normative significance to the self-definition of the respective society and its mores-setting strata. [These ideals] also contribute to the exercise of social obligations. In China, such ideals—positive and negative—are to be found to a great extent in collections of biographies⁴⁷ [...] [which] form an integral part

⁴⁴ Mark Lewis appears to recognize this point in his “Suppression of the Three Stages Sect,” in which he notes, “the intent of the biography [of the anonymous master of the Three Stages Sect] is clearly hagiographic” (Lewis, “Suppression,” 220). Lewis does not, however, explain what he means by this.

⁴⁵ Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 100. Campany’s general discussion in the surrounding section (i.e. *ibid*, 98–102) is a useful explanation of how to understand hagiographies.

⁴⁶ Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 124.

⁴⁷ Bumbacher uses “Biographie” throughout this article.

of religious literature. These texts allow authors and their social circles to stake out the boundaries of what is acceptable.⁴⁸

In the instance of religious hagiographies, the “society” in question tends to be that of the tradition of the hagiographies. The “boundaries of what is acceptable,” too, are specified to concerns the religious community might have.⁴⁹ For example, in the hagiography of Transcendent Lady Yu below, her unmarried status is a virtue. Were there an imperial biography of Yu, the biographer would undoubtedly cast her unmarried status in a much more negative light. This is because the Daoist group identity breaks from the larger social identity, in which marriage and procreation are necessary parts of normative life.⁵⁰ In much the same way that it is important to recognize that hagiographies operate on both a personal and social level, we must be aware that hagiographies function both within and outside of the religious in-group. As Bumbacher notes, “biographies, in addition to an inner aspect, namely the formation of a group identity, [have] an outer [aspect]: that of propaganda.”⁵¹

Propagandism manifests in several forms. The most apparent means of propagandizing through the hagiographies is in demonstrating the wondrous abilities Daoist adepts develop.⁵² Transcendents’ interactions with high deities, demonstrating

⁴⁸ Bumbacher, “Abschied von Heim und Herd,” 673 (translated from the German).

⁴⁹ One example of this, as explained by Vivian-Lee Nyitray, would be the various hagiographies of the goddess Mazu. For more, see Nyitray, “Becoming the Empress,” 168.

⁵⁰ For more, see Cahill, *Transcendence*, 213–214. Allowing and, in fact, encouraging monastic women to remain unmarried caused a number of problems for Daoists and Buddhists throughout Chinese history. For a discussion of the ways in which certain Daoists avoided this problem, see Valussi, “Men and Women,” 277–278. For a discussion of the ways in which women would use monastic Daoism and Buddhism to avoid the prospect of marriage, see Kohn, *Monastic Life*, 64–65; Tsai, Kathryn, *Lives of the Nuns*, 7; Tung, *Fables*, 47. For an inversion of this, in which Daoists considered marriage a “religious vocation,” see Cahill, *Transcendence*, 89–90. For a discussion of the ways in which Daoists changed their perceptions of marriage, see Kohn, *Monastic Life*, 121–123.

⁵¹ Bumbacher, “Abschied von Heim und Herd,” 694 (translated from the German).

⁵² A discussion of such abilities can be found later in this section.

the accessibility of such celestial beings, operate in a similar fashion.⁵³ The second method of propagandizing is in directly comparing two traditions. We see this, for example, in the hagiography of Xie Shouhao below. There a Buddhist figure contacts Xie and disparages Daoist teachings. Xie readily refutes this Buddhist's views, thereby proving the superiority of Daoism.⁵⁴ Occasionally the two types of propagandism are merged, as in Zhang Daoqing's hagiography below. In this case, the abbot of a Buddhist monastery sends several servants to Zhang so that he might cause it to rain, a feat which the Buddhist had been unable to accomplish. In doing so, the hagiography demonstrates the primacy of Daoism to both Daoists and non-Daoists.

In addition to the functions hagiographies serve, it is beneficial to examine the ways in which scholars approach the study of such texts. Michael Bathgate argues that scholars have historically been divided into two fields: those who follow "history-oriented" approaches, and those who are more "myth-oriented." For Bathgate, "history-oriented" studies are those in which "traditional religious biographies have been examined for the clues they provide in reconstructing the lives of historical figures."⁵⁵ Erik Zürcher exemplifies this field when he writes, concerning Buddhist hagiographies, "historical facts are often embedded in a mass of hagiographic material and must, wherever possible, be confirmed by external evidence preferably from non-Buddhist sources."⁵⁶ Scholars using such an approach often ignore the very functions that make hagiographies unique among the biographical genre.

⁵³ For a discussion of non-monastic interactions with deities and their role in attracting new adepts, see Kleeman, "Expansion," 63–65.

⁵⁴ Though there are several hagiographies in which Daoists disparage Buddhism, Xie is the most forthright in doing so.

⁵⁵ Bathgate, "Exemplary Lives," 272.

⁵⁶ Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 10.

The “myth-oriented” field, however, uses “the lives of religious founders, saints, and devotees as case studies in the history of the religious imagination, charting the religious and cultural ideals of a community through the lives of those said to have exemplified them.”⁵⁷ Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara typify this method when they write that they “approached [their] texts not as historical records but as religious texts, and our primary focus was the religious and cultural significance of the writings that we were studying.”⁵⁸ This approach, while it does mind the uniqueness of hagiographies, can be problematic if scholars consistently choose to ignore the “truly” historical accounts in favor of tracing ideas. To remedy the problems found in each field, Bathgate suggests merging the two. In doing so, one can “explore the complex intersection of the actual and the ideal in the telling (and in the living) of exemplary lives.”⁵⁹ This unified approach is the one I have tried to adopt.

The talk of translating the Chinese term *xian* 仙 is difficult. Historically, the term has often been translated as “immortals.” This translation is problematic in the context of Daoist hagiographies for a number of reasons. By translating *xian* as “immortals,” such figures are reduced to their ability to entirely evade death. Though there are occasions in which bodily immortality does seem to be the goal of *xian* hopefuls, this ability is never actually attributed to Daoist *xian*.⁶⁰ While such Daoist

⁵⁷ Bathgate, “Exemplary Lives,” 272.

⁵⁸ Granoff and Shinohara, eds., *Monks and Magicians*, 8.

⁵⁹ Bathgate, “Exemplary Lives,” 272.

⁶⁰ I therefore disagree with claims such as that made by Mu-chou Poo, who argues that the transcendents in the *Shenxian* seek deathless physical life. See Poo, “Images of Immortals,” 177–181. For a discussion of the history of *xian* in which physical immortality is actually sought, see Perry, “Immortality and Transcendence,” 111–112. For a discussion of the lack of physical immortality in Daoism, see Kohn, “Eternal Life,” 624. It is important to note that *xian* was not only applied to Daoist figures; see Como, *Weaving and Binding*, 269–270 n. 9; Puett, *To Become a God*, 204. For a discussion of the use of *xian* (and the related *zhenren* 真人) in Buddhist texts, see Sharf, *Coming to Terms*, 111, 187.

figures do frequently live inordinately long lives, they still die or ascend to heaven. In fact, they actively seek ascent to heaven, whether in their present bodies or in a more spiritual form.⁶¹ This can be seen in the hagiographies translated below, wherein no single subject is described as undying.⁶² The use of “immortal” also understates the actual abilities attributed to Daoist *xian*. For example, such figures often have numinous or prognostic knowledge as well as supernatural powers.⁶³ In following many contemporary scholars, I have thus elected to translate *xian* using “transcendents,” since “immortals” does not adequately describe the nature of such beings.⁶⁴

Like *xian*, *dao* 道 and its related terms have a storied history in Western scholarship. Daoism as understood in the West is a Western scholastic invention. The very notion we in the West have of “religion” is (or, rather, was) foreign to China when religious Daoism was developed. Wilfred Cantwell Smith is one of many scholars who have addressed this issue, though his understanding of the tradition borders on the farcical. He writes:

If we turn to the term ‘Daoism’, we find this as probably the instance where an argument against the use of [religion] needs most strongly to be made, and where the ineptness [of the term ‘religion’] is most conspicuous once one

⁶¹ For a discussion of the categories of Daoist transcendents typically depicted in hagiographies, see Kohn, “Transcending Personality,” 1–3.

⁶² Though the nature of Daoist transcendents does not seem to have changed dramatically throughout Chinese history, the ways in which Chinese artists depicted them did. For a discussion of this, see Spiro, “How Light and Airy,” 44–45.

⁶³ For a list of some such powers, see Campany, *Making Transcendents*, 48.

⁶⁴ Robert Campany, for example, prefers “transcendents” for reasons similar to my own. See Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 4–5. Some scholars seem to use the two glosses interchangeably. See, for example, Engelhardt, “Longevity Techniques,” 75; Perry, “Immortality and Transcendence,” esp. 123–127. Robert Bokenkamp, in his *Ancestors and Anxiety* conflates transcendence and rebirth; see Bokenkamp, *Ancestors*, 158–161.

pauses to reflect. For surely if ever it has been true it was true for Laozi and Zhuangzi, who inspired this movement, that (not religion: they used no such word, but) a true apprehension of life is deeply personal. They preached that reality, Dao, is not a system, not a neat and ordered pattern as Kong[zi] would have it, not a code of rules; but that it is a process, dynamic, vital, ebullient. If you catch it in any snare of words, in any net of logic, of morality, in any system, it dies. [...] I would guess that these two poets turned in their graves when the freedom that they proclaimed for man was presented under a rubric as systemized pattern. [...] If Dao as they conceived it is at all a valid concept, then it follows that Daoism is a false one.⁶⁵

A great many scholars have written much more nuanced works on the subject of “religion” in East Asia and I will go into it no further here.⁶⁶ In order to discuss the topic at hand, however, I identify Daoism as a religious tradition—a relatively cohesive movement that lays claim to specialized teachings; has a monastic class; creates a community of self-identifying members with a shared group identity; and involves ritual behavior.⁶⁷ A Daoist, then, is someone who would use such texts or adopt the shared identity. There are some scholars who might take issue with this definition, though for different reasons. I have considered Robert Campany’s critique

⁶⁵ Smith, Wilfred, *Meaning and End*, 69–70. While Mircea Eliade has no qualms with the term “Daoist,” his notion of the tradition is equally dated. See Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 153–154.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Josephson, *Religion in Japan*; Masuzawa, *World Religions*; Smith, Jonathan, “Religion.”

⁶⁷ This list of features is certainly not exhaustive, nor should this list be seen as essential in the identification of a religious tradition. In keeping with the argument put forth by Campany in his “Religious Repertoires and Contestation,” I have tried to avoid using Daoism as an action-taking subject. For more, see Campany, “Religious Repertoires,” 106–111.

of the notion of “Daoism” when trying to define the word for myself, and, though I use the term here, I do so with his discussion in mind.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ See Campany, *Making Transcendents*, 35–36.

The *Xubian*

The *Xubian* is comprised of five fascicles and contains thirty-four hagiographies. The fifth fascicle, translated below, consists of eight hagiographies: seven concerning male transcendentals (A1,¹ A2, A4–A8) and one detailing the exploits of a female transcendent (A3).² As mentioned above, the *Xubian* extends the *Tongjian* through the Yuan Dynasty, and it focuses primarily on masters of the Quanzhen School.³

The hagiographies in this collection follow a rather fixed pattern.⁴ Generally speaking, the life cycles of the transcendentals are provided chronologically, with major biographical and religious details described. Some of the hagiographies are quite long and provide many details about their subject's life, others are more truncated. For those hagiographies with such details,⁵ information regarding the transcendent's time and place of birth are provided, as is his or her place of origin. Childhood activities are described next, and the transcendent oftentimes displays his or her remarkable nature by this point. After childhood, most of the male transcendentals face their first major challenge: bureaucratic work or the imperial exam. Depending on how this moment goes, the man may enter the bureaucratic system for a time, or proceed immediately to his career as a Daoist adept. It is in this period that Zhao describes most of the miraculous events in the transcendent's life, be (s)he the active performer or receiver of said event. Finally, Zhao explains the transcendent's departure from this

¹ For ease of identification, each figure in the *Xubian* has been given a signifier A#.

² This female transcendent, Zu Shu, will be discussed below.

³ See Schipper and Verellen, eds., *Taoist Canon*, 893. The Quanzhen School is discussed in the translation below.

⁴ For a discussion of the structures of other hagiographies, see Cahill, *Divine Traces*, 17–20; DeWoskin, “*Xian* Descended,” 75–78.

⁵ To compare the details contained in each hagiography, see Table I below.

world, either through direct ascent to heaven or death, and details concerning the transcendent's disciples are listed.

The Men

The chronology found in the hagiographies tells us a great deal about social expectations for Song Dynasty men. Take Xie Shouhao, whose hagiography covers a number of the details listed above, as an example. Zhao begins the hagiography by telling us not only the day, but also the time of Xie's birth. As a youth, Xie studies (what he studies is not mentioned, but one can assume that it includes both traditional Chinese classics as well as Daoist-specific texts) vigorously. As it is for most young men in medieval China, this studying is likely in preparation for taking the imperial exams, which would allow Xie to enter into the state bureaucracy. During his studies, several strange monks visit Xie, and, with a cryptic message, grant Xie the ability to absorb texts without effort. This is the first truly hagiographical element of the piece.

Within the next sentence⁶ Xie has, presumably, passed the imperial exam and is working as a bureaucrat. This again is keeping with traditional social norms. We do not see mention here of Xie finding a wife or having children, however. In fact, none of the hagiographies translated from the *Xubian* discuss wives or children.⁷ Given social constraints and expectations placed upon men, especially those who have entered into bureaucratic service, it seems rather unlikely that none of the seven male

⁶ For a discussion of the use of time in the hagiographies of transcendents, see DeWoskin, "*Xian* Descended," 84–86.

⁷ The "progeny" of one male transcendent is/are mentioned briefly, but this is done in locating the figure spatially, as opposed to describing his life and actions.

transcendents discussed here would have had families. As will be discussed in the *Houji* section below, this is not the case for the female transcendents.

After serving for a time, Xie abandons his bureaucratic career. He attracts one and then several disciples. His proceeding religious career follows a path that is, with some additional accomplishments, frequently depicted in the hagiographies. Xie bests a Buddhist in a battle of wits, is appointed abbot of several monastic sites, and composes a text that becomes quite popular with both the populace and elite of the time. He travels throughout the state,⁸ propagating his teachings and converting people to Daoism. Though he is far from immortal, Zhao does describe Xie in such a way that his physical longevity becomes evident. When Xie is finally ready to depart from the world, he tells his disciples as much. He then composes a poetic hymn and dies.

So what does this typified hagiography tell us about social and Daoist expectations for men? It shows us a career comprised of stages—first in the bureaucratic world, then into the religious. That is to say, even for those individuals endowed with remarkable spiritual gifts, the path to transcendence is not brief. It is a lifelong endeavor. Zhao also depicts Xie operating within the larger imperial system. Though he may be a religious adept, Xie does not reject the political world. He is not a renegade. He has audiences with imperial figures, and receives commendation from them. Zhao depicts the miraculous events in Xie's life neither as mundane nor as

⁸ Travel is mentioned frequently in the hagiographies. For a map of the locations found in all of them, see Figure I.

extraordinarily unique occurrences. Rather, they are the phenomena possible to anyone who follows the proper religious protocol.⁹

Zu Shu

Zu Shu is an exceptional case. She is the only female¹⁰ in this fascicle, and her hagiography is quite different from any of the others translated in either the *Xubian* or the *Houji*. This difference is likely due to Zu's historical role within Daoism. As the founder of the Qingwei School,¹¹ Zu has greater religious weight than most of the other figures discussed below. Given what one would imagine to be the apparent importance of Zu, however, it is rather surprising to note how few historically grounded, "factual" biographical elements are to be found. Instead, Zu's hagiography is almost entirely hagiographic.

The only segments of Zu's hagiography that appear to be demonstrably true¹² are the beginning and end. These sections, namely the information pertaining to her time and location of birth and details describing her posthumous lineage, bookend the mythic tale of her founding of the Qingwei. In this middle segment, Zhao depicts Zu as a figure closer to a deity than a transcendent. Given the uniqueness of this

⁹ That is, though the two are often coupled, it seems one's actions are of greater significance in experiencing miraculous events than one's innate abilities are.

¹⁰ As pointed out by Dr. Shayne Clarke, Zu's gender is never directly mentioned in the hagiography. Were the title given her, Primordial Lady 元君, not attested as a feminine title, it would be nigh impossible to discern Zu as a woman (the "Lady" portion of the title, 君, is in most circumstances translated as "Lord" and applied to male figures). Whether or not Zu's gender was ambiguous to Zhao Daoyi is unclear, though, if it had been, this might explain the presence of Zu's hagiography in the *Xubian*. (Shayne Clarke, personal communication, 4 September 2014).

¹¹ The Qingwei School is discussed in the translation below.

¹² By looking at other biographical accounts of her life.

hagiography, it is less clear what prescriptive function it might have, though it does depict Zu as one in a long history of female founders of Daoist lineages.¹³

¹³ The most famous of whom is likely Wei Huacun, discussed in the translation below. Also included would be Laozi's mother, whom Livia Kohn calls Holy Mother Goddess 聖母院君. The Mother Goddess, both in giving birth to and teaching Laozi, can be seen as a founding matriarch. For more on this figure, see Kohn, "Mother of the Tao."

The *Houji*

The *Houji* is comprised of six fascicles and contains one hundred twenty hagiographies. The sixth fascicle, translated below, consists of fourteen hagiographies. Each of these hagiographies concerns a female transcendent, as does every other hagiography in the *Houji*.

As in the *Xubian*, the hagiographies in the *Houji* follow a regular pattern. The chronology is largely the same in both collections, with one major variation: whereas the men tend to have an obstacle in the form of studies or bureaucratic exams, the women's primary post-pubescent challenge is marriage. The narrative structures of the collections, however, are quite different. Whereas Zhao details many biographical points of the male transcents, this same information is frequently neglected for the female transcents. It is unclear if this is due to Zhao's own editorial decisions or, as is more likely, the limitations of the sources Zhao drew from.

The biggest question to ask in regards to the *Houji* is what led Zhao to consider it necessary to compile a hagiographical collection focused solely on female transcents. Unfortunately, as there is no preface for *Houji*, we cannot know for certain what Zhao's impetus was. We can, however, speculate. As is discussed above, Zhao borrowed heavily from Du Guangting's *Yongcheng* when compiling the *Houji*. Du, in the preface to his work, explains that he felt the "desire to record the lives of women saints neglected by other sources, to link his female subjects in a religious lineage that joins past and present, and to show the great variety of valid paths to the

Way.”¹ What is more, Du “recommends these saints as authentic and worthy of veneration” to the same extent that male transcendents are.² It is not entirely without reason to suspect that Zhao compiled the *Houji* with the same intentions.

That he was following the lead of Du is not the only logical explanation for Zhao’s female-centric work. Both the *Xubian* and *Houji* contain numerous hagiographies of important Quanzhen figures, and Wang Zhe,³ the founder of the Quanzhen School, was adamant in his conviction that male and female monastics should be separated from one another. Zhao’s proclivity for Quanzhen, taken in conjunction with Suzanne Cahill’s argument that, “by separating women’s biographies, Du reinforced the separation of men and women in all aspects of life that was to increase in severity and momentum during the...Song dynasty,” might allow for further explain of the segregation of the *Xubian* and *Houji*.⁴

The Women

As in the *Xubian*, the chronology found in the hagiographies of the *Houji* tells us a great deal about social expectations for Song Dynasty women. In this case, let us examine Cao Wenji as a typical case. The first thing we learn about Cao is her place of origin and that she was a prostitute. Zhao then informs us that Cao has a wondrous ability to understand texts, and is a renowned poet. We also learn that she is remarkably beautiful. In the first few sentences, Cao has been marked as sexually

¹ Cahill, *Divine Traces*, 13.

² Ibid.

³ Discussed in the translation below.

⁴ Cahill, *Divine Traces*, 14.

attractive and available. As such, a great many men try to wed her, but Cao rejects each of them. She finally agrees to marry one Ren Sheng, as he seems aware of her divine origins.

Cao and Ren are married, and time skips ahead five years. Cao explains to Ren that she used to be a heavenly transcendent, but that she, and the children they have together, were banished to Earth to live as mortals for several lifetimes. A divine being descends to retrieve Cao, and Cao informs her husband of the differences between ordinary human time and time as understood by transcendents.⁵ Zhao then describes Cao's ascension to heaven, which is witnessed by scores of people.

Perhaps the most important thing relayed to us by this hagiography is the place of marriage in the lives of medieval Chinese women. As is explained above,⁶ women would oftentimes use Daoism or Buddhism as an excuse to avoid marriage. This does not mean, however, that Daoist women could not marry if they so chose. Nor does it mean that monastic women were always able to avoid sexual union with men altogether.⁷ Rather, it meant that women could break with social norms and remain unmarried and celibate. This provided women with a sense of autonomy they might not otherwise have had.

When compared to their male counterparts, women in medieval China were largely without political or social power.⁸ This fact does not seem to have been lost on Chinese men or women. The presence of mythical matriarchal countries—in which gender roles were reversed, or, in more extreme cases, in which men were said not to

⁵ See note 6 in “The *Xubian*” above.

⁶ See note 50 in “Introduction.”

⁷ See, for example, Valussi, “Men and Women,” 252.

⁸ The major exception to this case is that of Wu Zhao 武曌 (624–705), also known as Wu Zetian, who served as Empress during the Tang Dynasty. For a discussion of Wu, see Bokenkamp, “Medieval Feminist Critique;” Pettit, “The Erotic Empress.”

exist at all—in Chinese texts belies this awareness.⁹ Women were, however, able to attain the same sorts of transcendence that men could, even if the means of doing so were understood by some to be slightly different.¹⁰

Sun Bu'er

Like Zu Shu in the *Xubian*, Sun Bu'er presents an exceptional case. And, like Zu, this is largely owed to Sun's historical position within Daoism. Unlike Zu, however, Sun is known primarily through her relation to the various men in her life, namely the founder of Quanzhen, Wang Zhe, and her husband, Ma Yifu.¹¹

Sun is one of the Seven Perfected, a group of early Quanzhen masters. She is the sole female in the bunch. In the hagiography below, Sun fills a number of roles throughout her life, from wife and mother to celibate renunciant. She willingly takes up each of these positions, and, in doing so, normalizes each of them in turn. Her biography is thus able to represent a number of ideal forms of practice, though she is best known in her later guise as an unmarried renunciant.

⁹ See Jay, "Imagining Matriarchy," 221–224.

¹⁰ See Valussi, "Blood, Tigers, Dragons;" Valussi, "Female Alchemy;" Valussi, "Men and Women."

¹¹ Ma is discussed in the translation below.

Conclusion

One of the dangers of these hagiographies is in their origin. Given that Zhao Daoyi likely drew many of these hagiographies from steles and other inscriptional works memorializing local deceased, we must consider who originally composed these works, and for whom they were intended. It is not out of the question that many of these inscriptions were created by non-Daoist artisans who were hired solely for their skill in etching. These artisans may have drawn upon popular notions of what Daoist men and women did in their lives, and embellished otherwise “standard” biographies with such details. What this would mean, then, is that the wondrous feats found in some of these hagiographies might be little more than the imaginings of a person who wished only to add to the length of the work and, in doing so, the depth of his or her compensation.

While it is important to consider, the source problem above is made largely ignorable in this study simply by the fact that Zhao Daoyi chose to use these hagiographies in his compilations. Because he himself was a Daoist, and sought to create a history of Daoist transcendents through his works, Zhao affirms the contents of these hagiographies as both descriptive of and prescriptive for Daoist life.

Though their pre-adept social obligations vary, the religious careers of Daoist men and women, as depicted in the hagiographies translated here, are quite similar. Gender does not seem to play a role in one’s ability to receive audience with a deity, acquire numinous texts, or attain transcendence. What does vary, and quite dramatically, is the narrative into which these details are built. The hagiographies of the male transcendents are consistently more developed, with many more biographical

details included. The female hagiographies, on the other hand, more frequently include descriptions of the women's physical beauty, and make mention of their husbands and children, or lack thereof. As noted above, it is difficult to discern how much of this difference we can actually attribute to Zhao, as we do not know what his sources were and how closely he transcribed them.

What might the above tell us about the men and women who looked to these hagiographies for identity formation? It would seem that they likely understood their world to be one in which their gender need not dictate their spiritual development. Those elements of the hagiographies that betray gender norms are not the elements that are unique to the Daoist identity. Rather, those points, like attaining bureaucratic work or finding a husband, are holdovers from Chinese society at large. Though gender norms would have been inescapable in their daily lives, the religious expectations Daoist men and women were held to vis-à-vis the hagiographies remained ungendered.

Table I. Comparative Data of Hagiographical Subjects

Subject	Gender	Named	Birth Date	Place of Birth	Death Date	Place of Death	Disciples	Visit from Deity	Receives Text	Family ¹	Encounter with Emperor
A1	M	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	F, M	X
A2	M	X	X	X	X	X	X	? ²	X		
A3	F	X	X	X			X	X		F, M	
A4	M	X	X	X		?		X	X		
A5	M	X		X			X		X		X
A6	M	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	R	
A7	M	X	?	X	X		X	X	X	P	X
A8	M	X		X	X	?	X				
B1	F	X				X				S	
B2	F	X		X				X		H, C	
B3	F	X		X		X		X		M, B	
B4	F	X		X						F, U	
B5	F	X		X		X		?		M	
B6	F	X						?			?
B7	F										
B8	F	X		X	X		X		X	F, M, U	X
B9	F	X		X							?
B10	F	X		X		?				H	
B11	F	X		X				X		B	X
B12	F	X		X		?		?			?
B13	F	X		X		X	X	X	X	M, U	
B14	F	X	X	X	X	X	X			F, M, H, C	

¹ F = Father; M = Mother; S = Sister(s); B = Brother(s); R = Relatives; P = Progeny; C = Children; H = Husband; U = Unmarried

² Unclear. This uncertainty arises from ambiguity in descriptions (e.g. visiting figure may or may not be deity; subject receives title, unclear if from Emperor) or from gaps in the text (e.g. final location mentioned in hagiography may or may not be location of death).

Figure I. Locations Named in Hagiographies on Modern Map of China



Note: Those provinces within the dotted line are the provinces mentioned in the footnotes of the translations in Part II.
Source for original map (http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=17503&lang=en).

Part II

Translations

Conventions

I use the Zhonghua Daozang 中華道藏 version of the texts in my translation. I also reference the Zhengtong Daozang 正統道藏 when characters or meanings are unclear.

I have tried to remain as true to the source texts as possible, and, as such, many words necessary for sensible English construction not found in the original Chinese are provided in square brackets []. Several poems are to be found throughout the translation, and, though I elect not to follow the rhyme or foot schemas of the originals, I do follow line breaks and make it clear that these are poetic in form by offsetting them through indentation.

Angle brackets < > signify that the contained passage is a commentarial note or addendum found within the source text. Such notes can be identified in the Chinese by their difference in font size.

I have elected to transliterate, as opposed to translate, several types of terms. The first of these are terms used to measure distances or areas. This is done for the sake of readability and accuracy. The second are those that are themselves transliterations of non-Chinese words (e.g. *ksana*).

On occasions in which I believe there to be a scribal error, I make note of it, providing both the character(s) given and the character(s) I assume to be correct. There is a single instance of missing characters in the translated texts, and, because the number of characters that could be found there, with sensible meaning, is astronomically high, I have elected to leave a blank space. I footnote this instance.

Though numerous texts are named throughout these biographies, I provide the Chinese pronunciation only for those that remain extant and identifiable. When relevant, I also provide the Harvard-Yenching Number (HY #) for easy identification.

In translating the titles of extant texts, I follow the translations found in Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen's, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon*). The only exception to this is in the translation of "Transcendent" for "Immortal."

In translating official titles, I follow Charles Hucker's *Dictionary of Official Titles* (Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*). When necessary, I combine several entries to make sense of a single title.

In several of the biographies below, after introducing a figure by his or her full name, said figure is referred to by given name, as opposed to surname, in the Chinese. When this given name is provided, I translate it as such. When no name is provided, but a subject is needed for translating purposes, I follow Western practice and refer to all figures by surname.

When a known or reasonably identifiable figure is mentioned, I provide relevant biographical information. If the figure is unidentifiable, I note said figure as such.

I sourced each biography from the titular collections alone. I do provide additional resources for those figures for whom additional resources are to be found.

Each figure in the *Xubian* has been given a signifier A# for simplified identification. Each figure in the *Houji* has been given a signifier B# for the same reason.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations below are my own.

*Supplement to the Comprehensive Mirror of Transcendents Who
Embodied the Dao through the Ages: Fascicle Five*

A1. Zhang Daoqing 張道清¹

The Perfected Lord 真君² had the surname of Master Zhang 張, the taboo name³

Daoqing 道清,⁴ and the courtesy name⁵ Deyi 得一.⁶ He was from Pusao Village 蒲騷

里.⁷ His mother, Madam Wang 王, had an unusual dream and became pregnant.⁸ On

¹ There is relatively little scholarship on Zhang Daoqing. For example, the *Chinese Dictionary of Daoism* 中華道教大辭典 contains a truncated version of this hagiography for its entry concerning Zhang. See Hu, ed., *Zhonghua Daojiao Dacidian*, “Zhang Daoqing,” 126. For a more full account of Zhang Daoqing and the Zhengyi lineage that he founded at Mount Jiugong, Yuzhi Pai (御制派), see Hudson, *Spreading the Dao*, 105.

² A title given to Daoists who have attained a high level of spiritual development. For a brief discussion of the rankings of spiritual development in Daoism, see Bokenkamp, “Stages of Transcendence,” 126.

³ Speaking or writing a particularly exalted person’s given or surname after their death was considered taboo in China, thus “taboo names” were used instead.

⁴ Meaning “Purity of the Dao”.

⁵ Courtesy names were given to people, typically men, after they turned twenty. One’s elders would continue to use one’s given name; all others would address one using this courtesy name.

⁶ Meaning “Obtaining Unity”.

⁷ Located in today’s Xiaogan in Hubei Province. Administrative regions were highly regulated throughout Chinese history. In the Song, the breakdown of regions was as follows:

“Provinces” (省) were the largest of the divisions; “Urban Prefecture” (府) were the major subdivisions of provinces; “Prefectures” (州) were similar to urban prefectures, save they were of smaller size and population density; “Districts” (縣) were the largest of the prefectural subdivisions; “Cantons” (郡) were similar to districts, though often smaller and less populated. The districts and cantons were further divided into regions such as “Cities” (城), “Towns” (鎮), “Villages” (里), and “Hamlets” (鄉).

⁸ The foretelling of a pregnancy in dreams is a common trope in East Asia, and such dreams are often used to signify that the child will be remarkable in some way.

the twentieth day of the fifth month of the sixth year *bingchen* 丙辰⁹ in Song 宋¹⁰ Gaozong's 高宗¹¹ Shaoxing 紹興¹² reign period,¹³ [Madam Wang] gave birth to the Perfected Lord in a residence on Mount Qingniu 青牛山.¹⁴ At that time, a purple cloud¹⁵ rose into the air, and all people far and near were filled with wonder. As a child, [Zhang] served his elderly parents and moved his home to Jingshan 京山¹⁶ [District] in Ying 郢¹⁷ [Prefecture]. When he was a child, his bearing was clear and pure, he did not eat meat or drink sweet wine. In his life [he] attained both disasters and happiness.

Having not eaten for several days, Zhang one day entered the mountains, and had not returned after five days. After five days without returning, [someone] went to look [for Zhang], and saw him lying on a cliff with two tigers crouching at his side. [Zhang's] townsman was frightened and considered this [event] divine. Another day, [Zhang] awoke from resting and spoke with his mother, saying, "Just now [I] went to Fu Prefecture 復州¹⁸ [and saw] that the girls and elder brother from the Wu 吳 family

⁹ One of the years in the Chinese sexagesimal cycle. The Chinese sexagesimal cycle was a means of measuring time, and was composed of a cycle of sixty days or years, depending on the measurement in question. Each of the days/years in the sexagesimal cycle was comprised of a pairing of one of ten "Heavenly Stems" (天干) and one of twelve "Earthly Branches" (地支). For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Ganzhi," 435.

¹⁰ Dynasty lasting 960–1279.

¹¹ An emperor of the Song Dynasty (1107–1187).

¹² (1131–1162). During their respective rule, Chinese emperors used reign names to mark years or periods. Many Chinese emperors would change the name of their reign period due to some event or sign, be it auspicious or inauspicious, though the reign name could be changed for any reason at all.

¹³ I.e. 21 May 1136.

¹⁴ Meaning "Blue-Black Cow Mountain". Located in today's Xiushan Tujia and Miao Autonomous County 秀山土家族苗族自治县 in Chongqing Municipality.

¹⁵ Purple clouds and mist were understood to be auspicious signs.

¹⁶ Located in today's Hubei Province.

¹⁷ Located in today's Hubei Province.

¹⁸ Located in today's Hubei Province.

of our village were just about to return [from Fu]. The biggest elder sister is going to bring [us] silk shoes and fruit.” The next day [this occurred] as expected. For this reason, [Zhang’s] father and mother also believed he was divinely anomalous.

On the first day of the twenty-seventh year [of the Shaoxing reign period],¹⁹ the Perfected Lord was sitting silently in front of a mountain. [Zhang] saw five-colored clouds²⁰ and mist, and within them there were innumerable divine honor guards. Amongst [the honor guards] was the Imperial Lord [of Eastern Florescence] [東華]帝君²¹ sitting on a dragon-drawn cart. [The Imperial Lord] summoned the Perfected Lord and transmitted to him a mysterious and secret numinous text. The Perfected Lord received it, and only then [did] the Dao he sought [become] manifest [to him]. Later, a worship hall²² was established in this region. Because it was the place where the Daoist scripture was received <it is called Dishou [Worship Hall] 帝授.>²³

[If] Zhang’s village had a drought or flood, he would pray [for aid], and it would come. [If] a person had an illness or disease, [Zhang would give] talisman

¹⁹ I.e. 12 February 1157.

²⁰ The five colors being green/blue, white, vermilion, black, and yellow. Like purple clouds, five-colored clouds were an auspicious sign.

²¹ Also known as Wang Xuanfu 王玄甫, the first of the Five Patriarchs of Quanzhen Daoism. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Wang Xuanfu,” 1018.

²² In these hagiographies are several terms used to describe Daoist places of worship and practice. “Palaces” (宮) were the largest, and often received imperial patronage; “Abbeys” (觀) were smaller than palaces, though they often served the same functions (e.g. monastery style residence of monks and nuns, large-scale rituals, &c.); “Cloisters” (庵) were similar to abbeys, and the same term was also used for Buddhist sites; “Worship Halls” (祠) tended to be smaller yet and were cultic sites built around a single figure or deity. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 73. For a discussion on the establishment of Daoist sites, see Kohn, *Monastic Manual*, 87–96.

²³ Meaning “Transmitted by the Imperial [Lord]”.

water [and that person would] be healed at once. For this reason, the people from the capital who favored and admired [Zhang] amassed.

In the first year of Xiaozong's 孝宗²⁴ Gandao 乾道²⁵ reign period,²⁶ [Zhang] converted his residence into a worship hall. He had made a portraiture image of the Jade Emperor,²⁷ [which he] worshipped and made offerings to. <Immediately [after worshipping the image], the shrine became illuminated, and, by an imperial letter, [it was named] Changsenwan 長森灣²⁸ [Worship Hall], now called Wansui Abbey 萬歲觀.²⁹ In the second year [of the Gandao reign period],³⁰ the Perfected Lord—with his kerchief, pigweed, and walking stick—travelled about the famous mountains, and examined and assisted people. He reached Mount Hong 洪山³¹ and visited the monastery³² abbot, Master Mushe 木闍.³³ With [Mushe, Zhang] discussed and investigated the mysterious and still Dao. [Zhang] liked that Mushe had an intelligent nature and training in concentration, [but he] had exhausted the gold and silk he had received as offerings in his village, and so returned [to his village].

²⁴ An emperor of the Song Dynasty (1127–1194).

²⁵ (1165–1173).

²⁶ I.e. 1165.

²⁷ The deity who rules over Heaven.

²⁸ Meaning “[Worship Hall of the] Expansive Forest Bay”.

²⁹ Meaning “Abbey of Immeasurable Years”.

³⁰ I.e. 1166.

³¹ Located in today's Hubei Province.

³² As with the terms for Daoist places of worship and practice, there are several terms used for similar Buddhist sites. “Monasteries” (寺) were the largest and served as major monastic centers; “Cloisters” (庵) were similar to monasteries, though smaller; “Buddhist Temples” (梵剎) were just that.

³³ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

In the eighth year [of the Gandao reign period],³⁴ there was a drought in Sui Prefecture 隨州.³⁵ [Mushe's] prayer for rain was not answered, and Mushe had heard about the Perfected Lord's wondrous numinous [affairs] in [Zhang's] canton. [Mushe] sent his subordinate officials to personally go to Changsen[wang Worship Hall] in this canton, and courteously ask for the Perfected Lord. [When the officials] reached the canton, [Wang] burned one sheet of paper from the spirit section of the text that had been transmitted from Heaven [to Zhang], and a sweet rain began to fall. The officials, feeling pleased, wished to stay in order to burn incense and make offerings at the worship hall. The Perfected Lord disapproved, and again passed through to Mount Hong. Mushe spoke to the Perfected Lord, saying, "The Dao has its root in the One, and the teachings then divide into three. I hope you do not reject this mountain [because] we advocate the Buddha's teachings." The Perfected Lord [responded,] saying, "[From] one [they] come, [to] one [they] go."³⁶ All have a fixed cause. Yesterday I [received] an imperial decree from the Jade Emperor that told me to construct, and burn incense at, [a site of practice and worship] at a spot which should be along the border of the Dipper and Ox 斗牛,³⁷ and even with [Mount] Lu 廬³⁸ [and

³⁴ I.e. 1173.

³⁵ Located in today's Hubei Province.

³⁶ This appears to be a subtle claim of the superiority of Daoism to Buddhism. "From one they come" is likely a reference to the notion that the Dao is the source of the myriad things in the universe, and it would seem the Dao is the "one" that all things return to.

³⁷ Two of the Twenty-eight Lodges (二十八宿), a system of Chinese constellations. The Lodges are grouped according to placement in the sky, and these are to the north. Because the Lodges marked a specific region of the sky, they could be tied to particular terrestrial locations. For more, see Needham, "Astronomy in Ancient and Medieval China," 68–72 with special attention to Figures 1 and 6; Needham, *Science and Civilisation*, Vol. 3, 234–238; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Xiu," 1115–1118; Selin, ed., *History of Science*, 1237–1241.

³⁸ Located in today's Jiangxi Province. One of the "assistant" mountains to the Five Marchmounts (五嶽). For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Lushan," 725–726.

Mount] Huo 霍.³⁹ [When I] come upon [Mount] Jiu[gong] 九[宮山]⁴⁰ I [will] prosper at that spot.⁴¹ [I] cannot disobey the mandate of heaven.” [Zhang] then took his leave of Mushe, and returned to his residence at Changsen[wan Worship Hall].

In the seventh month of the first year of the Chunxi 淳熙⁴² reign period,⁴³ the Perfected Lord arrived at Mount Longhu 龍虎山⁴⁴ and paid his respects to the Celestial Master(s).⁴⁵ [There he] received the texts of the Shangqing Great Grotto 上清大洞,⁴⁶ and returned [to Changsenwan Worship Hall]. In the fourth year [of the Chunxi reign period],⁴⁷ the Buddhist monk Zuchao 祖超⁴⁸ came from Tiantai Guoqing Monastery 天台國清寺⁴⁹ [to Zhang], and asked him to serve as a teacher

³⁹ An alternate name for Mount Tianzhu (天柱山) in today’s Anhui Province. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Huoshan,” 533–534.

⁴⁰ Located in today’s Hubei Province. For a discussion of Mount Jiugong, see Hudson, *Spreading the Dao*, 105–125, *passim*.

⁴¹ This sentence is rendered: “逢九當興,” which may be a miswriting of “逢九宮興,” meaning, “[When I] come upon [Mount] Jiugong [I will] prosper.”

⁴² (1174–1189). Reign period of Emperor Xiaozong of the Song.

⁴³ I.e. June–July 1174.

⁴⁴ Located in today’s Jiangxi Province. Mount Longhu is largely associated with the Celestial Masters. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Longhu Shan,” 702–704.

⁴⁵ One of the major schools of Daoism. For a discussion of the origins of the Celestial Masters, see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 32–37; Robinet, *Taoism*, 53–77; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Tianshi Dao,” 981–986. For a brief discussion of the Celestial Masters of Mount Longhu, see Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism*, 159.

⁴⁶ The Shangqing is another of the major schools of Daoism. “Grotto” is the term used for the three sections of the Daoist canon, corresponding to Shangqing, Lingbao, and Sanhuang traditions. For a discussion of the Shangqing, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Shangqing,” 858–866; Robinet, “Shangqing,” 196–224; Robinet, *Taoism*, 114–148, *passim*; Strickmann, “Mao Shan,” 2–7.

⁴⁷ I.e. 1177.

⁴⁸ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

⁴⁹ Meaning “Monastery of the Tiantai Kingdom of Purity”. Tiantai is a school of Buddhism that heavily reveres the Lotus Sutra. For more, see Buswell, ed., *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, “Tiantai School,” 845–851.

and to quickly go there⁵⁰ and discuss the matters of the past.⁵¹ The amassed monks considered him divine.

The Perfected Lord returned to Ying, and the people of Pusao Village increasingly admired his anomalous numen. Scholars and ordinary people abandoned their residences, and at the place of [Zhang's] numinous birth on Mount Qingniu they built a worship hall. There they made offerings and burnt incense, <and it is now called Chongning Wanshou Abbey 崇寧萬壽觀.>⁵²

In the tenth year [of the Chunxi reign period],⁵³ the Perfected Lord was roaming in Zhongdu 中都.⁵⁴ At that time, Guangzong 光宗⁵⁵ was heir and had gone to Qi'an Canton 齊安郡,⁵⁶ where he fell ill. Empress Ciyi 慈懿皇后⁵⁷ urgently thought, “If [I can] get Master Zhang to come, he can cure this illness.” [Because] the place was distant [from Zhang], [Empress Ciyi] arrived [after a] difficult [journey]. Li 李⁵⁸ submitted her urban prefectural imperial belt⁵⁹ in order to see the Perfected Lord, staying at his official residence. [Empress Ciyi] heard [Zhang was] in the eastern hall, and there manifested the summons [to Zhang]. The Perfected Lord said an incantation over date water⁶⁰ and presented this [to Empress Ciyi]. In [Qi'an] Canton, the lord⁶¹ drank it and was revived. Guangzong said, “It is true! [Zhang's] spirit [is unusual]!”

⁵⁰ I.e. Tiantai Guoqing.

⁵¹ I.e. the matters of Zhang's supernatural abilities, and his teachings on the Dao.

⁵² Meaning “Abbey of Esteemed Peace and Immeasurable Age”.

⁵³ I.e. 1183.

⁵⁴ A number of cities have the name Zhongdu, it is unclear to which this is referring.

⁵⁵ A Song Dynasty emperor (1147–1200).

⁵⁶ Located in today's Hubei Province.

⁵⁷ The posthumous name of Empress Li Fengniang 李鳳娘 (1144–1200).

⁵⁸ I.e. Empress Li in note above.

⁵⁹ A belt with tallies fastened to it, used to distribute decrees and notices.

⁶⁰ I.e. water with the ashes of a date tree.

⁶¹ I.e. Guangzong.

[Guangzong] bestowed favors [upon Zhang] with great generosity, but the Perfected Lord did not accept them. [Guangzong] personally and genially bestowed [upon Zhang] an ivory placard with the two-character “Perfected Shepherd 真牧”⁶² carved onto it.

After this, the times when [Zhang] was summoned for audience, and the politeness of manners [when addressing Zhang], increased. The Perfected Lord lived a simple life, and did not go [as summoned]; it was not that he was asked and did not answer. One day, an imperial decree arrived, asking where [Zhang lived] his everyday life. [Zhang] answered, saying, “Changsenwan [Worship Hall] in Ying Prefecture.” Guangzong again personally and genially bestowed favors [upon Zhang] at Changsenwan [Worship Hall].

In the eleventh year [of the Chunxi reign period],⁶³ the Perfected Lord departed from the capital city. [When he] returned to his hermitage,⁶⁴ those living beings⁶⁵ who were living there had [greatly] amassed. The Perfected Lord saw that the hall at Changsen[w]an Worship Hall was too narrow, and would not fit the paintings and jewels [given him by] the heir apparent, Guang[zong]. [Zhang] ordered his follower Yang Zonghua 楊宗華⁶⁶ and others to build a new hall. When it was complete, [Zhang] explained to the crowd, saying, “In the past [I] personally received an imperial decree from the Jade Emperor, [I] established a Daoist ritual site, [but have] not found a place where the mountains and rivers are numinous. [I] have waited and lived for a long time, where will I go in the future?” Then [Zhang] left Ying and

⁶² This seems to be an honorary title for a high-level Daoist.

⁶³ I.e. 1184.

⁶⁴ I.e. Changsenwan Worship Hall.

⁶⁵ I.e. ordinary people.

⁶⁶ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

entered Shu 蜀,⁶⁷ passing through Alignment and Well 參井,⁶⁸ drifting through [Dongting] Lake and Xiang [River] 湖湘,⁶⁹ going over [Lake] Dongting, and under the river basin.

In the spring of the fourteenth year [of the Chunxi reign period],⁷⁰ [Zhang] passed through [Mount] Kanglu 康廬.⁷¹ There, aged transcendents greeted him on the road with clasped hands, saying, “[We are] foolish⁷² footprint-concealers⁷³ of [Mount] Jiugong, [we] have come from a distance to join and meet you. [You] wish to soon visit that mountain,⁷⁴ we have things you [can] rely upon.”⁷⁵ The Perfected Lord accepted, [and it was] for this reason that [Zhang] had abundance. [When] he reached Tongyang 通羊⁷⁶ at the top of the river, he stopped at Shankeng Buddhist Temple 杉坑梵刹.⁷⁷ That evening, the hamlet elder of the Town of Zhang 張鎮 was on the spur of the mountain. That night [the hamlet elder] had a dream in which a deity wearing a yellow gown and riding a white horse came directly into his dwelling. The next day at the hour of the horse 午,⁷⁸ the Perfected Lord arrived in the Town [of Zhang]. [The townsfolk] thought him unusual, and poured out their thoughts to him. The Perfected

⁶⁷ One of the stars found in the Heavenly Market Enclosure (天市垣), one of the Three Enclosures (三垣). The Three Enclosures, like the Twenty-eight Lodges, were a means of dividing up the sky, and, as such, denoting terrestrial locations. The Heavenly Market Enclosure comprised the southwestern portion of the sky. For more on the Three Enclosures, see Ho, *Chinese Mathematical Astrology*, 140–143.

⁶⁸ Two of the Twenty-eight Lodges. These two lie in the southwest.

⁶⁹ Used to abbreviate Lake Dongting [洞庭湖] and the Xiang River [湘江] in Hunan Province.

⁷⁰ I.e. 1187.

⁷¹ Another term for Mount Lu, above.

⁷² A humble means of referring to oneself.

⁷³ A poetic term for those who live as hermits.

⁷⁴ I.e. Mount Jiugong.

⁷⁵ I.e. to get Zhang to the mountain.

⁷⁶ Located in today's Hubei Province.

⁷⁷ Meaning “Buddhist Temple of the Pine Pit”.

⁷⁸ The Chinese clock was divided into twelve two-hour blocks. This period was from 11:00–13:00.

Lord told them, saying, “This is the numinous altar [Mount] Jiugong, and it has been covered and neglected for a long time.⁷⁹ I will cultivate this foundation, and will pray for the state in this place.”

Thereupon, [Zhang] laid his hands upon creeping plants and climbed several tens of *li*.⁸⁰ He reached the place at the mountain’s summit, and it was several tens of *mu*⁸¹ across. [Zhang] immediately mapped [the place] and wrote [a name], calling the place Pinghutai 平壺臺.⁸² At sunset, [Zhang] lodged for the night on the mountain, sitting cross-legged below a pine tree. At midnight, the mountain [was filled with] numinous sounds and music, and [Zhang’s] followers were overwhelmed with fear. The Perfected Lord said, “This is the spirit of the mountain, communicating to us its joy.” Then there [appeared] a crimson snake and a spirit dragon [and the followers thought it] unusual. At dawn, [Zhang’s] followers announced that they were hungry, and the Perfected Lord, who had been sitting silently, suddenly awoke. From his sleeve he produced a vegetarian meal of half-cooked beans, and each [follower] was granted one. [The beans] had an unusual fragrance, and felt as if they were hot. [The followers] ate them and were satiated. Then, at [Ping]hutai, below and facing a tree trunk, [Zhang] made a sacrifice and established a Daoist ritual site, saying to his followers, “I will return to Changsen[wang Worship Hall], and will come again in the fall.” [Zhang], using talismans, then transmitted his teachings to his disciple Yang Zonghua, and commanded [his disciples] to establish [a site] before [Zhang] left. [His

⁷⁹ It seems that Zhang is referring to the entirety of Mount Jiugong as a numinous altar.

⁸⁰ A *li* (里) is a Chinese unit of length, roughly equal to 500 meters.

⁸¹ A *mu* (畝) is a Chinese unit of area, roughly equal to 650 square meters.

⁸² Meaning “Flat Pot Terrace”.

disciples made] a dwelling of tied reeds, in which [Zhang] temporarily rested peacefully.

In the fifteenth year *wushen* 戊申⁸³ [of the Chunxi reign period],⁸⁴ the Perfected Lord arrived [back at Pinghutai], and seven crowds welcomed him into the mountain. Those people from the four directions who were in bad health or sought peace were gathered like clouds, prostrated themselves [before him,] and listened to [Zhang's] responses. Those who were poor sought assistance; those who were wealthy gave riches. Afterwards, the Perfected Lord bestowed every bandit with numen, and the establishment of the [site at Mount] Jiugong was completed in a few days.

In the first year of Guangzong's Shaoxi 紹熙⁸⁵ reign period,⁸⁶ [Guangzong sent] an imperial decree summoning [Zhang], [but Zhang] did not go. [Guangzong] dispatched an envoy, who went carrying joss sticks, candles, embroidered banners, and silver tickets and entered the mountain, establishing a state Daoist ceremony and [granting] insignia and blessings to the people. Emperor Ning 寧皇⁸⁷ was heir to the throne, and also generously conferred [gifts upon Zhang]. Before long, the government ordered a Buddhist cloister⁸⁸ be changed to Qintian Abbey 欽天觀.⁸⁹

In the first year of the Qingyuan 慶元⁹⁰ reign period,⁹¹ Ningzong, approaching in a chariot, [came to] Ciyi's dwelling in the palace. Every year [he] dispatched an envoy to enter Mount [Jiugong], and bestowed substantial gifts [upon Zhang]. In the

⁸³ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

⁸⁴ I.e. 1188.

⁸⁵ (1190–1194).

⁸⁶ I.e. 1190.

⁸⁷ I.e. Ningzong, a Song Dynasty emperor (1168–1224).

⁸⁸ It is unclear which Buddhist cloister. Perhaps Shankeng Buddhist Temple mentioned above.

⁸⁹ Meaning “Abbey of Respecting Heaven”.

⁹⁰ (1195–1201) Reign period of Song Ningzong.

⁹¹ I.e. 1195.

third year [of the Qingyuan reign period],⁹² the Perfected Lord returned to Changsen[wang Worship Hall]. In the fifth year [of the Qingyuan reign period],⁹³ the emperor bestowed the Perfected Lord with [the title] “Perfected Shepherd of Perfected Men 真牧真人”. In the fourth year of the Jiatai 嘉泰⁹⁴ reign period,⁹⁵ Emperor Ning personally and genially [bestowed upon the site at Mount Jiugong] the six-character title “Qintian Ruiqingzhi Palace 欽天瑞慶之宮”.⁹⁶ By imperial decree, [this title was] carved into print blocks [and printed] at Xiuneisi 修內司.⁹⁷ [Qingtian] Abbey was changed into a Palace, and [that which was] bestowed was superfluous and great. In the sixth month [of that year], the emperor returned and conferred the title “Great Peace State Protecting Perfected Shepherd of Perfected Men 太平護國真牧真人” [on Zhang].

In the second year of the Kaixi 開禧⁹⁸ reign period,⁹⁹ by imperial decree, the Fiscal Commissioner 轉運司¹⁰⁰ of Jiangxi 江西¹⁰¹ [Province] distributed and bestowed unoccupied land [to Zhang]. Furthermore, Empress Ciming 慈明皇后¹⁰²

⁹² I.e. 1197.

⁹³ I.e. 1199.

⁹⁴ (1201–1204) Reign period of Song Ningzong.

⁹⁵ I.e. 1204.

⁹⁶ Meaning “Palace of Respecting Heaven and Auspicious Celebrations”. For a discussion of events surrounding this site and its importance to later Daoists, see Hudson, *Spreading the Dao*, 105–125, *passim*.

⁹⁷ Xiuneisi was one of five famous kilns in the Song Dynasty, at which the dishware used by the imperial family was produced.

⁹⁸ (1205–1207) Reign period of Song Ningzong.

⁹⁹ I.e. 1206.

¹⁰⁰ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “chüan-yün ssü,” 186.

¹⁰¹ This is also today’s Jiangxi Province.

¹⁰² (1162–1232) Another name for Empress Gongsheng (恭聖皇后), the Empress consort of Song Ningzong.

bestowed money and set aside farmsteads, offering support to the feathered masses.¹⁰³ [The two] continuously sent special imperial decrees that dismissed servants, exempted [people] from taxes, and so on. In this year, bandits captured [the area] west of the capital, and Changsen[wang Worship Hall] was naturally seized in this. The capturing [bandits] had already entered the region, and the feathered crowd fled. The Perfected Lord sat upright at the front of the hall, and the capturing [bandits] were unable to commit a crime. This extended to [the bandits] setting fire to and burning the worship hall, but [Zhang] extinguished the smoke and flames himself. Then [the bandits] gasped in admiration, saying, “This is the transcendent of the Southern Dynasty 南朝¹⁰⁴ who has obtained the Dao.”

At the beginning of the summer of the third year [of the Kaixi reign period],¹⁰⁵ the Perfected Lord returned again to Changsen[wang Worship Hall], and the disciples from [Mount] Jiugong also arrived in the province¹⁰⁶ to serve [him]. [Duties] complete, [the disciples] asked, hopefully, if the Perfected Lord would return to [Mount] Jiugong. The Perfected Lord said, “My movements are not to a place that you know. I established the Daoist ritual site at [Mount] Jiugong, thereupon receiving the mandate of heaven. [I] guarded the state and Ning[zong’s] house, and founded and built a place for the assembled crowd of Daoists. You all should advance your minds in the Dao, you must not concern yourselves with whether I do not return.”

¹⁰³ 羽眾 What this means, exactly, remains unclear. “Feathered” is often an attribute of transcendents, but, given the crowd’s later actions, it does not seem as if this is likely here.

¹⁰⁴ I.e. the Southern Song Dynasty.

¹⁰⁵ I.e. 1207.

¹⁰⁶ I.e. Hubei Province.

On the fifth day of the seventh month [of that year],¹⁰⁷ the Perfected Lord beat a drum and ascended while sitting, proclaiming to the crowd, “Death and life are the same as day and night. Leaving and entering are the same as Heaven and Earth.”¹⁰⁸ I myself have experienced a *kalpa* 劫¹⁰⁹ since coming [into the world], and should now depart the world. [I] submit my mind to passing beyond men, my body is dust of the common world, my name is written in the register of transcendents. Now [I] will return [to] the grotto, and, thus, not have the hangings and obstructions of the Eight Wastelands 八荒.¹¹⁰ You all must observe and adhere strictly to the rules, follow the compass and go with the set square,¹¹¹ support the teachings, and tell your rulers and kin [about the Dao].” At this point, [Zhang] demanded paper and wrote a hymn, which said:

Matter is illusory and dust beautiful,
 [This could be discussed] in excess of six records.
 Sympathize with every emotion,
 If thirsty, go to water.
 [If you] step on and break iron shoes,
 Seek to follow a rope underfoot.
 [In] one *kṣana* 刹那¹¹² of time,
 The flow of the crowd ceases.

¹⁰⁷ I.e. 31 July 1207.

¹⁰⁸ Alternately, “Leaving and entering are the same as *yang* and *yin*.”

¹⁰⁹ A Sanskrit, and Buddhist, term. The *kalpa* is the longest of the Indian cosmological time periods, and is defined as 1000 *yugas*, a period equaling 432,000,000 human years. For more on *kalpas*, see “Digital Dictionary of Buddhism,” “劫,” Eliade, *Eternal Return*, 113–117. For a discussion of the notion of *kalpas* in Daoism, see Zürcher, “Buddhist Influence,” 87.

¹¹⁰ The eight regions around China. A metaphor for the world.

¹¹¹ An idiomatic expression meaning, “Follow the rules exactly.”

¹¹² A Sanskrit, and Buddhist, term. Refers to a single instant.

[I] look up and receive imperial favors,
And can declare [what is] the end and beginning.
Today [I] escape form,
Clear as shedding a slipper.
Ah! [I] clearly remember from the time [since I began this] journey,
[Now I] ride these white clouds and return to the Hamlet of the Gods
帝鄉.¹¹³

The hymn thus ended, [Zhang wished his disciples] take good care of themselves, sat upright, and molted.¹¹⁴

[That which was] left behind was memorialized, and covered by Emperor Ning who made an imperial comment, [saying,] “Zhang Daoqing, the Great Peace State Protecting Perfected Shepherd of Perfected Men, recorded the true and false, and his skills acquired through religious practice were lofty and unsullied. [In] former reigns [he] took interest in those he came across, and was extremely generous. Furthermore, [if he] prayed for rain or sunshine, [he] always received a response. Now that [he has] already ascended, I feel great pity. I can bestow money taken from my treasury, and command [my] disciples to go to Changsenwan [Worship Hall] and, upon welcoming a return [of Zhang’s remains] to [Mount] Jiugong to offer veneration and admiration.” Those who were in charge at [Mount] Jiugong used sorcery to prophesy a good place to safely inter [Zhang], [where his remains would] not be

¹¹³ I.e. the home of the gods.

¹¹⁴ I.e. left his earthly body behind.

destroyed or broken, and [they] would not allow a place that would obstruct seekers. Qintian Ruiqing Palace was proposed, [and the monks] approve of this.¹¹⁵

[Ningzong] continued to send imperial edicts, saying, “[I have] ordered the Fiscal Commission of Jiangxi to send Fiscal Commissioner-in-chief 都運¹¹⁶ Zhao Longtu 趙龍圖¹¹⁷ to supervise and urge this movement [of Zhang’s remains]. [Upon his] welcome, [he will] quickly send a reply. [You must] resolutely wait for the masses of followers to receive [news of this] imperial edict, [then] leave Changsenwan [Worship Hall] to protect the niche and welcome [Zhang’s] return, choosing an auspicious day to enter the tower.” Suddenly,¹¹⁸ the Perfected Lord personally appeared near a boy, calling out, “I am now a spirit and have returned to the Heavenly Mansion 天府.¹¹⁹ I have lost my form, why do you inter it? Cherish the several honest, virtuous, truthful [people who have] come from a distance, not in order to respect [me], [but] in order to establish a hall to venerate and make offers at. True characteristics are just like this.”

In the third year of the Jiading 嘉定¹²⁰ reign period,¹²¹ Emperor Ning continued [his] offerings, bestowing [upon the hall at Qintian Ruiqing Palace] a placard carved with the three-character “Perfected Shepherd Hall 真牧堂”. [When]

¹¹⁵ This anecdote is humorous for several reasons. The first is that, as it would turn out, Qintian Ruiqing Palace was not a safe place to inter Zhang, as his remains would be cut into pieces by bandits in 1855 (see Hudson, *Spreading the Dao*, 105). The second of these reasons is that Qintian Ruiqing Palace was the temple at Mount Jiugong, and it should be no surprise that the monks in charge of divining Zhang’s place of interment should choose their own temple.

¹¹⁶ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “tū-yūn,” 546.

¹¹⁷ A Song Dynasty poet. Dates unknown.

¹¹⁸ It would appear as if the following encounter happens after Zhang’s body is brought to Mount Jiugong.

¹¹⁹ A term for the heavens.

¹²⁰ (1208–1224).

¹²¹ I.e. 1210.

Emperor Lizong 理宗¹²² was on the imperial throne, he showed great concern for various matters, and in the fourth year of the Shaoding 紹定¹²³ reign period,¹²⁴ [Lizong] conferred the title of “Perfected Shepherd [who] Universally Responds to Perfected Men 真牧普應真人” [upon Zhang], <[because] his deeds [showed] a strange numen, and the lord’s kindness and favor were abundant. Detailed on Mount Jiugong is the Perfected Lord’s full biography.>

A2. Xie Shouhao 謝守灝¹²⁵

The Elder’s 先生¹²⁶ surname was Xie 謝, his given name Shouhao 守灝,¹²⁷ and his courtesy name Huaiying 懷英.¹²⁸ He was a man of Yongjia 永嘉¹²⁹ [Canton], and was born at the hour of the horse on the twenty-second day of the third month of the fourth year *jiayin* 甲寅¹³⁰ in Song Gaozong’s Shaoxing reign period.¹³¹ When the Elder was young he was bright and intelligent. In the year he came of age,¹³² [Xie] quickly [turned his] ambition toward studying. One day, several Daoist monks¹³³ visited his

¹²² (1205–1264) Emperor of Song Dynasty.

¹²³ (1228–1233) Reign period of Song Lizong.

¹²⁴ I.e. 1231.

¹²⁵ For more on Xie Shouhao, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Hunyuan shengji,” 525–526.

¹²⁶ A term for a person of note, though not necessarily a Daoist title.

¹²⁷ Meaning “Defending Expansively”.

¹²⁸ Meaning “Bright Bosomed”.

¹²⁹ Located in today’s Zhejiang Province.

¹³⁰ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

¹³¹ I.e. 18 April 1134.

¹³² Men in China came of age when they turned twenty.

¹³³ Literally “cloud water circulation of the Dao 雲水道流”.

study, and the Daoist monks said, “[We] poor Daoists¹³⁴ will form ties to [you,] Elder.” With that, [the Daoist monks] clasped their hands in greeting and promptly sat down. They again stood and entered inside, [and Xie] ordered tea be made. The Daoist monks nodded, saying, “Venerate that which is the ancient knowledge of the spirit transcendents!” The Daoist monks sat. The Elder was speechless and it was as if he had become awakened and aware. Various classics, philosophies, and histories became plainly visible to him. [Xie] was encouraged that he had the essence of a Confucian scholar, and that his abilities were sufficient [for such an occupation]. In his younger years, [Xie] filled a position at a university, and afterward he [served] at a public building in Duke Cao Zhongjing’s 曹忠靖公¹³⁵ urban prefecture.

At that time, the Perfected¹³⁶ Huangfu of Pure Emptiness 清虛皇甫真人¹³⁷ had come across the border, and all the suzerains [of the region] delayed him and asked him about ethics. Duke Cao perceived the Perfected’s crossing of the Yellow River as a blessing, and [Cao] delayed [the Perfected] for a time at his house. The Elder admired the Perfected’s virtue, and therefore removed his scholar’s cap, took part in rites with the Perfected, and focused on being written into the registers of the feather-coated.¹³⁸ [The] Perfected of the Dao, [who was] initially entrusted by Cao fully and deeply, then went to the Elder, entered his home, and became his disciple. The Elder was erudite and had a strong memory, and [the subjects he] discussed were wide and broad. [He discussed] everything between the superior Dao and the inferior

¹³⁴ A humble means of referring to oneself.

¹³⁵ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹³⁶ 真人 A title granted to Daoists who have high spiritual attainment. It appears to be lower than Perfected Lord.

¹³⁷ “Pure Emptiness” is a reference to Laozi’s thought on how to govern. I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹³⁸ I.e. the register of transcendents.

Buddhism, and distinguished the severity of wickedness amongst them. The Elder always said, “The Confucian school claims it is able to discuss those [schools] from Yang to Mo 楊墨,¹³⁹ as well as those of the Sage’s¹⁴⁰ followers. We of the Daoist School can also claim this.”

One day, an intelligent scholar who was devoted to and esteemed Buddhism asked the Elder, saying, “Are you familiar with the superior of the Three Teachings?”¹⁴¹ The Elder [answered,] saying, “All under heaven is without two paths, and the innumerably different [things] have the same origins. [This has been] reached through clear logic, how can you have doubts?” The Elder had examined and investigated the classics and the histories, and his words were in accordance with [them]. [Though the scholar] disputed [the Elder] with a torrent of words, the Elder could not be swayed.

One day, he who had had difficulty¹⁴² returned and said, “Exhaustively trusting in texts is not as good as being without texts.”¹⁴³ The Elder [responded,] saying, “If this is true, then the classics and histories of the school you esteem¹⁴⁴ cannot be trusted. [How then can] your words be esteemed and trusted?” The person had no answer, and with great respect and admiration he left.

¹³⁹ The teachings of Yang Zhu (楊朱) and Mozi (墨子), two philosophers of the Warring States period. The Confucians often looked at these two as anti-ethical thinkers.

¹⁴⁰ I.e. Confucius.

¹⁴¹ I.e. Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.

¹⁴² I.e. the Buddhist scholar above.

¹⁴³ This appears to be a reference to the Chan 禪 School of Buddhism, certain proponents of which alleged that true Buddhist teachings were only to be found outside of texts. For more on Chan, see Buswell, ed., *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, “Chan School,” 130–136.

¹⁴⁴ I.e. (Chan) Buddhism.

In the thirteenth year of Xiaozong's 孝宗¹⁴⁵ Chunxi reign period,¹⁴⁶ the Transport Clerk 漕使¹⁴⁷ of Jiangxi [Province] sent a dispatch [to Xie] requesting knowledge of Yulong Wanshou Palace 玉隆萬壽宮¹⁴⁸ in the Western Hills 西山.¹⁴⁹ In the first year of Guangzong's Shaoxi reign period,¹⁵⁰ the imperial court granted [and allowed Xie] to return to an abbey as great master, [and asked] that he pose as an administrative high scholar at Shouning Abbey 壽寧觀.¹⁵¹ However, as the Elder was examining the texts of the Three Teachings and the Hundred Schools of Thought,¹⁵² he composed the *True Record of Taishang Laojun the Emperor of Time Immemorial* 太上老君混元皇帝實錄¹⁵³ totaling seven fascicles. He reported and made this text known to the suzerain, and it became widespread at the time. To teach about the origin,¹⁵⁴ [Xie] spoke and moved through all levels of society.

In the fourth year of the Shaoxi reign period,¹⁵⁵ [Xie] was appointed abbot of Yulong Wanshou Palace. In the first year of Ningzong's Jiatai reign period,¹⁵⁶ [Xie] was appointed to burn incense and study [as] the administrator of palace affairs. [Xie] promoted a single scripture, dispelled the subtle and referred to the abstruse, and attracted [those who studied] the Three Teachings. [If] a noble person asked a

¹⁴⁵ (1127–1194).

¹⁴⁶ I.e. 1186.

¹⁴⁷ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “ts’áo-shih,” 520.

¹⁴⁸ Meaning “Palace of Jade Abundance and Immeasurable Age”. For more on this temple, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Yulong wanshou gong,” 1199.

¹⁴⁹ Located in today's Jiangxi Province. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Xishang,” 1111–1112.

¹⁵⁰ I.e. 1190.

¹⁵¹ Meaning “Abbey of Peaceful Old Age”.

¹⁵² The Three Teachings are discussed above. The Hundred Schools of Thought refers to the various philosophies established during the Warring States period.

¹⁵³ Taishang Laojun is the name of the deified Laozi. This text does not seem to be extant.

¹⁵⁴ I.e. the Dao.

¹⁵⁵ I.e. 1193.

¹⁵⁶ I.e. 1201.

question, [Xie] responded like an echo. [Xie] was also asked if he would temporarily sit at a [Buddhist] monastery and expound the teachings. [At the] contemplation grove¹⁵⁷ were venerable old monks, and many sighed with admiration [at Xie].

The Elder soon roamed the area between the Yangzi River and the sea, and passed through many famous mountains. [At one time] he came across and met a person who transmitted to [Xie] the *Record of the Transcendent's Stone Casket* 旌陽石函記¹⁵⁸ in full. It was concerned with managing gold and cinnabar,¹⁵⁹ [allowing Xie] to prepare more and more subtle classes [of product]. What is inside is nourished and true, what is outside is mixed and unrefined, and people do not know this.¹⁶⁰

In both Guang[zong's] and Ning[zong's] reigns, [Xie] had cared for those he met with generosity. [He] had made friends [his] whole life, had high virtue for the age, and had surpassingly uprooted the unrefined, all to a point unreachable by [most] people. [Xie] had reached his twilight years, and his appearance was clearly aged. His beard and hair were hoary and white, and many people said he looked like a living Laojun who had come to the world. [At one time, Xie] was sitting quietly in an enclosed area, and was burning incense and reciting a text. Because [Xie] had himself composed the *True Record of Time Immemorial*¹⁶¹ at the abbey, [he] now leaned upon a table and recited at length, saying, "That which I know is only this text! That which is my sin is only this text!"¹⁶² [Xie's] disciples questioned him increasingly, and the

¹⁵⁷ A poetic term for Buddhist practice sites.

¹⁵⁸ This text does not seem to be extant.

¹⁵⁹ I.e. it was an alchemical text.

¹⁶⁰ This sentence appears to be an added note, as it breaks the narrative structure found in the rest of the hagiography. If it is an added note, however, it has not been marked as such.

¹⁶¹ I.e. *True Record of Taishang Laojun the Emperor of Time Immemorial*.

¹⁶² This is a reference to the *Mengzi*, which cites Confucius as saying "That which I know is only the Spring and Autumn Annals! That which is my sin is only the Spring and Autumn Annals!"

Elder said, “My ambition is in studying this writing and protecting the teachings, to illuminate and discuss [what is] right and [what is] wrong. [My] thoughts have already been established and settled, and no word can change [my mind]. Future generations [may] slander my reputation. Allow this.” [Though Xie was] aged in years, his countenance was pleased and dewy, [his] ears and eyes acute. Like a lantern on a clear night [he could] understand the texts, [though the] characters were as fine as a fly’s head.¹⁶³ [He] tried to make hidden one section of the *Record of the Stone Casket*¹⁶⁴—<this one section, which is titled “Discourse on Recipes for the Appearance of the Gold and Cinnabar 金丹法象論”,¹⁶⁵ is an addendum added by a later person, the teaching of which is abnormal, [and I]¹⁶⁶ fear it is an error of some scholar>—by writing the characters like grains of rice, carving them onto high-quality silver leaf. [Xie] hid in a cave in a cliff, and [in doing the above] waited for his bones to become those of a transcendent’s.¹⁶⁷

In his twilight years, [Xie] resigned from his position and left for Yongjia Canton and Rui’an District 瑞安縣.¹⁶⁸ At Zihua Summit 紫華峰,¹⁶⁹ [Xie] established a palace. [He] asked the emperor for a placard, calling it Jiuxing Palace 九星宮.¹⁷⁰ At this time, the Elder built an area for bathing. [He] had lived in this world for nine

¹⁶³ I.e. though the characters were very small.

¹⁶⁴ I.e. the *Record of the Transcendent’s Stone Casket*.

¹⁶⁵ Like the rest of the text, this section does not seem to be extant.

¹⁶⁶ I.e. the writer of the note.

¹⁶⁷ The bones of a transcendent were typically thought to be composed of jade.

¹⁶⁸ Located in today’s Zhejiang Province.

¹⁶⁹ Meaning “Purple Flower Summit”.

¹⁷⁰ Meaning “Palace of the Nine Stars”. This is a reference to the Big Dipper, which was supposed to have contained nine stars (seven visible, two invisible). For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Beidou,” 224–226.

years beyond seventy,¹⁷¹ and on the nineteenth night of the second month of the fifth year *renshen* 壬申¹⁷² in Ningzong's Jiading reign period,¹⁷³ [Xie] suddenly dreamed that a celestial being descended and called to the Elder, saying, "Taishang [Laojun] has sent an order, hurriedly summoning [you] to study the *Record of the History of Perfected Transcendents* 真仙史記."¹⁷⁴ The next day at the hour of the horse, [Xie] bathed his body in a fragrant hot spring, and took leave of the crowd of Daoists. [He] wrote a hymn, which said:

The creator of things is the host of an inn,
Heaven and Earth are a single lotus hut.
Still, you already have life,
I am not yet without life.

The hymn [thus] ended, [Xie] sat upright in proper clothing and hat, and, ere long, suddenly transformed.¹⁷⁵ Afterward, his disciples secretly and quietly returned the Elder[']s remains] to Xiuwen Fujiao Abbey 修文輔教觀.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ 住世引年七十有九 It is unclear why this structure is used instead of simply writing out seventy-nine years.

¹⁷² One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

¹⁷³ I.e. 23 March 1212.

¹⁷⁴ This seems to be a heavenly biography of transcendents.

¹⁷⁵ 化 Likely meant to be "Metamorphosed" (變化). For more on what this term means, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Bianhua," 229–230.

¹⁷⁶ Meaning "Abbey of Studying the Writings and Protecting the Teaching". This name appears to be a reference to Xie's latter day intentions.

A3. Primordial Lady Zu 祖元君¹⁷⁷

The Primordial Lady 元君¹⁷⁸ had the surname Zu 祖, the taboo name Shu 舒,¹⁷⁹ the given name Suidao 遂道,¹⁸⁰ and the courtesy name Fangzhong 防仲.¹⁸¹ [Zu] was a woman of Lingling 零陵¹⁸² [County] in Guangxi 廣西¹⁸³ [Province,] [or of] Qiyang District 祈陽縣 in Yong Prefecture 永州,¹⁸⁴ in the Tang 唐¹⁸⁵ [Dynasty]. [She] was born in the ninth month on the ninth day during a lunar apogee.¹⁸⁶ [Her] face was black in color; [she] had great, circular eyes; [her] teeth were bared; and the hair on [her] head was loose and often had a bamboo-joint hairpin inserted [in it]. [Her] hands and feet were black and had fine hair, [she] was over seven *chi*¹⁸⁷ tall, and her age [upon death] was one hundred and thirty-two. [When she] was young [she] had moral principles, and at birth had a numinous spirit. [She was] strict in her ambition to study what was true, and, as neither her mother nor father could prohibit it, [she] roamed all

¹⁷⁷ For a discussion of Zu Shu see Despeux and Kohn, ed., *Women in Daoism*, 17–18, 132–133; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Qingwei,” 804–805. For a discussion of Zu’s gender as found in the hagiography, see note 10 in “The *Xubian*” above.

¹⁷⁸ A title granted to Daoist women who had become transcendents. Zu is the only woman to have a hagiography in this fascicle.

¹⁷⁹ Meaning “Relaxed”.

¹⁸⁰ Meaning “Following the Dao”.

¹⁸¹ Meaning “Defending the Middle”.

¹⁸² Located in today’s Hunan Province.

¹⁸³ Known today as the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

¹⁸⁴ Located in today’s Hunan Province.

¹⁸⁵ Dynasty lasting 618–907.

¹⁸⁶ The year of her birth is not given. The lunar apogee, or “dark moon,” is the point at which the moon is furthest from the Earth. Lunar apogee could occur at eight different points in the celestial mapping of the sky, with the period for each cycle of eight positions being approximately nine years. For a brief discussion of the lunar apogee, see Needham, *Science and Civilisation*, Vol. 3, Figure 180, 393. Judith Boltz gives Zu the dates fl. 889–904. See: Boltz, *Taoist Literature*, 38.

¹⁸⁷ A *chi* (尺) is a Chinese unit of length, roughly equal to thirty-three centimeters.

over the famous mountains, serving as a teacher to Perfected Lord Xu 許真君,¹⁸⁸

Perfected Zheng 鄭真人,¹⁸⁹ and Sacred Mother Lingguang 靈光聖母.¹⁹⁰

One day, [Zu] was at Shenhua Creek 神化溪¹⁹¹ in Qingxu Grotto 清虛洞,¹⁹² west of the capital. There she met Madam Taixuan 太玄夫人,¹⁹³ who had descended to the creek's bank. [Taixuan's] followers and troops were also there. [Taixuan] received [Zu], and together they all went into the grotto for several days. [There, Zu] altered [her] appearance [between] male and female,¹⁹⁴ underwent several difficult trials, and in the end did not make one careless mistake. Therefore, [Taixuan] transmitted [to Zu the knowledge of] the Primal Dao 元始大道.¹⁹⁵ [Taixuan] ordered [Zu] to ride upon a dead tree [down Shenhua Creek]. [Zu] obeyed and drifted until she had stopped. After a short time, the tree reached an ancient spot, and [Zu] lost the location of Madam [Taixuan].

From this, [Zu] assembled the four sects¹⁹⁶ and made them one, taking a position as the chief imperial attendant of the Qingwei 清微¹⁹⁷ [School]. [Zu] returned

¹⁸⁸ There are a number of Daoist figures with this name, it is unclear to which this refers.

¹⁸⁹ There are a number of Daoist figures with this name, it is unclear to which this refers.

¹⁹⁰ This could also be the name of a deity, the Goddess of Numinous Light.

¹⁹¹ Meaning "Creek of Spiritual Transformation".

¹⁹² Meaning "Grotto of Pure Emptiness". Located in today's Guizhou Province.

¹⁹³ Meaning "Madam of the Great Mystery". Taixuan refers to the first of the three pneuma created at the beginning of time. For a discussion of the three pneumas, see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 188–194. It can also refer to one of the supplemental sections to the *Daozang*.

¹⁹⁴ What exactly this phrase (變現男女) means is somewhat unclear. The ability to change one's gender at will was a feat achieved by those who have attained a high-level of spiritual development. If, however, Dr. Shayne Clarke's suggestion is correct, this might mean that Zu Shu was originally a man and transformed—or was transformed—into a woman (Shayne Clarke, personal communication, 4 September 2014).

¹⁹⁵ I.e. the Dao before it split to create the innumerable things of the universe.

¹⁹⁶ Which four sects are being referred to is unclear. It is likely that they include Shangqing, Lingbao, and Zhengyi.

[to Heaven] in an incarnated form as the Primordial Lady of the Qingwei who Oversees Manifestation and Transformation 清微察令昭化元君, also called the Primordial Lady of Realization and Unified Glory 通化一輝元君. [The Primordial Lady] had control over thunder.¹⁹⁸ [The Primordial Lady] manifested [herself] in various forms: one in which she held a red kerchief and shoulder bag, with bare feet and exposed legs, and which was of formidable might; one in which she held a double-edged sword and sat upon a rock, shouting out orders to the wind and thunder; one in which she rode a dragon and held a double-edged sword, urging on innumerable numinous servants; and one in which she wore a gold cap and white robe, descending with honor to grotto mansions.¹⁹⁹

[Zu's] nature was already strict and virtuous, and the thunder spirit [powers] added to and encouraged her strictness. [Her] merits complete, [Zu] rose in the air and dwelt at Jinque Zhaoning Palace 金闕昭凝宮,²⁰⁰ located in the Zhu Qingwei Dongzhao Mansion 主清微洞照府.²⁰¹ [The region was] also called Jinque Zhonglingning Zhao Mansion 金闕中靈凝照府.²⁰² [There, Zu] maintained the teachings, and benefitted and aided the living people. Among those who continued the

¹⁹⁷ Meaning "Grand Tenuity". The Qingwei School was an influential but little-studied school, known for its development of the Thunder Rites, which will be mentioned later in the hagiography. For a discussion of the Qingwei, see: Boltz, *Taoist Literature*, 38–41; Robinet, *Taoism*, 180–182; Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon*, 1095–1115.

¹⁹⁸ Control over thunder, achieved through Thunder Rites (雷法), was a Qingwei exorcistic technique that became widespread across Daoist schools after the twelfth century. For more, see Boltz, "Seal of Office," 272–286; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Leifa," 627–629. For a discussion of the history of Thunder Rites in China, including those that preceded Zu Shu, see Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, 24–30.

¹⁹⁹ Grotto mansions (洞府) were among the locations in which transcendents would live.

²⁰⁰ Meaning "Palace of the Golden Watchtower of Condensed Light".

²⁰¹ Meaning "Mansion of the Lord of Qingwei's Illuminated Grotto". When referring to heavenly realms, 府 is taken to mean "Mansions" as opposed to "Urban Prefectures."

²⁰² Meaning "Illuminated Mansion of the Golden Watchtower in Condensed Numen".

Dao,²⁰³ they affectionately carried on [propagating the teaching]. [Those who] most thoroughly elucidated the teachings of Qingwei Daoism include:²⁰⁴ Primordial Lady Guo of the Jade Room in the Grotto of Purity 瓊室洞清郭元君, Primordial Lady Fu of the Happiness and Peace of the Glorious and Perfected 福和耀真傳元君, Primordial Lady Yao of the Dragon Light's Clear Dao 龍光道明姚元君, Primordial Lady Gao of the Violet Flower and Jade Kindness 紫英玉惠高元君, Perfected²⁰⁵ Hua of the Original Light of the Royal and Numinous Purity 元勳皇靈清虛華真人, Perfected Zhu who Passed Brightly through Mount Qingcheng 青城山通慧朱真人, Perfected Li who Guards All on Cloud Mountain 雲山保一李真人, and Perfected Nan who Reached Meishan and Secretly Merged 至眉山混隱南真人.²⁰⁶

A4. Perfected Lord Wang the Official of Fire 火師汪真君²⁰⁷

The Perfected Lord's surname was Wang 汪, his given name Zihua 子華,²⁰⁸ and his courtesy name Shimei 時美.²⁰⁹ [Wang] was born in the second year *jiayin* 甲寅²¹⁰ of

²⁰³ I.e. propagated Zu's teachings.

²⁰⁴ What follows is a list of eight figures, all of whom are given rather long religious titles. I have not been able to locate any of these figures outside this text.

²⁰⁵ The characters used to describe this and the following "Perfected" figures (i.e. 真人) can be applied to both men and women. As such, unless a figure can be readily identified, the genders of these figures remain unclear.

²⁰⁶ Meishan Prefecture is located in today's Sichuan Province.

²⁰⁷ Like Zhang Daoqing, there is relatively little scholarship on Wang Zihua. For example, the *Chinese Dictionary of Daoism* 中華道教大辭典 contains a truncated version of this hagiography for its entry concerning Wang. See Hu, ed., *Zhonghua Daojiao Dacidian*, "Wang Zihua," 100.

Tang Xuanzong 唐玄宗²¹¹ in the Ruyang District 汝陽縣 of the Cai Prefecture 蔡州.²¹² [When Wang was] forty years old, and had failed the civil service exam on three occasions, he sighed, saying, “I am in excess of forty years,²¹³ and have not risen in the court register of officials; how must I appear when my friends gaze upon me? I shall study Huang-Lao’s 黃老²¹⁴ teachings, and become a minister in the Hamlet of the Gods.”

Then, together with Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿,²¹⁵ [Wang] learned from White Cloud Elder Zhang Yue 白雲先生張約,²¹⁶ and again [Wang] learned from Crimson City Elder Sima Chengzhen 赤城先生司馬承禎.²¹⁷ [Wang] encountered Lushan’s 祿山²¹⁸ revolt, [so he] forsook his home and travelled about freely.

²⁰⁸ Meaning “Son of Illustriousness” or “Son of China”.

²⁰⁹ Meaning “Time of Beauty”.

²¹⁰ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

²¹¹ (685–762) This would have been the year 714, during the Kaiyuan reign period (713–741 [開元]).

²¹² Located in today’s Henan Province.

²¹³ Literally “My years exceed to non-confusion,” a literary reference to the *Analects*.

²¹⁴ I.e. Huang[di] (皇帝) and Lao[zi] (老子) thought, a philosophical school that flourished in the second century. For more, see de Bary, ed., *Sources*, 131–151; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Huang-Lao,” 508–510.

²¹⁵ Yan (709–785) was a renowned Tang calligrapher and Daoist. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Huang Lingwei,” 501–502.

²¹⁶ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

²¹⁷ Sima Chengzhen (647–735) was a Shangqing patriarch, famous for the time he spent on Mount Tiantai. The title given to Zhang Yue, White Cloud Master, is an attested title for Sima Chengzhen. For more, see: Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Sima Chengzhen,” 911–913; Robinet, *Taoism*, 118.

²¹⁸ I.e. An Lushan (703–757). Lushan led a rebellion against the Tang Dynasty that lasted 755–763.

[Wang] passed through Southern Peak 南嶽²¹⁹ below Zhurong Summit 祝融峰.²²⁰ [Wang] practiced Daoism there for nine years without descending from the mountain. [In this time] Zhenqing governed at the place where Lu Qi 盧杞²²¹ had been captured, and was sent to the western part of the Huai 淮 [River],²²² because Li Xilie 李希烈²²³ had hanged himself.²²⁴

The Official [of Fire] then came across the Primordial Lady of the Violet Void 紫虛元君,²²⁵ and personally visited with her on Nanyue, where she transmitted the Dao down to [him]. [Wang] then studied [this text] for twenty-eight years, [until he had a] cinnabar [elixir] completed and the Dao perfected.²²⁶ On the seventh day of the first lunar month of the fifth year *gengwu* 庚午²²⁷ during the Zhenyuan 貞元²²⁸ reign period,²²⁹ [Wang] received a decree and ascended to heaven in broad daylight.

²¹⁹ Another name for Mount Heng, the southernmost of the Five Marchmounts, located in today's Hunan Province. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Nanyue," 755–756.

²²⁰ Meaning "Vulcan Summit" or "Fire God Summit", a summit at Mount Heng.

²²¹ Lu Qi (?–785) was a Tang Dynasty official, often blamed for provoking several rebellions. He was captured during Zhu Ci's (743–784 [朱泚]) rebellion.

²²² Runs through today's Henan Province.

²²³ Li Xilie (?–786) was a Tang Dynasty general who revolted and formed his own dynasty, the Chu (楚) Dynasty.

²²⁴ This differs from traditional accounts, in which Li is poisoned by one of his own generals.

²²⁵ One of several names given to Wei Huacun (251–334 [魏華存]), a divine woman and first Shangqing Grand Master, often associated with Mount Heng. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Wei Huacun," 1031–1032.

²²⁶ This might mean that the text that had been transmitted to Wang was an alchemical text.

²²⁷ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

²²⁸ (785–805) A reign period of Emperor Tang Dezong (742–805 [唐德宗]).

²²⁹ Either 6 February 789 or 26 Jan 790. Discrepancies between dates given. The fifth *gengwu* year was not in the Zhenyuan reign period, but fifth *jisi* [己巳] year was, and sixth *gengwu* year was. Regardless, this was during the reign of Tang Dezong.

A5. Huang of the Thundering Abyss 黃雷淵²³⁰

The Perfected had the surname Huang 黃 and the given name Shunshen 舜申.²³¹ [He] was from Jianning 建寧²³² [County] in Fujian [Province] 福建. As a child, [his] intelligence surpassed that of others and he found nothing he could not penetrate in the Three Teachings and Nine Schools.²³³ At the time [Huang] was an official in Guangxi, a statute sent him as an emissary to Duke Nan 南公,²³⁴ who saw [Huang] and thought him unusual. [Duke Nan] having learned [of Huang's unusual nature] transmitted a spirit text [to him]. The Perfected hooked the abstruse and groped for the profound, assembled and finished [texts so that his knowledge] was comprehensive. [Huang thus] climbed the gates of a scholar like a cloud.

Later, [Huang] received an imperial decree ordering him to enter into an imperial audience. Afterward [Huang] received a decree to return to the mountains, [where he] hid himself in the purple and rosy clouds above the Azure Continent 滄洲.²³⁵ [There Huang] was granted the title Perfected of the Cinnabar Mountain's Thunderous Abyss of Extensive Happiness and Widespread Transformation 丹山雷淵

²³⁰ For more on Huang Shunshen, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Huang Shunshen," 503–504.

²³¹ Meaning "Extension of [the mythical sage] Shun".

²³² Located in today's Fujian Province.

²³³ The Three Teachings have been discussed above. The Nine Schools are as follows: Confucianism, Daoism, the Naturalists (also known as the Yin-Yang School), Legalism, the Logicians (also known as the School of Names), Mohism, the School of Diplomacy, Syncretism, and Agriculturism.

²³⁴ This appears to be Nan Bidao (1196–? [南畢道]), a patriarch of Qingwei. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Huang Shunshen," 503.

²³⁵ One of the hidden islands inhabited by transcendents.

廣福普化真人. At this place,²³⁶ all of [Huang's] disciples thought to establish a stele and inscribe their names upon it. Those who [inscribed their names on] the front of the stele numbered thirty, those who [inscribed their names on] the back of the stele numbered five people and no more. Those [whose names were on the front] received a single [of five Qingwei] traditions; those [whose names were on the back] obtained the exhaustive [Qingwei] teachings.

[Among these disciples were the] likes of Perfected Zhang of the Wudang [Mountains] Grotto Abyss 武當洞淵張真人,²³⁷ [who] spread the teachings through the Four Seas 四海.²³⁸ [He] was solitary and exposed like a limestone butte, and he [spread] the Dao greatly as he moved to the north. [Similarly,] Perfected Xiong of the Western Hills Perfected Breath 西山真息熊真人,²³⁹ who, alone among those who inscribed their names on the back of the stele, explained the Dao in the four directions, and went especially to the south. [Huang's teachings] were transmitted to Peng Ruli 彭汝勵 of Ancheng 安城.²⁴⁰ Ruli transmitted [the teachings] to Zeng Chenwai 曾塵外²⁴¹ of Anfu 安福²⁴² [District]. Chenwai transmitted [the teachings] to Zhao

²³⁶ I.e. the place at which Huang received this title.

²³⁷ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text. Mount Wudang, in today's Hubei Province, is home to a number of Daoist palaces and abbeys. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Wudang shan," 1052–1053.

²³⁸ A literary reference to China, stemming from a time when it was believed that China was bordered by four seas, one in each of the cardinal directions.

²³⁹ I have been unable to locate this and the following figure outside this text.

²⁴⁰ A township located in today's Zhejiang Province.

²⁴¹ For a brief discussion of Zeng Chenwai, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Huang Shunshen," 504.

²⁴² Located in today's Jiangxi Province.

Yuanyang 趙元陽²⁴³ of Junyi 浚儀²⁴⁴ [District]. All those who transmitted and received [Huang's teachings] in this way were renowned masters²⁴⁵ of their time. [Through Huang's teachings] virtue flooded and was dispersed, and [all] inside and outside [of the region] was clear and bright.

A6. Lei Mo'an 雷默庵²⁴⁶

The Perfected had the surname Lei 雷, the taboo name Shizhong 時中,²⁴⁷ the courtesy name Kequan 可權,²⁴⁸ and the monastic name²⁴⁹ Mo'an 默庵.²⁵⁰ Previously his roots²⁵¹ were as a man of Yuzhang 豫章²⁵² [District], later he had a home in the Town of Jinniu 金牛鎮 in Wuchang 武昌²⁵³ [Urban Prefecture] of Huguang 湖廣²⁵⁴ [Province]. [Lei's] residence was encircled by a rivulet, and there were two bridges—one in the east and one in the west. For this reason, [Lei's residence] was also called

²⁴³ This seems to be an alternate form of Zhao Yizhen's (?–1382 [趙宜真]) monastic name, Yuanyang (原陽). For more on Zhao Yizhen, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Zhao Yizhen,” 1245–1247.

²⁴⁴ Located in today's Henan Province.

²⁴⁵ I.e. renowned masters of academic or artistic works.

²⁴⁶ For more on Lei Shizhong, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Lei Shizhong,” 625.

²⁴⁷ Meaning “Within the Times”.

²⁴⁸ Meaning “Able Authority”.

²⁴⁹ 號 When they took monastic vows, people would be granted new, monastic names.

²⁵⁰ Meaning “Silent Cloister”.

²⁵¹ I.e. his ancestors came from the following place.

²⁵² Located in today's Jiangxi Province.

²⁵³ Located in today's Hubei Province.

²⁵⁴ A province that was later split into today's Hubei and Hunan Provinces. This provincial name was used in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, and might tell us something about when this hagiography was composed.

Shuangqiao 雙橋.²⁵⁵ The old man was born at the hour of the dragon 辰²⁵⁶ on the fifth day of the eleventh month in the year *xinsi* 辛巳²⁵⁷ of the Jiading reign period in the Song Dynasty.²⁵⁸ When he was young, [Lei] studied and recited poetic essays, and later knew the *Book of Songs (Shijing)* 詩經²⁵⁹ well. He thrice passed the triennial provincial imperial exam,²⁶⁰ and studied the School of the Way 道學²⁶¹ with the utmost care, focusing on matters concerning the nature of the law.

[Lei's] relatives lived in Jifu 吉甫 in Jiujiang 九江²⁶² [Urban Prefecture].

Because the years *jiwei* 己未²⁶³ and *gengshen* 庚申²⁶⁴ were difficult, [Lei] announced to his family that he would rely upon and reside [with them] at Jifu. In the year *jiasi* 甲子²⁶⁵, a Commander-in-chief of the Palace Command 殿帥²⁶⁶ went to Taiping Palace 太平宮²⁶⁷ for a Daoist ceremony, and the Master 師²⁶⁸ joined him in going.²⁶⁹ That night, as [they] lodged at Taiping Palace, [Lei] heard rain on the pavilion. While

²⁵⁵ Meaning “Twin Bridges”.

²⁵⁶ One of the twelve two-hour periods of the day, from 07:00–09:00.

²⁵⁷ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

²⁵⁸ I.e. 20 November 1221.

²⁵⁹ One of the Chinese classics, and the oldest extant collection of Chinese poetry.

²⁶⁰ 領鄉薦 A set phrase. The term “Triennial Provincial Exam” (鄉薦) was used in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and might tell us something about when this hagiography was composed.

²⁶¹ Another term for the Neo-Confucian movement of the Song and Ming Dynasties. This movement, more properly called the Song-Ming Rationalistic School 宋明理學, was created with the intent of divorcing the “superstition” of Buddhism and Daoism from Confucian thought.

²⁶² Located in today's Jiangxi Province.

²⁶³ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

²⁶⁴ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle. These would have been the years 1259 and 1260, respectively.

²⁶⁵ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle. This year would have been 1264.

²⁶⁶ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “tiên-shuài,” 507.

²⁶⁷ Meaning “Palace of Great Harmony”.

²⁶⁸ I.e. Lei. It is unclear why he is being referred to as “Master” as opposed to “Perfected”.

²⁶⁹ It would appear as if Xie is in the service of this Commander-in-chief of the Palace Command.

[Lei stared] absent-mindedly, Shangdi 上帝²⁷⁰ manifested himself [to Lei] and spoke these words, saying, “Noble one, the blessings of *yang* are not insignificant, and the officials of *yin* have a cause. It is not necessary to be mindful of glory.” That evening, those who lived at the palace and those who studied at the palace²⁷¹ also dreamt of discussions with the Perfected Lord,²⁷² [who] spoke, saying, “Tomorrow at quarter past the hour of the horse, you may, with strict essence, worship this affair.” Among the five hundred numinous officials [who accompanied Shangdi,] one numinous official personally descended and lit a candle and incense at the altar.

The next day, early in the hour of the horse, the Commander-in-chief of the Palace Command spoke to the Master, saying, “I am very tired, the Master can replace the burnt incense.” Upon reaching the altar, those who studied at the palace grew very frightened, and just then understood the Master was the person amidst the five hundred numinous officials. After those who studied at the palace explained [this matter] to the Master, the Master increasingly paid attention to the Daoist teachings and severed his thoughts from glory.

[Lei] returned to his dwelling in the Town of Jinniu, and installed an altar there to worship. The third day of the third month of the *gengwu* year²⁷³ was the Dark Warrior’s 玄武²⁷⁴ birthday, so the Master wrote and sent up a gift, burnt incense, and

²⁷⁰ An early high deity, found across Chinese religious and bureaucratic pantheons.

²⁷¹ 本宮知宮 This seems to be drawing a distinction between those monastic figures who reside at the temple, and other Daoists who simply visit the temple for purposes of practice and worship.

²⁷² I.e. Shangdi.

²⁷³ I.e. 25 March 1270.

²⁷⁴ The Dark Warrior, also known as the Perfected Warrior [真武] is Chinese deity often associated with divination, healing, and exorcism. He is also one of the Four Numina, four celestial animals, each associated with a cardinal direction. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Zhenwu,” 1266–1267.

recited the *Scripture on Salvation* (*Duren jing*) 度人經²⁷⁵ with exuberance. Suddenly, a Daoist with exceptional character arrived from outside, saying, “[This] poor Daoist has a Daoist teaching, and [I] have come with the specific purpose of transmitting it to you.” [He] then pulled a one-fascicle text from his sleeve, saying, “[You] can install this writing upon your altar. Only after fasting for seven days can you open and read it.” The Master received it and put it on the incense-burning table. [Lei] turned around, but the Daoist had already left and [Lei] did not know where he had gone. Only then did [Lei] realize he was an unusual person.

[Lei] entered the altar [room], made obeisance, and gave thanks. [He] had sincerely maintained a fast for seven days, was burning incense, making obeisance, and [observing] rites. [Lei] opened and read this writing, and then [saw it was] the *Desired Daoist Teachings of the Six Heavens of Primordial Chaos* 混元六天如意道法.²⁷⁶ [When Lei] finished reading, it was as if the altar had gone from daytime to night. In a moment thunder and lightning filled the air, and Heavenly Lord Xin of the Thunderclap 雷霆辛天君²⁷⁷ immediately [appeared] on a bench, saying, “I bring an imperial order from Heaven, to entrust to [you,] noble one, to establish and elucidate

²⁷⁵ HY 1. An early Lingbao scripture, the *Scripture on Salvation* was the Daoists’ response to the Buddhists’ notion of bodhisattvas, beings whose stated purpose was to save living beings. For more on the *Scripture of Salvation*, see Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon*, “*Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojiang*,” 214–215; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “*Duren jing*,” 394–396. For more on bodhisattvas, see Buswell, ed., *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, “Bodhisattva(s),” 58–60; Nattier, “Gender and Hierarchy,” 88–91.

²⁷⁶ The Six Heavens here represent a period of development of the Dao. For a discussion of this understanding of the Six Heavens, see: Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 193–194. This text does not seem to be extant.

²⁷⁷ A celestial figure associated with Thunder Rites. For a brief discussion of this figure, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Bai Yuchan,” 204; *ibid.*, “Lei Shizhong,” 625.

the teachings of Thunder,²⁷⁸ [bringing about] universal mercy and succor.²⁷⁹ Through my teachings and assistance, you [can] go to and serve Shangdi. He who transmitted this text to [you,] noble one, a few days ago was Perfected Lord Lu the Ancestral Master 祖師路真君.²⁸⁰ [Your] name, noble one, is in the register of transcendents. For seven generations you were a scholar, for three generations you spread the teachings, [but] from now on do not let a moment pass [doing these things]. [Instead, you] should undertake my teachings on a large scale. [Perfected Lord] Lu the Ancestral Master accepted and promoted this text, and in time he personally met Taishang Laojun. [Therefore, I] transmit this teaching, and by relying on this teaching [you should] concentrate on the *Scripture on Salvation*.²⁸¹ [Become] a teacher, and spread [this teaching] to all, guiding [those from] the common people up to [your] established and proper disciples. Command all those mentioned to recite the scripture²⁸² with utmost care, and each will obtain positive results.²⁸³ Moreover, take on and discuss the purpose of the *Scripture on Salvation* with pupils. It is essential to make ten recitations of the [*Scripture on*] *Salvation*. However, if you cannot make ten [recitations] of the [*Scripture on*] *Salvation*, then on an ordinary day cultivate and refine yourself by examining and returning to [that which is] subtle. [You] absolutely

²⁷⁸ 雷霆 It is unclear whether he means his own teachings, or teachings concerning the Thunder Rites.

²⁷⁹ 普濟眾生 A stock phrase, which seems to have Buddhist overtones.

²⁸⁰ This reference is unclear, but the figure mentioned may be Lu Shizhong (fl. 1120–1130 [路時中]), a Daoist monk associated with spirit texts. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Lu Shizhong,” 715–716.

²⁸¹ It would appear as if the text transmitted to Lei is a commentary on the *Scripture on Salvation*.

²⁸² I.e. the *Scripture on Salvation*.

²⁸³ 果報 Buddhists use this term to mean *karma*. For a discussion of *karma*, see Buswell, ed., *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, “Karma (Action),” 415–417. For a discussion of the notion of *karma* in Daoism, see Zürcher, “Buddhist Influence,” 87.

must first save your ancestors, [and, in] the end, [when you] have obtained the Dao perfectly, [you will] fly and ascend to the Shangqing [Heaven].²⁸⁴ Explain the purpose of the scripture, [and] do not exceed this.”²⁸⁵

Compared with Confucian or Buddhist scholars, [Lei] aimed to distinguish [himself] broadly, implementing mixing and blending²⁸⁶ [amongst the people] and returning [them] to the singular cause.²⁸⁷ [People] in all directions heard of his profound and unusual skills acquired through religious practice, and those who came to his door crowded about daily. [Because] his disciples numbered in the thousands, [Lei] divided [them] into two branches: [one to] the southeast and [one in] Xishu 西蜀.²⁸⁸ First [Lei] considered Scholars Lu 廬²⁸⁹ and Li 李, [then Lei] reached Nankang 南康²⁹⁰ [District] and investigated [Scholar] Taiyu 泰宇.²⁹¹ For this reason, Lu and Li practiced Daoism in Xishu, and Taiyu practiced Daoism in²⁹² the southeast.

[At that time,] the teaching of *Time Immemorial*²⁹³ was spread greatly throughout the realm, and [people in] those places where it reached spread it to outsiders in the necessary sequence. [The] Daoist teachings referred to the true, the

²⁸⁴ The uppermost Heaven of the Shangqing School.

²⁸⁵ I.e. do not teach your disciples about other texts.

²⁸⁶ 混融 This binome was used by Du Guangting to discuss Daoists “mixing and blending” themselves amongst the people of the world to spread Daoist teachings.

²⁸⁷ I.e. the Dao.

²⁸⁸ It is unclear where this is. Shu (蜀) is the name given to today’s Sichuan Province, but that would be quite far removed from where the rest of the action in the hagiography takes place.

²⁸⁹ I have been unable to locate this and the following figure outside this text.

²⁹⁰ Located in today’s Jiangxi Province.

²⁹¹ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

²⁹² The character given here, 乎, seems to be mistaken for 于.

²⁹³ I.e. *Desired Daoist Teachings of the Six Heavens of Primordial Chaos*

Original Dao²⁹⁴ was praised, and all made full use of the Dao of *Time Immemorial* to transform the subtle.

On the fifth day of the fourth month of the year *yiwei* 乙未²⁹⁵ in the Zhiyuan 至元²⁹⁶ reign period,²⁹⁷ [Lei] bathed, put on [proper clothing], and sat upright. At the hour of the horse, [Lei] ordered Masters Lu and Li to lead several disciples in a recitation of the *Scripture on Salvation*. Immediately after [they] had completed the first fascicle, [Lei] demanded a writing brush and paper, and wrote a hymn, which said:

A recitation [of the scripture] is the bright moon shining in a clear sky,
In ten thousand *li* not a cloud [can be seen, it] is clear and bright.
[I am] comfortable and unfettered, and do not have a single affair,
I am in complete harmony with the great emptiness.

The hymn [thus] ended, [Lei] became fixed and passed away.

In the winter of that year, [Lei's] disciples respectfully interred [his remains] at Mount Yan 顏山²⁹⁸ in that canton.²⁹⁹ Afterward, a peal of thunder [was heard, and] a composition descended, which said, “Shangdi has already promoted me to Perfected, and in Xuandu 玄都³⁰⁰ [I] serve as Supreme Councilor 上相³⁰¹ to the Perfected Lord

²⁹⁴ I.e. the Dao before it split.

²⁹⁵ One of the years in the sexagesimal cycle.

²⁹⁶ (1264–1294) A reign period of Yuan Shizu (1215–1294 [元世祖 {also known as Kublai Khan}]).

²⁹⁷ I.e. 20 April 1295. This date is problematic, as there was no *yiwei* year in the Zhiyuan reign period. The reign period that followed, Yuan Chengzong's (1265–1307 [元成宗 {also known as Temür Khan}]) Yuanzhen (1295–1297[元貞]) reign period, however, did have a *yiwei* year.

²⁹⁸ It is unclear where this is, though it is likely in today's Jiangxi Province.

²⁹⁹ It is unclear to which canton this is referring.

³⁰⁰ Meaning “Abstruse Metropolis”.

³⁰¹ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “shàng-hsiàng,” 408.

of Universal Aid and the Subtle Dao of Time Immemorial 混元妙道普濟真君, as well as the Heavenly Worthy of the Thunder Enlightenment 雷聲演教天尊.

A7. Mo of the Moon Tripod 莫月鼎³⁰²

The Perfected of the Moon Tripod 月鼎真人 had the surname Master Mo 莫, the taboo name Dongyi 洞一,³⁰³ and the courtesy name Qiyao 起炎.³⁰⁴ Mo [was born] during the Zhachuan 霄川³⁰⁵ [rebellion], [and he] and his progeny were of western Zhe[jiang Province] 浙.³⁰⁶ When he was born, Mo was intelligent and clever beyond others. [He] strongly admired Daoist teachings and the words of the transcendents, and, along with Perfected Lei of the Cantons of the Western Submerged Wilderness 郡西埜沈震雷真人³⁰⁷ and Perfected Zou the Master of Affairs at the Iron Wall 師事鐵壁鄒真人, [Mo] obtained the *Hidden Text of the Thunder Crystal of the Nine Heavens* 九天雷晶隱書³⁰⁸ of Perfected Lord Wang the Imperial Retainer 侍宸王真君. For this reason, [Mo's] name became well known at the time.

³⁰² For more on Mo Qiyao, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Mo Qiyao,” 752.

³⁰³ Meaning “Grotto of Unity”.

³⁰⁴ Meaning “Rising Flames”.

³⁰⁵ A rebellion during the reign of Song Ningzong lasting c. 1224–1225.

³⁰⁶ This is also today's Zhejiang Province.

³⁰⁷ I have been unable to locate this and the following figure outside this text.

³⁰⁸ The Nine Heavens are found in Lingbao cosmology, and were created when the three original pneuma each split into three pneuma. For a brief discussion, see: Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 199 n.12; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Jiutian,” 593–594. This text does not seem to be extant.

As for Huiji 會稽³⁰⁹ [Canton], [Mo went] and mixed and blended³¹⁰ with Duke Han 韓公³¹¹ and Dukes Qian Tangyang 錢塘楊 and Yu Chanchuan 玉蟾川. [Mo] was very famous in that era, and in his Daoist lineage all burned incense and listened to [Mo's] lectures, and for this reason the Daoist teachings became increasingly valued.

[Later] the Perfected was in dire straits and had no home. He [reached] a dwelling and stopped. Those who sought the Dao were greatly amassed [at this dwelling], and many had abandoned the world, cut ties with the unrefined, and departed from relationships.³¹² [But they would] drink alcohol and become intoxicated, and had truly carefree natures. [Mo] received these disciples, criticizing many of them. [He] tested whether [their] minds and behavior were sincere or negligent. Those who were not adequate were stopped halfway [through the training].

In the year *dinghai* 丁亥³¹³ of the Zhiyuan reign period,³¹⁴ [Mo] was summoned to go to the emperor's watchtower. [There Mo] expounded upon teachings and talismans, and commanded thunder and rain when asked. At that time, [Mo] had a distinguished reputation³¹⁵ in the capital city, and he dashed about that short distance as if [he were] a cloud and as if [he were] a wall.³¹⁶ [Mo] had not yet reached a distance of several thousand *li* when he reached a home where there were those who

³⁰⁹ Located in today's Jiangsu Province.

³¹⁰ 混融 See note 286 above.

³¹¹ I have been unable to locate this and the two following figures outside this text.

³¹² I.e. they had become renunciants.

³¹³ One of the years in the sexagesimal cycle.

³¹⁴ I.e. 1287. Because Yuan Renzong is later mentioned, it can be assumed that this Zhiyuan reign period of Yuan Shizu, and not the later Yuan Shundi (1320–1370 [元順帝 {also known as Toghon Temür}]).

³¹⁵ The characters given, 名動 (which might mean something like “renowned events”), seem to be mistaken for 名重.

³¹⁶ I.e. he would flit around and then stop and stay at one spot for a while before moving to the next.

sought the Dao. [They] offered [Mo] fifty strings of coins as tuition, which [Mo] accepted [in return for] serving as [their] master. One day, [Mo] removed [the strings of coins] from within his sleeve, and, coming across a bar that was crude, entered. [Mo] saw those who were impoverished and aided them. [He] gave those who were aged and weak those things [they] required. This extended up to food and so on, until the strings of coins were exhausted.

Among [Mo's] disciples were those who were able receptacles of the Dao, and who always obeyed [the teachings] and, in doing so, made [spiritual] progress. [Mo] developed the details of the mysteries of the Thunder [Rites], and began to reveal [these details] to many of those who had come to study [with him]. That which he sent [to his disciples] had the form of a talisman, and to each disciple was transmitted a different [talisman]. From [this], the Perfected established his teachings and was confirmed as the head of his sect. [He] examined the abstruse and tenuous, and always returned to the singular cause. [Mo] developed the Dao beyond that of Perfected Lord Wang the Imperial Retainer, and the Perfected, with Perfected [Lei] of the [Cantons] of the Western Submerged Wilderness 西埜沈真人,³¹⁷ had two sects, which, [like] tributaries, flowed throughout [the land]. [The teaching] was abundant west of the Yangzi River, and flourished in the eastern states. Mo had greatly supported the teachings and made it fertile amongst the common people.

At the hour of the horse on a fall day in the year *gengyin* 庚寅³¹⁸ of the Yanyou 延祐³¹⁹ reign period,³²⁰ [Mo] sat cross-legged and asked his disciples, saying,

³¹⁷ Though slightly different characters are used here, this seems to be referring to the Perfected mentioned at the beginning of this hagiography.

³¹⁸ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

“What time is it?” [His] disciples said, “It is midday.” [Mo] then demanded paper and a writing brush, and composed a hymn, which said:

Seventy-four years of bright moons,

And in the past there was a complete lack of overcast [nights].³²¹

Today Earth is radiant,

[I am able to] penetrate the emptiness of the Three Realms 三界.³²²

The text [thus] ended, [Mo] sat upright and passed away, [his] face like cinnabar.

A8. Jin the Disheveled-Headed 金蓬頭³²³

Jin the Disheveled-Headed was a man of Yongjia [Canton]. [He] had the given name Zhiyang 志陽,³²⁴ and the monastic name Ye'an 野庵.³²⁵ [He] always kept his disheveled hair in a single topknot, and for this reason he has his monastic name.³²⁶ From birth he was not a part of the rabble.³²⁷ From childhood [he] was courageous

³¹⁹ (1314–1320) Reign period of Yuan Renzong (1285–1320 [元仁宗 {also known as Buyantu Khan}]).

³²⁰ I.e. 1320.

³²¹ Mo is saying that he has been able to see the truth of the Dao his entire life, and that his view has never been obstructed.

³²² The Three Realms, which the Daoists seem to have adopted from Buddhist cosmologies, are those of desire, form, and formlessness. The Three Realms can be further divided into Thirty-two or Thirty-six Heavens. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Sanshi'er tian,” 847–848; *ibid.*, “Sanshiliu tian,” 849–851.

³²³ For a brief discussion of Jin Zhiyang, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Zhao Yizhen,” 1246.

³²⁴ Meaning “Marked Yang”.

³²⁵ Meaning “Wilderness Cloister”.

³²⁶ I.e. he has the disheveled-head of one who would live in a “wilderness cloister.”

³²⁷ One of the characters given here, 群, may be a scribal error. By using a different character (詳), this sentence reads, “No details concerning [his] birth [are known]” (生而不詳).

and resolute, and had unrestrained and lofty aspirations. [When he] was a grown man, [he] desired the Dao and left the world.³²⁸ [Because] he feared being like the burned and drowned,³²⁹ he went to a master of the Quanzhen 全真道³³⁰ [School], Daoist Li Yuexi 李月溪.³³¹ Yuexi was a disciple of Perfected Li the Truly Abiding 真常李真人, [and Perfected Li the] Truly Abiding was the premier disciple of Perfected Qiu of Constant Youth 長春丘真人.

At one [time, Jin] was seen as [being a good] receptacle [for the Dao], and was ordered to roam Yan, Zhao, Qi, and Chu 燕趙齊楚.³³² [Because Jin] sought what was proper with virtue from the very start, [he] was able to attend matters of Perfected Li the Truly Abiding. [In the south Jin] reached Yuan Prefecture 袁州,³³³ [and he] came across the Commandant 校尉³³⁴ of the troops who defended the city. [This man's] appearance was robust and plain. During the day [the man] could not be met in this world, but at night stopped at a shrine. The Master³³⁵ knew this [man] was unusual, and when the Master served [the man], he also had these [spiritual] attainments.

³²⁸ I.e. became a monk.

³²⁹ I.e. because he feared being one of those people in the world who suffer greatly in life.

³³⁰ The Quanzhen School is a branch of Daoism associated with monasticism and inner alchemy (內丹). For a discussion of Quanzhen, see: Eskildsen, *Early Quanzhen Masters*, 3–18; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Quanzhen,” 814–820; Robinet, *Taoism*, 222–224; Yao, “Quanzhen,” 567–593.

³³¹ I have been unable to locate this and the two following figure outside this text.

³³² Four different ancient states, all of which lie in the region comprised of today's Hebei, Hubei, Hunan, and Shanxi Provinces. These state names would not have been used in the Yuan Dynasty, and appear to be a poetic reference.

³³³ Located in today's Jiangxi Province.

³³⁴ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “hsiào-wèi,” 238.

³³⁵ I.e. Jin.

It took place that [Jin] roamed Mounts Wuyi 武夷³³⁶ and Longhu. At the time, [Jin served as] a private teacher at Zhuxiantian Abbey 主先天觀³³⁷ on [Mount] Longhu. [He also served] as a public teacher at Penglai Cloister 蓬萊庵.³³⁸ Based on [Jin's actions at Penglai] Cloister, he was summoned by the Lord of Shengjing 君聖井³³⁹ and disregarded, for the time being, several mountaintop assemblies. The Master climbed up cliffs and ravines accompanied by deer and boar, [and he] leaned upon clouds and mist. [Those who] saw thought this normal.³⁴⁰ [That] night, someone was sitting on a flat rock. A snake and tiger happened to be in front of the rock, and [the person] was suddenly startled and died. [Jin] ordered his followers Li Quanzheng 李全正³⁴¹ and Zhao Zhenchun 趙真純 to erect Tianrui Cloister 天瑞庵³⁴² at the summit of the mountain. [Jin's teachings of] the Dao were heard throughout the four directions, and, no matter from how far or near, those with illnesses and sufferings [came to Jin] and prostrated [before him]. [Jin] quickly responded by offering fruit and clothing to everyone without exception. Those who attended the rites [Jin performed] amassed daily.

[At one point] Heaven refused to rain, so [Jin] mounted a dragon [at Sheng]jing and ordered the dragon to depart. [When he] told the dragon to depart it

³³⁶ Located in today's Fujian Province. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Wuyi shan," 1071.

³³⁷ Meaning "Abbey of the Lord of the First Heavens".

³³⁸ This appears to be a Daoist cloister. Penglai is the name of one of the islands to which transcendents travel. For more, see Eskildsen, *Early Quanzhen Masters*, 217 n. 6.

³³⁹ Meaning "Sacred Well". Unsure if this is an actual, terrestrial location, or a heavenly abode.

³⁴⁰ It is unclear whether a negating character is missing from this clause, or if Jin's exploits are so well known to those in the mountain that they are unsurprised.

³⁴¹ I have been unable to locate this and the following figure outside this text.

³⁴² Meaning "Cloister of the Auspicious Heaven". This appears to be a Daoist cloister.

listened. Over time [Earth] gradually grew smaller, and they jumped and entered into Heaven. Then [Jin] warned [the dragon] to stop, and the dragon soared into the water. In a short time, Heaven rained heavily.

In the year *guiyou* 癸酉³⁴³ of the Yuantong 元統³⁴⁴ reign period,³⁴⁵ [Jin] returned in secret to Mount Wuyi, residing at Yuchanzhi Zhizhi Cloister 玉蟾之止止庵.³⁴⁶ Li Taiping 李太平,³⁴⁷ the marshal of eastern Zhe[jiang Province], heard [of this and went to] perform rites [with Jin]. [Jin] spoke [with him], saying, “If orders are strict then the people will be governed, if the mind is pure then desires will be few.” Li [heard this] and increasingly deferred [to Jin]. At some time there was someone who was jealous [of Jin], and [he] schemed to use pharmacopeia to poison [Jin]. The Master anticipated this, and ordered his followers to dig a cistern for storing water. [They] dutifully obeyed, and [Jin] bathed and left, [feeling] tranquil. This is now called Tudan Well 吐丹井.³⁴⁸

On the first day of the first month of the year *bingzi* 丙子³⁴⁹ in the Zhiyuan reign period,³⁵⁰ [Jin’s] classmate Gui Xinyuan 桂心淵,³⁵¹ at that time called Gui Fengzi 桂風子, sat at Mount Lu and explained [the Dao]. The Master heard of this,

³⁴³ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

³⁴⁴ (1213–1216) Reign period of Yelu Liuge (1165–1220 [耶律留哥]). Yelu rebelled against the Jin Dynasty and formed his own short-lived state, the Eastern Liao.

³⁴⁵ I.e. 1213.

³⁴⁶ Meaning “Cloister of the Jade Toad’s Stopping”. The Jade Toad is a figure that, according to Chinese folklore, lives on the moon with the Jade Rabbit. This appears to be a Daoist cloister.

³⁴⁷ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

³⁴⁸ Meaning “Well of Spewing Cinnabar”.

³⁴⁹ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

³⁵⁰ I.e. 18 January 1276.

³⁵¹ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

and on the tenth day of the fourth month,³⁵² [Jin] ordered his followers to write one hymn, [then he] sat and passed away. After thirteen days, [Jin's] face nodded as if trembling, and his limbs and trunk were warm and flexible as in life. [He] was buried at the side of the cloister. Those disciples who had received [Jin's teachings], among them Lao Yangsu 勞養素,³⁵³ Guo Chuchang 郭處常, Li Xilai 李西來, Zhang Tianquan 張天全,³⁵⁴ Yin Pona 殷破納,³⁵⁵ and Fang Fanghu 方方壺, all made [Jin's teachings of] the Dao known in [their] generations.

³⁵² I.e. 24 May 1276.

³⁵³ I have been unable to locate this and the two following figures outside this text.

³⁵⁴ For a brief discussion of Zhang Tianquan, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Zhao Yizhen," 1246.

³⁵⁵ I have been unable to locate this and the following figure outside this text.

Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror of Transcendents

Who Embodied the Dao through the Ages: Fascicle Six

B1. Female Perfected Qian 錢女真¹

The Female Perfected 女真 Madam Qian 錢 was [one of] two sisters. She relied on Taoju 陶居² and recited the *Scripture of the Yellow Court* (*Huangting jing*) 黃庭經,³ and was in Yan Grotto 燕洞 at Mount Mao 茅山.⁴ Up until then, there had been flowering peaches [there], and immediately afterward [there grew] violet sweet-flag. [Qian, the] elder sister, seeking to wear a white silken robe, followed the path and entered the grotto. When her younger sister arrived, the grotto was already obfuscated.

In the fifth year of Song Taizong's 太宗⁵ Chunhua 淳化⁶ reign period,⁷

Military Inspector 巡檢⁸ Xiahou 夏侯⁹ [saw] auspicious signs, and, with five Daoist

¹ For a brief discussion of Qian, see Despeux and Kohn, eds., *Women in Daoism*, 114.

² Also known as Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, a poet from the Six Dynasties period known for his works concerning nature (365–427). This allusion seems to refer to the asceticism found in Yuanming's lifestyle and poetic subject matter. For a discussion of Yuanming and one of his grotto poems, see Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font," 65–77, *passim*.

³ HY 331; HY 332. A Shangqing scripture allegedly transmitted to Wei Huacun, of which there are two full extant versions—an earlier version, HY 332 *Taishang huangting waijing yujing* 太上黃庭外景玉經, and a Shangqing version, HY 331 *Taishang huangting neijing yujing* 太上黃庭內景玉經. The scripture concerns itself primarily with longevity practices. For more, see Barrett, *Taoism Under the T'ang*, 82–83; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Huangting jing," 511–514; Schipper and Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon*, 92; *ibid*, "Taishang huangting waijing yujing," 96–97; *ibid*, "Taishang huangting neijing yujing," 184–185.

⁴ Located in today's Jiangsu Province. Mt. Mao is amongst the most important mountains for Shangqing, as it is the mountain at which Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536) founded said school. For more on Mt. Mao, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Maoshan," 734–736.

⁵ An emperor of the Song Dynasty (939–997).

priests, went to the peak [of Mount Mao] and cast dragon [tablets].¹⁰ That night the thunder quaked, and [Yan] Grotto opened again. Its depth was immeasurable. Together the officials penetrated deeply into the chamber, and [there] they encountered a Daoist priest at a crab-apple tree. [They] ate from it, thereupon cutting [the fruit] into pieces. Tianlin 田霖¹¹ [composed] a poem on a wooden plaque, [which said:]

At the mouth of Yan [Grotto], Pool Long's 龍泓 scenery is pure;
[Female] Perfected Qian left behind her numen in this place.
[She] went to the transcendent lands and followed a master as if here;
When the younger sister returned the grotto had been sealed.
The sheets of clouds are like [her] flying white silken robes;
Spring's voice is like [her] reciting the [*Scripture of*] *the Yellow Court*.
Flowering peach flowers develop [into] violet sweet flag;
I halted with people [in this] place [and] wrote words of appraisal.

⁶ (990–994).

⁷ I.e. 994.

⁸ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “hsün-chiēn ssū,” 254.

⁹ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹⁰ Originally an exorcistic practice through which the ill would repent for their misdeeds, Casting Dragon Tablets eventually took on additional roles (e.g. attaining immortality). For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Tou longjian,” 998–999.

¹¹ A Song Dynasty poet. Dates unknown.

B2. Cao Wenji 曹文姬¹²

Cao Wenji 曹文姬¹³ was originally a prostitute in Chang'an 長安.¹⁴ Within four or five years of her birth, she was able to communicate the main points of the subtle words of every fascicle of literature, poems, and plays in the texts [she read]. People suspected that she had developed these skills in a previous lifetime. When she reached marriageable age she was beautiful, [but] she cut [herself from] normal human relationships and focused especially upon her calligraphic work. She wrote her own commentary outside [the texts], and, if she reached a place she could write on the gauze and silk covering the window, she would surely write there. Each day she wrote several tens of thousands of characters, and people thus called her the Writing Transcendent 書仙. The vigor of style in her literary compositions was unequalled in the land between the passes.¹⁵ While she was working on her writings, Gentleman of the Interior 郎中¹⁶ Zhou 周¹⁷ [went to] see [her] excessively, and Director of the Investigation Division 監察¹⁸ Ma 馬¹⁹ [went to] see [her] on occasion, each bestowing praise upon her endlessly.

¹² This appears to be another name, or scribal error, for Cao Wenyi 曹文逸 (fl. 1119–1125). For more on Cao, see Despeux and Kohn, eds., *Women in Daoism*, 133–140.

¹³ Wenji meaning “Writing Concubine”.

¹⁴ Located in today’s Shaanxi Province.

¹⁵ 關中 A region of plains located in today’s Shaanxi Province.

¹⁶ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “láng-chūng,” 301.

¹⁷ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹⁸ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “chiēn,” 145; *ibid*, “ch’á,” 105.

¹⁹ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

[Cao's] family taught music, [about which Cao] then said, "How [can] I be happy in this lowly matter? Only my ink pool and brush grave²⁰ will lead me to attain [happiness] in old age at this place." For this reason [Cao] was regarded as having a high reputation. Chivalrous gentlemen wished to transport gold and send jade to her, and those who did so sought to make her their partner. None were successful in their schemes [to marry her]. She²¹ said, "None [of these men] are my partner. Those who desire to be my partner should first submit [to me] a poem, and I shall personally consider and select [one]. [The poem] itself [can be] as long as a chapter or as short as a sentence; it can be lacking in expression or elegant in its language; you can take a day or swiftly write several hundred." She had no intention [of fulfilling her promise] in any case. [At that time] there was one Ren Sheng 任生²² of the Min Mountains 岷山²³ who was a traveler in Chang'an. He was innately shrewd, and [when] he heard about [Cao's promise] he happily said, "I will obtain [her as my] partner." Others asked him [how], [and Ren] then said, "The male phoenix roosts in the parasol tree and the fish frolics in the abyss, things each have a place they thus return to." Then [he] submitted a poem to her. The poem read:

Before his hall the Jade Emperor holds the Writing Transcendent in his
hand,
[She] alone shamed the Nine Heavens with a mind polluted by worldly
desire.

²⁰ An ink pool is the dish in which one would wash off a brush of ink; a brush grave is the place in which one would discard broken or used brushes.

²¹ I.e. Cao.

²² I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

²³ Located in today's Sichuan Province.

[She] does not have an unusual aroma or ample frame,²⁴

[Her] once ornate clothing [now] the irritating smoke from an imperial stove.

The woman²⁵ obtained the poem, and happily said, “This is truly my husband. How could he know of my nefarious conduct otherwise? I wish for this matter, and I will not visit others to take them into consideration. Should my family not restrain [me], then I [will] consider [him] my partner.”

Henceforth spring was like morning and autumn like evening.²⁶ Together the husband and wife recited poetry in whispers and had drinks with snacks. Because they were enjoying themselves, it felt as if this circumstance was a short while. It was like this for five years, and for that reason, on the twenty-ninth day²⁷ of the third month, the first day of spring, the couple was drinking. The woman²⁸ inscribed a poem, [which] said:

The transcendent home has neither summer nor autumn,

The red sun and cool breeze fill the lady’s dwelling.²⁹

Moreover [I] surely have a homeward journey to the clear sky,

[We] might fly together on a five-colored cloud [pulled by] a young dragon.

[When the] poem was finished [she] sighed, saying, “I was originally the Manager of Writings 司書³⁰ transcendent, but was banished to this dusty world for two eras due to

²⁴ Both of these being desirable traits in a woman.

²⁵ I.e. Cao.

²⁶ The exact meaning of this is unclear, though it seems to mean that time flew by for the pair.

²⁷ The actual characters given, 晦日, mean something like “dark day” or “obscured day,” but refers to the last day of the lunar month.

²⁸ I.e. Cao.

²⁹ The characters given, 翠樓, mean “kingfisher-green building” and can also be used to refer to a brothel.

my [worldly] affections.” [She] also told Ren, saying, “The children are also transcendents who had obtained the Dao in a previous generation and were banished to this world. I was brought together with these children by fate, and that is the reason I obtained and was entrusted with [our] children. Today we should go together.” Suddenly transcendent music could be heard floating in the sky, and an unusual fragrance filled the chamber. [Cao’s] family was amazed, and together watched as a vermilion-robed magistrate appeared, grasping a jade block with vermilion seal script. [The magistrate] descended, saying, “Li Changji 李長吉³¹ recently composed a record of the house of transcendents, [and] Tiandi 天帝³² has summoned you to write a stele. [You] should quickly fly without delay.” [Cao’s] family [responded], saying, “Changji was a talented man of the Tang, [it has been] three hundred years [from his time] until now. Saying this, then, is surely bewildering.” She³³ smiled, saying, “That is not like a place that you can conceive of. Three hundred years in this world feels like an instant in the transcendent home.” She changed her clothes, did obeisance, and consoled Ren Sheng, then moved forward and rose into the sky. [Her family could] still see her through the resplendent, multi-colored clouds as a chol³⁴ and crane wound around her.

At that time, those who observed [Cao’s ascent] numbered approximately ten thousand. Her residence on this world became Shuxian Village 書仙里.³⁵ This record

³⁰ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “ssū-shū,” 455.

³¹ A Tang Dynasty poet (?–823).

³² Another name for Shangdi.

³³ I.e. Cao.

³⁴ The character 鸞 is used to refer to a glorious bird akin to a phoenix, and the chol, a bird in Jewish folklore, is similarly compared to the phoenix.

³⁵ Meaning “Writing Transcendent Village.”

was composed in the fourth year *jiashen* 甲申³⁶ of Song Renzong's 仁宗³⁷ Qingli 慶曆³⁸ reign period.³⁹

B3. Transcendent Lady Zhao 趙仙姑⁴⁰

Transcendent Lady 仙姑⁴¹ Zhao 趙 had the given name He 何,⁴² and was from Lingling [County] in Yong Prefecture. Her home was below the city wall. In her twelfth year, she accompanied a group to pick sow-thistle. [They] had not yet gone several *li* when the Transcendent Lady lost her companions. [Zhao] again walked several *li*. [She] looked at the eastern summit's couloir [which was] especially beautiful. [There] a mountain stream peacefully gurgled, trees and flowers mutually relied on one another, cliff-dwelling birds sounded beautifully, and mist advanced and receded. A single person was walking amongst this. She [thought this] a peculiar encounter. [The man wore] an eye-star⁴³ conical cap and transcendent clothing.⁴⁴ He saw the Transcendent Lady and smiled. The Transcendent Lady thought he might dwell in this place, and for this reason paid him formal obeisance and sought to pass

³⁶ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

³⁷ An emperor of the Song Dynasty (1010–1063). The characters for his name are erroneously given as 仁宋.

³⁸ (1041–1048).

³⁹ I.e. 1044.

⁴⁰ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

⁴¹ A term for women who have gained transcendence.

⁴² Meaning “To Carry”.

⁴³ The meaning of the characters given, 目星, is unclear. This binome occasionally occurs in discussions about constellations, and may be a signifier for certain clusters of stars.

⁴⁴ The characters given, 銖衣, are in reference to very light clothing, the kind worn by transcedents.

time [there], desiring to serve his kerchief and table.⁴⁵ The bearded transcendent said, “You cannot yet dwell in this place. You have come from a distance, and surely must be famished.” He subsequently pulled a single peach from his sleeve, ordering the [Transcendent] Lady eat it, and again [spoke,] saying, “If you are able to eat [this peach] in full, you will surely levitate to heaven some other day. If not, you shall continue to dwell on this world.” The Transcendent Lady bit the peach, but was only able to eat half. Because [she was unable to finish it,] she put the other half in her bosom, desiring to [show it] to her kin. The bearded transcendent said, “You can swiftly return, do not tarry in this place for a long time.”

The Transcendent Lady thus returned [home], [where her] mother and elder brother said, “Where did you go for so long?” [The Transcendent Lady] asked about [how long she had been gone], then [learned] it had been over one month.⁴⁶ From that time the Transcendent Lady did not eat [a regular diet], only eating fruit and [drinking] water and nothing more. She did not often enjoy conversing with unrefined people, and sat in meditation all day with pressed knees. [She did this] in absolute silence. [Her] mother and elder brother recognized that she was unusual, and so built a bamboo chamber in which she could dwell. However, the Transcendent Lady lived together with her elder brother and his wife. When night arrived, there would often be [heard] the sound of people conversing from the chamber in which she lived.

One day, [her] elder brother entered the chamber [in order to] secretly listen [to these conversations]. He saw the Transcendent Lady facing and chatting with [a man] with a long beard [who was] wearing an elegant eye-star conical cap and

⁴⁵ I.e. serve him in his everyday affairs.

⁴⁶ This narrative device, a transcendent or aspirant to transcendence learning that (s)he has been gone for much longer than (s)he had believed, is frequently found in tales of transcents. For a discussion, see DeWoskin, “*Xian* Descended,” 84–85.

transcendent clothing. The Transcendent Lady called to the long-bearded Transcendent Gentleman 仙翁,⁴⁷ saying, “Earlier [you] said [you had] an appointment to attend to later, I hope this matter went well. [Did it]?” The Transcendent Gentleman said, “Just then [I was] assembling talismans to issue, seeking to send rain thirteen hundred *li* to Pengli Marsh 彭蠡澤.⁴⁸ [I believed] three *chi* of rain in one evening would be enough. Because [we are in] Dashu 大暑,⁴⁹ all the dragons feared this would not be enough.⁵⁰ I then summoned six of my disciples, [all] distinguished in the Dao, and left, calling to the clouds and summoning dragons. [We] urged on the thunder and moved the lightning, and it was for this reason that I thus assembled [the talismans]. Therefore I am happy about the appointment from the prior evening.”

This speech just ended, [he] again [spoke,] saying, “Your elder brother and mother are secretly listening to my mysterious words, and I fear they will divulge the mysteries known unto heaven. I am now leaving.” [Zhao’s elder brother] saw only a white light penetrate the window, and then [the Transcendent Gentleman] was gone. Morning arrived and the Transcendent Lady called to her elder brother, saying, “Do not visit [my chamber] again, nor come listen and spy. [I] fear it will be disadvantageous to [you,] elder brother.” [Her] elder brother said, “[I] will no longer listen, but I want to hear about last night’s affair. [He] was a transcendent, then, [and] must also move the rain?” The Transcendent Lady said, “Today, those who have obtained transcendence but are unable to dwell in heaven number several thousand

⁴⁷ A term for male transcents.

⁴⁸ An archaic name for Poyang Lake 鄱阳湖 located in today’s Jiangxi Province.

⁴⁹ One of twenty-four solar periods, this one lasting from 23 July–6 August.

⁵⁰ The dragons here are likely a reference to the Dragon Kings who rule bodies of water.

people. They are all at the Ten Continents and Three Islands 十洲三島⁵¹ or in grotto dwellings on famous mountains. They amass merit and accumulate [proper] conduct, only when [they] can [do so do they] ascend and rise. Some govern the rivers and lakes,⁵² some are masters of the underworld, and some hold mountain peaks in their hands. [They] cause merit to flourish for innumerable ages, and remove the harms from all under heaven.⁵³ They aid the sick and eliminate suffering. They alleviate distress and support [those who are] upset. They help the weak. They [make known] hidden merits and bestow secrets. They are moral in conduct and cultivate what is latent. It is not possible to fully explain [them]. However, spiritual transcendents do not boast, lest [other] people know of them. This is so that people of this world do not obtain [such knowledge] and make it known.” [Her] elder brother said, “What, then, do spirit transcendents regard as important meritorious conduct?” The Transcendent Lady said, “[As for] spirit transcendents’ meritorious conduct, there are also transcendent officials and managers [like here]. This is the reason that, each year, their affairs are entered into a registry at [Shang]di’s court, and afterwards [the transcendents] are graded by relative superiority. [Some] advance and fill vacancies in the transcendents’ ranks.”

⁵¹ As the name implies, this is a legendary collection of ten continents and three islands, in and on which transcendents live. The Ten Continents and Three Islands are thoroughly detailed in the *Record of the Ten Islands* (HY 598 *Shizhou ji* 十洲記). For a translation and discussion of this text, see Smith, Thomas, “Ten Continents,” 87–119.

⁵² The characters given here, 江湖, can also be used to refer to the geographical region comprising today’s Jiangnan, Jiangxi, Hubei, and Hunan Provinces.

⁵³ The sentence given, 興萬世之利，去天下之害, is a slight misquote of one composed by Mozi (470 BCE—391 CE), the philosopher who founded what is known as Mohism, concerning humaneness. Mozi’s quote reads, “Those who [are concerned with] matters which constitute humaneness, surely should seek to cause the merits of all under heaven to flourish, and eliminate the harms of all under heaven.” 仁之事者，必務求興天下之利，除天下之害.

The Prefect 知州⁵⁴ of Dao Prefecture 道州,⁵⁵ Zhou Lianfu 周廉夫,⁵⁶ was returning to the imperial court and following the road [through] Lingling [County]. [He] reached and saw the Transcendent Lady. [She] was seated and had a guest, whose strength of character was very unusual. [The guest] looked at [Zhou] and squatted, but did not greet Lianfu. Lianfu thought [the guest] seemed angry, and that person then got up and left. Lianfu said [to the Transcendent Lady], “Who was that? And is he as haughty as he seemed?” The Transcendent Lady said, “That was Transcendent Gentleman Lü 吕仙翁.”⁵⁷ Lianfu quickly dispatched someone to pursue [Lü], but [Lü] was already beyond sight. The Transcendent Lady said, “If there is somewhere the Transcendent Gentleman wishes to go, he immediately reaches that region. It will not have reached one quarter of an hour, and his person has already travelled thousands of *li*.” Lianfu thus asked the Transcendent Lady, saying, “Where did the Transcendent Gentleman go just now?” The Transcendent Lady looked around, saying, “The Transcendent Gentleman is already at Jingnan Urban Prefecture 荆南府.”⁵⁸

Again there was a scholar [named] Xia Jun 夏鈞⁵⁹ who passed through Yong Prefecture. He asked the Transcendent Lady, saying, “Where is Elder Lü 吕先生

⁵⁴ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “chīh-chōu,” 157.

⁵⁵ Located in today’s Hunan Province.

⁵⁶ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

⁵⁷ Referring to Lü Dongbin 吕洞宾. Dates unclear. Lü was semi-mythic figure that allegedly mastered everything from calligraphy to swordsmanship. He was co-opted by various groups, including Daoists, who drew upon his legend to deride bureaucrats. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Lü Dongbin,” 712–714.

⁵⁸ One of the ten kingdoms in the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907–960/979). Located near today’s Hubei and Hunan Provinces.

⁵⁹ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

now?” The Transcendent Lady said, “Today [he] is in Tan Prefecture 潭州⁶⁰ establishing a vegetarian feast at Xinghua Monastery 興化寺.”⁶¹ Jun reached Tan [Prefecture] and reached the monastery. [Jun] took a vegetarian feast calendar and inspected it, that day’s fruit was an offering from a guest returning from Hua Prefecture 華州.⁶²

Li Zhengchen 李正臣⁶³ was a travelling salesman from Tan Prefecture, and had dealings in the Jianghu 江湖⁶⁴ region. [His] wife obtained an illness wherein something like an enormous lump was in her abdomen. On occasion [the lump] in her abdomen would revolve, promptly causing unendurable pain. [Li] administered many [medical] recipes to her, but there was no recovery. Zhengchen then went and saw the Transcendent Lady, and the Transcendent Lady said, “The child is the pregnant servant girl your wife murdered, and this grievance has manifested itself in [your wife’s] abdomen.” Zhengchen requested a recipe to save her, but the Transcendent Lady said, “This matter has been managed. The grievance has already been corrected, and [your wife] cannot be saved.” The lump in [Li’s wife’s] abdomen later gradually grew larger, causing extreme anguish. [Finally] it turned over, splitting [Li’s wife] open and killing [her]. Zhengchen inspected his wife’s abdomen, in which was a girl. [The girl’s] body still had lash marks upon it. Busybodies constantly went and

⁶⁰ Located in today’s Hunan Province.

⁶¹ Meaning “Giving Rise to Change Monastery”.

⁶² Located in today’s Shaanxi Province.

⁶³ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

⁶⁴ As noted above, this is a reference to the area now consisting of today’s Jiangnan, Jiangxi, Hubei, and Hunan Provinces.

inquired [about this], _____⁶⁵ pass through, all inspected [the incident], and scholars from Xiangdong [District] 湘東⁶⁶ agreed in saying this was supernatural.

At that time, Yang Gong 楊公⁶⁷ was writing comments on statutes and went near the canton [where Zhao was]. [Yang] reached Yong [Prefecture] and heard about [the above event]. [Because] Gong was an upright man, [he] became very indignant. [He] then locked and barred the door of [the Transcendent Lady's] chamber, sealing it with his name, and left. After one month, [Yang] returned and opened the chamber, and the Transcendent Lady's countenance was like before.⁶⁸ Gong was thus inclined to express faith in [the Dao], and no longer had a desire to further injure the Transcendent Lady.

[At that time] Teng Zijing 滕子京⁶⁹ was exiled to Yueyang [Prefecture] 岳陽.⁷⁰ One evening there was a great thunderstorm, and [the sky] subsequently cleared up. On the stone wall at the western peak of Huarong [District] 華容⁷¹ were written three characters, [saying,] “Apologize [to the] transcendent [for your] anger.” The calligraphic style was unusual, and Gong ordered [someone] to copy the characters on the hall wall. [He] then ordered people to go ask the Transcendent Lady [about this], and the Transcendent Lady said, “This was only one demon from the Thunder

⁶⁵ Several characters are missing here, and it is difficult to discern what they might be. It is possible that they refer to the “Xiangdong scholars” mentioned later. Regardless, the meaning of the sentence can be roughly understood.

⁶⁶ Located in today's Jiangxi Province.

⁶⁷ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

⁶⁸ I.e. it had not changed in the month she had been locked up, despite not having access to food, &c.

⁶⁹ Also known as Teng Zongliang 滕宗諒 (991–1074). An official who met Lü Dongbin, and who may have been responsible for establishing a cultic site dedicated to Lü.

⁷⁰ Located in today's Hunan Province.

⁷¹ In Yueyang.

Division.⁷² Two brothers wrote the characters using an iron writing brush, and each of those characters measures three *chi* tall.”

Gong was vigorously promoted and [ordered to] move to the south. While on the road out of Yong [Prefecture], [he] went to see the Transcendent Lady, saying, “Is it possible I will return?” The Transcendent Lady said, “[You will] return.” [Yang asked,] “[Will] I see the sage⁷³ again?” The Transcendent Lady refused to answer. Afterward, things resulted as the Transcendent Lady had said. Grand Counselor of the Right 右相⁷⁴ Di 狄⁷⁵ was going to the south for an attack and passed through Yong [Prefecture]. He saw the Transcendent Lady and said, “[I] received imperial command to strategize [against] a traitorous [group], and I wish to know the outcome of the battle. Will we now destroy the traitors?” The Transcendent Lady said, “The traitors will see destruction.”⁷⁶ [Di asked,] “[Will I] be able to seize their ferocious chief?” The Transcendent Lady refused to answer. Afterward everything happened as the Transcendent Lady had said.

All those who passed through Yong [Prefecture] with something preoccupying them, without exception, saw the Transcendent Lady and asked their fortunes. One day, the Transcendent Lady called her elder brother and his wife and said, “Heaven and earth have not before revealed to people their disasters and happiness, and [I was] worried about revealing those secrets. Now I have a house full of distinguished visitors, and when they inquire I cannot refuse them. I have indeed been on the verge of revealing to someone heaven and earth’s hidden secrets, how can I avoid being

⁷² I.e. the celestial division dealing with thunderstorms.

⁷³ I.e. Zhao.

⁷⁴ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “yù,” 584; *ibid.*, “hisāng,” 230.

⁷⁵ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

⁷⁶ Zhao’s response seems ambiguous, hence the phrasing above. She could either be saying, “Yes, you will destroy the traitors,” or, “The traitors will destroy you.”

reprimanded from above? I will depart from this place.” [Zhao] then bathed and put on a hat and clothing, sat upright, and transformed. Today her perfected body is still in [her] chamber.

B4. Transcendent Lady Zheng 鄭仙姑⁷⁷

Transcendent Lady Zheng 鄭 was from Hui Prefecture 徽州.⁷⁸ Her father, Balang 八郎,⁷⁹ studied the Dao. From childhood, the Transcendent Lady and her father lived alone at the top of a pavilion. [One day] a guest arrived, and she saw her father at the bottom of the pavilion. [The Transcendent] Lady, clasping tea and hot water, descended, hastily believing that [the guest] was an ordinary person. [She] did not see that their pavilion was on fire from her cooking. Her father died, but, during the preparation of his body for burial, she refused to inter him, saying, “My father is not dead.”

From the outset the Transcendent Lady did not go out of the outer city gates, but there were people who had seen her hundreds of *li* outside [of them]. The room of her residence had long been decayed. One autumn there was great wind and rain, and, one evening, the room fell. Those nearby were greatly alarmed, and people suspected that she had been crushed to death. [They] were about to inspect [the pavilion], and

⁷⁷ I have been unable to find any information for this figure that is not already found within this biography.

⁷⁸ Located in today's Anhui Province.

⁷⁹ I have not been able to locate this figure outside this text. Balang is also the term used to refer to a spirit to whom druggists make offerings.

saw one wooden cot, on which the Transcendent Lady was laying. She had not been crushed, and was still not awake.

[At one time], the Jixi [County]⁸⁰ 績溪⁸¹ Director 令⁸² Su Zhe 蘇轍,⁸³ [courtesy name] Ziyou 子由, saw [the Transcendent Lady] and said [to himself], “[She] is already eighty years old, and is still a maiden.” Ziyou said [to Zheng], “[Your] household operates within social norms, why is [the Transcendent] Lady not married?” [She] said, “Because I recite the *Scripture on Salvation* [instead].” [Ziyou] questioned her reasoning, [and she] said, “This scripture’s origins are in the spoken. Its origins are before heaven and earth. It was established outside of heaven and earth, how could I not obtain it?” Ziyou said, “How can anyone be able to climb outside of heaven and earth?” [The Transcendent Lady] said, “[If you have] the Dao, then it is thus.” Ziyou said, “How can the Dao grant this matter?” [The Transcendent Lady] said, “That which is my body is not the Dao.”

Ziyou understood she was unusual, and the next day [he] arranged for delicacies and gifts to be delivered to the Transcendent Lady. Once they arrived, [Ziyou] planned to be able to drink wine and eat strong-smelling foods.⁸⁴ Ziyou quietly asked [the Transcendent Lady] about matters concerning maintaining good health, [and she] said, “The lord’s vessel⁸⁵ [is already] damaged, it will be difficult to complete the Dao.” Because of this, Ziyou promptly asked [her] about various

⁸⁰ Located in today’s Anhui Province.

⁸¹ The characters given, 績溪, contain a scribal error.

⁸² See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “ling,” 313.

⁸³ (1039–1112). A widely renowned essayist and politician from the Song Dynasty.

⁸⁴ Though it is not stated, it seems that Ziyou’s assumption was erroneous.

⁸⁵ I.e. your body.

methods of gymnastics,⁸⁶ [to] all [of which she] said, “Not so. I have only cultivated [my practices] in this very spot from infancy.” Ziyu said, “There are those who have seen [the Transcendent] Lady hundreds of *li* outside [the city walls], is it dishonest [to say] you have not gone [anywhere since] infancy?” [The Transcendent] Lady laughed and did not answer. After this her final location was not known.

B5. Liu Yan 劉妍⁸⁷

Transcendent Lady Liu Yan 劉妍 was a prostitute from Dai Prefecture 代州.⁸⁸ In Song Zhezong’s 哲宗⁸⁹ Shaosheng 紹聖⁹⁰ reign period, an old woman came to her door and begged for money. [The woman] tarried at [Liu’s] house, [waiting] for food to be arranged. Having eaten, the old woman spoke, saying, “Are you willing to resign yourself of this? Why not follow me and leave, and I shall teach you the Dao.” The Transcendent Lady promised to go, and told her mother, saying, “You [have] gems, jewels, and innumerable gold. There is another woman I can serve, I beg [you] to let me leave and study the Dao.” Her mother did not [prevent her from] following, [and Liu] immediately cut her hair and donned linen clothing.

⁸⁶ Also called “guiding and pulling” 導引, these are specific gymnastic techniques used by Daoists in an attempt to attain longevity. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Daoyin,” 334–337.

⁸⁷ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

⁸⁸ Located in today’s Shanxi Province.

⁸⁹ A Song Dynasty emperor (1076–1100).

⁹⁰ (1094–1098).

[Liu] entered the Taihang Mountains 太行山⁹¹ through a narrow path and dwelt in a hut, begging for food from sunrise. [She lived] thusly for several years, until one day she spoke to those from the place where she frequently begged for food, saying, “For a long time [I] have lived like an animal, tomorrow I shall depart.” People went to observe her as planned, and saw flames issuing from her hut. The Transcendent Lady sat cross-legged amongst the flames and transformed. [The people] of the world say they believe she changed her body via the fire.⁹²

B6. Perfected Yu 虞真人⁹³

Perfected Yu 虞 had her origins as an unseemly woman. [Once, she] came across an unusual person, [and from then on] did not eat and concealed herself in the Zhongnan Mountains 終南山.⁹⁴ Many scholars and officials honored her. At the beginning of Song Huizong’s 徽宗⁹⁵ Chongning 崇寧⁹⁶ reign period,⁹⁷ first from Mount Mao was

⁹¹ A mountain range running through today’s Shanxi, Henan, and Hebei Provinces.

⁹² Instances of the practice of religious self-immolation can be found throughout Chinese history, and, in some cases, seem to be supported by religious texts. For more on self-immolation in Daoism, see Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 159; Eskildsen, *Early Quanzhen Masters*, 59–60; Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 163 n. 166. For more on self-immolation in Chinese religion, see Benn, *Burning for the Buddha*, 8–12; Benn, “The *Lotus Sūtra* and Self-Immolation,” 114–119; *ibid.*, 123–128; Benn, “Multiple Meanings of Buddhist Self-Immolation,” 204–208.

⁹³ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

⁹⁴ Located in today’s Shaanxi Province.

⁹⁵ A Song Dynasty emperor (1082–1135).

⁹⁶ (1102–1106).

⁹⁷ I.e. 1102.

summoned Liu Hunkang 劉混康,⁹⁸ [from] Hailing [District] 海陵⁹⁹ was summoned Xu Shenweng 徐神翁,¹⁰⁰ [from] Zhongnan [Mountains] was summoned Perfected Yu, [from] Yiyang [County] 弋陽¹⁰¹ was summoned Zhang Xujing 張虛靜.¹⁰² [One] day [they] assembled at an abstruse palace hall,¹⁰³ [and] explained and examined the exquisite Dao.

B7. Woman of Mo Prefecture 莫州女¹⁰⁴

At the boundary of Renqiu District 任丘縣¹⁰⁵ in Mo Prefecture 莫州¹⁰⁶ was Tangluo Market 塘灤市, where fish amassed in mounds. In Song Huizong's Daguan 大觀¹⁰⁷ reign period, there was a poor woman, the origins of whom are unknown, who commonly dwelt in a wasteland temple. At daybreak she entered the market to sell fish in strained circumstances. [She] danced and cooked the fish to eat, but others did not see what she herself ate. Some person gave her clothes, and she subsequently rent and destroyed them with a knife. People nearby immediately berated and scolded her, and [the woman] stabbed those who did so with the knife. Because of this, no one

⁹⁸ (1035–1108). The twenty-fifth patriarch of the Shangqing School. For more on Liu, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Liu Hunkang,” 689–690.

⁹⁹ Located in today's Jiangsu Province.

¹⁰⁰ Also known as Xu Shouxin 徐守信 (1032–1108). A Song Dynasty Daoist priest.

¹⁰¹ Located in today's Jiangxi Province.

¹⁰² I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹⁰³ A palace in which profound mysteries are studied.

¹⁰⁴ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹⁰⁵ Located in today's Hebei Province.

¹⁰⁶ Located in today's Hebei Province.

¹⁰⁷ (1107–1110).

dared venture near her. Her manner was graceful and fine, and her skin was like frozen fat. [Amongst] the prefectural troops the idea began to sprout that [they] should assault her. [They] suddenly saw her seat was a great python, were filled with dread, and fled. [When they] returned to observe her, they saw that her seat was now a jeweled lotus flower. The poor woman said, “I cannot dwell in this place.” Her whereabouts suddenly became unknown.

B8. Transcendent Lady Yu 于仙姑¹⁰⁸

Transcendent Lady Yu 于 was from Fengxiang [County] 鳳翔.¹⁰⁹ Her origins were in a family whose business was boiling tea. They lived in the wall around the market and sold the tea there in strained circumstances. Although the Transcendent Lady was but a small girl, she alone liked what was pure and clean, she refused to eat meat, and she recited Laozi’s texts daily. Her father and mother gave her money, which she promptly stored away. At the market she [purchased] letters on abandoning and documents on declining,¹¹⁰ bundled her clothing, and gave [money] to beggars, carrying very little [money] with her. In the letters and documents [Yu] obtained, the Daoist [methods of] hissing, laughing, wheezing, puffing, and grunting¹¹¹ were discussed. [Yu] performed these [breaths] for a long time, then abstained from

¹⁰⁸ I have not been able to locate this figure outside this text.

¹⁰⁹ Located in today’s Shaanxi Province.

¹¹⁰ The meaning here is unclear. It appears as if these refer to Daoist texts, given what Yu learns from them.

¹¹¹ These are five of the six “Instructions on the Six Sounds” 六字訣, a series of breathing techniques used for healing purposes. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Liuzi jue,” 698–700.

cereals.¹¹² At the age of fourteen, [Yu] was unwilling to marry. Those who were near the woman [thought her] a goodly spiritual transcendent, and sought to come visit the Transcendent Lady [in an attempt to marry her].

One day, [Yu] was with a medium at a field [near] Mount Hua 華山.¹¹³ [There] there was a stone chamber, deep within which was a jade box storing a cinnabar recipe.¹¹⁴ [Yu] had heard that several people sought [the chamber], but, when they placed their hands on the jade box, they had been unable to open [it]. Only [those who knew] the treasured compositions of Shangqing [could do so], and those who did not have the Dao could not [make it] go. [Someone said,] “I have observed Madam Yu. [She] has studied the Dao and is unmarried, [and she] has already been able to abstain from cereals. [I] think [she is] a person who will be able to open the jade box.” Thereupon, [the people] went to ask the Transcendent Lady [to open the box]. The Transcendent Lady promised [to open it], and several women went together [with her] as soon as [she had said this]. The Transcendent Lady then entered [the chamber]. [She] saw the jade box, and, as a result, a Dadong 大洞¹¹⁵ scripture was issued forth and [Yu] obtained it. Fearing the crowd would snatch [the text], [Yu] went out and announced to them, saying, “With [all] honesty, I was unable to open [the box].” The crowd was disappointed and resented these words.

¹¹² Abstinence from grains is a recurring theme in the lives of the extraordinary religious figures of China. For a discussion of the history of this practice, see Schipper, *Taoist Body*, 167–170.

¹¹³ Located in today’s Shaanxi Province. This mountain has been associated with a number of cults throughout Chinese history, both Daoist and non-Daoist. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Huashan,” 516–517.

¹¹⁴ I.e. an alchemical recipe.

¹¹⁵ Meaning “Great Cavern”. This term is often used to synonymously refer to Shangqing texts. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Dadong zhenjing,” 295–297.

The Transcendent Lady went home to study the scripture. [She] did this morning and night, and thereupon obtained the methods for surpassing the world [and] refining her form.¹¹⁶ [She] was able to place [the text] on a heating basket, or lay [it] in a cabinet for a time spanning many successive months. Her disciples opened [the storage containers] and inspected them, each [place] gathered dust. The Transcendent Lady gently lifted her clothing and raised up the texts. Song Huizong heard this and summoned [Yu] to come to the eastern metropolis,¹¹⁷ [where he] conferred [upon her] the title “Perfected.” [He] moreover bestowed [her] with a poem, [which] said:

[Your] body is a companion of the Three Mountains’ 三山¹¹⁸ alpine
clouds,

[Your] mind is free from even a single speck of worldly dust.

In the beginning of [Song] Qinzong’s 欽宗¹¹⁹ Jingkang 靖康¹²⁰ reign period,¹²¹ [Yu] spoke to her disciples, saying, “I will now die. After [these] sixty years I shall return [to heaven].” [She] stopped [talking] and thereupon transformed. Her disciples honored her words and made a great coffin. The two¹²² passed through [various areas] and reached [their destination]. [Yu’s followers] placed [her body] in a ravine in the Zhongnan Mountains. People knew of her, and those who [wished to] see

¹¹⁶ “Refining the form,” 煉形, is associated with the Daoist cosmological notion of the relationship between the spirit, pneuma, and form. For later Daoists (e.g. those in the Song Dynasty), the form was understood as being related to, but different from, the body. In this understanding, refining the form leads to longer life, and, eventually, a release from the form and ascent to Heaven. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Lianxing,” 649–651.

¹¹⁷ This reference is unclear. It may be an actual place name, of which there are many Eastern Metropolises, or a more general geographic reference.

¹¹⁸ Mounts Gezao, Longhu, and Mao. All important Daoist sites.

¹¹⁹ An emperor of the Song Dynasty (1100–1161).

¹²⁰ (1126–1127).

¹²¹ I.e. 1126.

¹²² I.e. Yu and her coffin.

[her] personally reached [the ravine]. Several months passed and the Transcendent Lady suddenly rose. [She] spoke to her disciples, saying, “I admonish you, do not cause the masses to inspect [my body]. Now [I] will say how this shall be. You [must] urgently dig a grave twenty *chi* deep and place my coffin in it.” Her disciples then dug deeply, and [when they had] finished, the Transcendent Lady promptly lied down in her coffin, ordering her disciples to inter her, saying, “The masses can return to harass me.” [Among] those to whom [Yu] transmitted [her teachings] in her life, Xiang Tuan 向湍¹²³ obtained the Dao.

B9. Transcendent Lady Zhang 張仙姑¹²⁴

Transcendent Lady Zhang 張 was from Nanyang [Prefecture] 南陽.¹²⁵ Among those who had not comprehensively grasped the Dao in that area were some sick people. The Transcendent Lady then sat correctly and closed her eyes, secretly spreading her pneuma to attack [the illness]. Those who were ill suddenly woke, their bosoms mild. Thus, [though they had] showed confused and angered countenances, they stopped and issued cries like animals and sounds like thunder. Although those who were chronically ill had sunk [deep into their illness], none were [unhealed]. At that time, the nobility greatly respected and admired [Zhang]. Song Huizong tried to summon her to come to the eastern metropolis, after which her whereabouts are unknown.

¹²³ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹²⁴ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹²⁵ Located in today’s Henan Province.

B10. Xu Daosheng 徐道生¹²⁶

Xu 徐 Daosheng 道生¹²⁷ was a martial wife of Shangyang [District] 山陽,¹²⁸ and she later entered Shenguang Abbey 神光觀¹²⁹ and became a Daoist priestess. [Xu] heard that Xu Shenweng was in Hailing [District] [and she] promptly left to serve him. [She] unhurriedly asked Shenweng, saying, “People’s bodies have integrated what is polluted and impure, but in the past there have been those who have risen to the sky during the day. Can one judge what is nefarious?” Shenweng said, “I have heard there is one Huangü Cliff 換骨岩¹³⁰ in the Taihang Mountains. Those who desire to levitate [to heaven] first go to Huangü, and afterward they indeed obtain [their] ascent to Shangqing, [where they] are listed in the transcendent registers.” Daosheng had already obtained Shenweng’s words, and promptly sought Huangü Cliff and a Daoist abbey thereupon. [She] reached the lofty and towering summit, [but it was] dangerous and [she] could not climb. Daosheng’s will was resolute and determined, and she submitted to the will of heaven without dread. Then, with the help of a kudzu creeper, [which appeared] unexpectedly underfoot, [she] climbed up a narrow path to the precious summit. As a result [she saw] a great shelter that was deep and wide. All around [it] were thousands of transcedents’ joint-locked skeletons,¹³¹ [all] sitting

¹²⁶ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹²⁷ Meaning “Born of the Dao”.

¹²⁸ Located in today’s Shaanxi Province.

¹²⁹ Meaning “Spiritual Radiance Abbey”.

¹³⁰ Meaning “Cliff of Changing the Skeleton”.

¹³¹ 鎖子骨 In Chinese lore, transcedents would occasionally leave behind a skeleton whose bones were linked or fused together.

cross-legged in the corridor below. Daosheng took frankincense¹³² from each [skeleton's] mouth and returned it. She departed, and her whereabouts are unknown.

B11. Chen Qiongyu 陳瓊玉¹³³

Madam Chen 陳 had the given name Qiongyu 瓊玉¹³⁴ and was from Jinhua District 金華縣 in Mu Prefecture 婺州.¹³⁵ One day, when [she was] seventeen, [she] encountered her elder brother roaming amongst the four bright seas. Her elder brother mounted a boat and Qiongyu walked atop the water. [This went on] in excess of several days and her clothing did not get wet. Additionally, she told people, saying, “I was on the water and I encountered a beautiful female starlord¹³⁶ who guided me to Penglai. Only then did I realize [my] origins are in the Master of the Thirteen Grottoes 十三洞主.¹³⁷ Thereupon [I] woke to reality, and [I] henceforth severed [myself] from grains. Furthermore, I can [compose] verse, and know the calamities and fortunes of the human world.” Palace Ministers 公卿¹³⁸ and various gentlemen [spent] days paying her obeisance, and the door outside [her dwelling] was full of sandals.

¹³² There is a scribal error in the characters given here. What is written 熏陸香 should be read 薰陸香.

¹³³ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹³⁴ Meaning “Elegant Jade”.

¹³⁵ Located in today's Zhejiang Province.

¹³⁶ Each celestial body was supposed to have a deity ruling over it, and that figure was referred to as a “starlord” 星君.

¹³⁷ The Thirteen Grottoes are a series of karsts located in Hunan Province and are the alleged home of both Buddhist and Daoist religious figures. The Master Grotto is the largest of these grottoes.

¹³⁸ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “kūng-ch'ing,” 291.

In the seventh year of Song Huizong's Zhenghe 政和¹³⁹ reign period,¹⁴⁰ Provisional Administration Commissioner 郡守¹⁴¹ Liu An 劉安,¹⁴² Upper Division Commissioner 使者¹⁴³ Lu Tianji 盧天驥,¹⁴⁴ Wang Ruming 王汝明, and so on made [news of Chen] known at the dynastic court. [Chen was] summoned to and reached the capital city, and was bestowed with the title Master of the Subtle and Calm Refinement 妙靜煉師. [Her] reception complete, [Chen] promptly requested to return to the mountains, and [for her] return [she was] bestowed with a litter.

Outside of the city, the esteemed Master resided alone in a single roomed [dwelling]. In front of [the dwelling] lay Gexian Summit 葛仙峰¹⁴⁵ and behind the Transcendent Lady's pillow was an altar. In the Zhenghe reign period, District Magistrate 邑宰¹⁴⁶ He Tingjian 何庭堅¹⁴⁷ presented [Chen] with a poem [which] said:

Severed [from] grain, [this] perched spirit is how many years?
 Secluded all day long, [she is] still hasty like this.
 [From a] lofty peak [she] writes Magu's 麻姑¹⁴⁸ deeds from memory;
 Exquisite methods [are] intimately propagated by [this] woman of Mu.
 As a result, [her] practice always exceeds outside the Three Realms;
 [Her] surname and name clearly penetrate the nine layers of heaven.

¹³⁹ (1111–1118).

¹⁴⁰ I.e. 1117.

¹⁴¹ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “chùn-shǒu,” 202.

¹⁴² I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹⁴³ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “shǐh-chě,” 422.

¹⁴⁴ I have been unable to locate this and the following figure outside this text.

¹⁴⁵ Located in today's Jiangxi Province.

¹⁴⁶ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “i-tsǎi,” 270.

¹⁴⁷ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹⁴⁸ Magu is a legendary transcendent known largely through the biography of another transcendent, Wang Yuan 王遠. For more, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Magu,” 731–732.

Rely on whom [you can] and ask the Queen Mother of the West 西王

母.¹⁴⁹

The Master is one of how many Jinhua transcendents?

People presented many poems [to Chen], and the Master solitarily enjoyed these writings.

The Master wrote poems, in sum not less than several thousand, many prophesying people's fortunes and misfortunes. [Chen's] younger brother Zhaochang 昭嘗 said, "[These] verses' words, things are as they sound.¹⁵⁰ How do you know [these things]?" The Master said, "The tone [and affair] are internally connected. [It is said] and it promptly comes to a transcendent official [who] records it. From five hundred years in the past to what has not yet come, [I] know all. I fear revealing the secrets known only to heaven. For this reason I rely on wind, flowers, snow, and the moon¹⁵¹ in [my] verse, but good and bad fortunes can be found included among them. I not only know these things, I also [know how] to wield [such information]. In the past, authority was ficklely [wielded] by Commandants 尉¹⁵² and the human realm was managed through life and death. Later authority was hidden in law and the human realm was managed through the six crimes. These affairs are: absconding [with]

¹⁴⁹ The Queen Mother of the West is among the most important of the Daoist deities, and is foremost among female figures. She is the embodiment of *yin* and is associated both with life and death. For a brief discussion, see Cahill, "The Goddess," 197–198; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Xiwang mu," 1119–1120. For a more complete discussion, see Despeux and Kohn, eds., *Women in Daoism*, 25–47; Cahill, *Divine Traces*, 43–50; Yü, *Kuan-yin*, 408–411.

¹⁵⁰ I.e. the things prophesied in these poems come true.

¹⁵¹ I.e. trite poetic subjects.

¹⁵² See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, "wèi," 7658.

officials' money, the Five Transgressions,¹⁵³ unfiliality, committing crimes, excessive transgressions, and premeditated murder. Common people dare to commit crimes, and that is the reason for the great strictness of heaven. Those who do not commit crimes leave the Three Worlds¹⁵⁴ as spirit transcendents. Close [to our time they] also manage the moon platform¹⁵⁵ and transcendent census. Those who are clever in regards to everything are at the top of the census. If [one] has efficacious practice, [they] can be regarded as a Moon Platform Transcendent 月臺仙. Generally speaking, [they] make an effort through loyalty, filial piety, sincerity, and integrity.” [Chen] reached eighty or ninety years, and her appearance was unfailing. Afterward her final location was not known.

B12. Madam Wu 吳氏¹⁵⁶

Perfected Madam Wu of Subtle Illumination 妙明真人吳氏 was a scholarly woman of Jurong District 句容縣.¹⁵⁷ When she was young she encountered an unusual person, [from whom she] obtained secrets of cultivation and refinement. [Afterward]

¹⁵³ The term “Five Transgressions” 五逆 is usually used in Buddhist texts to refer to five extremely heinous deeds. These deeds are: killing a buddha (i.e. one who has attained enlightenment and seeks to aid others), killing an arhat (i.e. one who has attained enlightenment, but who is not yet a buddha), fracturing the Saṅgha (i.e. the Buddhist monastic community), patricide, and matricide.

¹⁵⁴ Another means of referring to the Three Realms.

¹⁵⁵ A term used to refer to the abode of the transcendents.

¹⁵⁶ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹⁵⁷ Located in today's Zhejiang Province.

she did not eat, and did not even drink water. During Song Huizong's Xuanhe 宣和¹⁵⁸ reign period, [she] was summoned to come to the palace and go to the public building [where] Cai Jing 蔡京¹⁵⁹ [was]. Jing presented [Wu with] a poem, which had the lines:

[This] nun issues forth [her] spirit [like] a transcendent drinking dew;
Tortoise-Platform Queen Mother 龜臺王母¹⁶⁰ has not forgotten [her]
peaches.

Soon after, [Wu] received a request [from Chen] to return to Qiantang 錢塘¹⁶¹ [River with him]. Before long, she desired to depart. Other people asked [her about] this, [and she] said, "This town has a pervasive and sinister pneuma, may [I] quickly flee and leave? [If] a goldsmith were only passing through for a short period, [he would be] saturated and have calamities." The Perfected had skin bright and elegant, and she was able to understand the words of any debate or history. [Though she] did not ever see writings, there was no matter past or present about which she did not know. [She] later concealed [herself] in [Mount] Luofu 羅浮 in Hui Prefecture 惠州.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ (1119–1125).

¹⁵⁹ A government official in the Song Dynasty (1047–1126).

¹⁶⁰ A reference to the Queen Mother of the West, whose home has a region known as the Tortoise Platform.

¹⁶¹ Located in today's Zhejiang Province.

¹⁶² Located in today's Guangdong Province.

B13. Wu Yuanzhao 武元照¹⁶³

Perfected Wu 武真人 had the given name Yuanzhao 元照¹⁶⁴ and was a woman from an ordinary family from Xiaoshan [Ward] 蕭山 in Huiji [Canton] 會稽.¹⁶⁵ [When she was] just a child being cradled in [her parents' arms], her mother would sometimes eat meat, and [Wu] would not suckle for the rest of the day. [If her mother] ate vegetables, [Wu would] then [suckle] as before. Her mother thought this strange and suspected [Wu was of unusual character].

Some years later, [her mother] discussed this matter with the wives of the region's wealthy men. [Wu] had already received silks, then became discontented and unhappy. As she was being instructed by working women, [Wu] sat and dozed off. Her mother whipped her with bamboo, [and Wu] apologized, saying, "I would not dare be lazy, [but] yesterday I had a dream in which a gold-armored spirit announced from the earth and made manifest a decree. Together we departed, entering into the skies and into the fore of a wide hall. I saw a lofty perfected [being] sitting in the aft of the hall, with jade girls arranged in attendance. [The perfected being] beckoned me to ascend the hall, and admonished me, saying, 'You have your origins as a jade girl. Some time ago you faulted and received implication, and have been temporarily banished to the mortal world. You will return in three ages. [If] you [wish to] return, [you must] cease [eating] grains, reject social customs, and cultivate the Dao.' [He] reached [the end] and I woke up, no longer desiring to eat [grains], and mother saw [in

¹⁶³ I have been unable to find any information for this figure that is not already found within this biography.

¹⁶⁴ Meaning "Original Radiance".

¹⁶⁵ Located in today's Zhejiang Province.

me] strength. Again I dreamt a spirit angrily said, '[I] informed you that you must not eat, [and] you disobeyed my admonishment.' [He] disemboweled me, took my stomach and intestines, washed them several times in a jade basin, then returned them into my abdomen and sealed it up. For this reason, [he] transmitted the Lingbao¹⁶⁶ and Dadong teachings, up to the Seal of the Perfected of the Dadong Great Law Master of Returning Wind and Mixing and Blending 大洞大法師回風混合真人印. [This seal] allows [me] to govern the illnesses of those in the world." [Her] mother heard what was stated and, reaching realization with a jolt, said, "[My] child is an unusual person. I will [allow my] child to sever [herself] from marital matters, so that [she] may indeed comply with [her] aspiration."

[Wu] herself lived alone in a quiet room, in which she used talisman water to heal people's illnesses. [People] from far and near hurriedly assembled, seeking such talismans. Someone invited [Wu] to pass through [the region] to a house to inspect a disease. [That person] then ordered two servants [to pick Wu up and] depart by means of a shoulder carriage. [The retinue] did not wrap [their] provisions, and, [when they] reached midway, [her] followers were famished. But [Wu bought] two peaches at a market, breathed [her] pneuma [onto them], and gave them [to her followers]. The people ate one peach, then went several tens of *li* without feeling hungry.

[At that time,] Attendant Censor 侍御史¹⁶⁷ Chen Mou 陳某¹⁶⁸ lived at Qiantang. By means of the will of heaven's rules, the people [he] managed were punished with illness. In a separate garden near [his] home, [Chen] built a multi-

¹⁶⁶ One of the major schools of Daoism. For more on Lingbao, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Lingbao," 663–669; Robinet, *Taoism* 149–183; Yamada, "Lingbao," 225–255.

¹⁶⁷ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, "shih yù-shih," 431.

¹⁶⁸ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

storied building. The people in the garden informed [Chen] that there were people on horseback who had gone to the top [of the building]. Chen shouted at [the people] to leave, saying, “Why are you here?” Bo Chun 薄春,¹⁶⁹ carrying a double-edged sword, stopped below [the building] and also heard the sound of horses. Before long [Chen’s] family knocked on the door, enticing him to return [home], saying, “[Our] young daughter is fastened in the sky like a thing bridled and tied in form.” [Chen] inspected [the situation] and it was indeed so. The girl fainted and was unaware of people day after day. Chen went to the multi-storied building and established a Daoist ceremony to satiate [this problem]. A fire began to rise between the walls of the building, and [Chen] hastily ran down below. The fire then ceased as well. Again [Mou] summoned a Daoist scholar to act as administrator. When [the scholar] reached the door he lost his kerchief, and [Chen’s] family became fearful.¹⁷⁰ [Chen] sent a letter beckoning Yuanzhao, and Yuanzhao [donned] her hat and clothes and began to leave. [When Wu arrived,] the Chen girl arose and greeted [her] at the door, talking and laughing like she had been before, when she was not ill. Yuanzhao led her by the hand, lodging upstairs for over three days and nights. All [the others] did not look into the place, and the girl was also self-composed.

Han Ziyi 韓子辰,¹⁷¹ the son of the Defender-in-Chief 太尉公,¹⁷² was an official below the chariot.¹⁷³ [Han] had himself already drafted a chapter of a text to report to heaven, about which people did not know. [He] requested to report to

¹⁶⁹ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹⁷⁰ It is not clear why the scholar losing his kerchief would lead to fear amongst Chen’s family.

¹⁷¹ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹⁷² See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “t’ài-wèi kǒng,” 485.

¹⁷³ “Below the chariot” being an idiomatic reference to the Emperor’s home (i.e. the capital city).

Yuanzhao, [before whom] he lay prostrate for a good while. He then rose and recited the words of his chapter, from which not one [word] was missing. [Han] moreover said, “Shangdi [grants] auspices, equality, and peace [to those who] do not covet fortune.” [Wu] criticized [this] and replied, saying, “[If] you adhere strictly to the rules [for] several thousand days, distinguished¹⁷⁴ officials [will] reward these meritorious [deeds].” Afterward, everyone [behaved] according to Yuanzhao’s words.

Han had suffered from an illness of his foot from childhood. [This affected] everything he did, extending to [his] inability to bend and stretch. Yuanzhao massaged [him], and became aware that the space between his kidneys was fiery. Again [she] rubbed his thigh, and [found that] it, too, was hot. [Wu] shook the pneuma outward from his foot and toe. [Han] immediately placed his foot on the ground and [found that] his illness had finally been healed. [Sometime later,] Han and his servant lodged in a hut beside a narrow house. That night, [Han] dreamt a ghostly being was pressing upon his body, so he shouted and left [the hut]. [News] of this event reached Yuanzhao. None were able to tell her the reason [for the event], and [she] bounded [out] to reach his locale. Yuanzhao reached the door and returned, saying, “This room [houses the ghost] of someone who hanged himself. [He] has fluffy hair on his head and his tongue is out. [He] appeared to me as I sought to pass.” [Wu] quickly drew a talisman and ordered her servant to burn it. That night, [Wu] had a dream in which that person thanked her profusely, saying, “I have obtained rebirth [thanks to your] talisman, Perfected Official 真官,¹⁷⁵ [and I shall] no longer return.” [Wu] opened the

¹⁷⁴ Two different characters can be found here, depending on the version of the text one uses. These are “辯,” meaning “to argue,” and “辨,” meaning “distinguish.” I have gone with the latter character.

¹⁷⁵ A term used to refer both to transcendent bureaucrats, as well as to Daoist clergy.

pass and [made to] depart, [but] Master Han had built a cot to detain Yuanzhao. [She] lied down [on the cot], [but] no one heard [her] gasping for breath. Slowly, rising in the clear sky above the tip of her nose, [she] saw an infant. [It was] perhaps three *cun* long, colored like jade glass, and emitted a light [that lit] the whole cot. [The infant] hovered above [her] abdomen, and, shortly afterward, [she] lost sight [of it].¹⁷⁶

[At one time,] the servant girl of Prince Zhang Xun's 張循王¹⁷⁷ house became pregnant. She was long overdue but had not given birth, and [Zhang] asked Yuanzhao to come. [When Wu arrived,] several servant girls were standing together, [and] Yuanzhao inspected only the one who was pregnant. [Wu] gasped, saying, "In a previous life you were a woodsman, and you beat a great snake to death with your hand. This is the reason you now have [this] enemy, [the one who is] in your abdomen, eating from your five storehouses."¹⁷⁸ [It] will only stop once [the storehouses] have been exhausted." [Wu] quickly explained [this] to the Prince, who departed. [Wu] wrote two talismans and gave them to the servant girl. [She] admonished the servant girl to burn the talismans and drink the talisman water in its entirety. [The servant girl did this] and gave birth to a single great snake. The Prince heard about this and was greatly astonished. [He] saluted [Wu] and [tried] to confer gifts of gold and silk [upon her, but she] refused to accept [them].

¹⁷⁶ It is unclear if this anecdote is somehow relevant to the following story, or if this describes a pregnancy of Wu's that we hear no more about. The fact that she is "detained" by Han leads me to believe that the latter of these scenarios is more likely.

¹⁷⁷ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹⁷⁸ The "five storehouses" 五藏 are five visceral organs that, together with the "six repositories" 六府, make up the primary visceral systems of the body. These organs include the kidneys, liver, heart, spleen, and lungs. For more on these organs see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 19, table 2; Kuriyama, *Expressiveness of the Body*, 265–268; Sivin, *Traditional Medicine*, 124–133; Unschuld, *Medicine in China*, 77–83.

[Wu] returned to and stayed with Master Han for a year. [Afterward] she desired to return [home, but he] stopped her, and would not allow [her to leave]. [Wu] sighed and said [to the] others, “I [will] not arrive [here] again.” The masses suspected she would levitate [to heaven]. At dawn [the next] day, [Wu] took a boat and returned to Xiaoshan [Ward]. She reached [her] house and, though she was not sick, died. Before this, in an area in excess of ten houses, all [the people] saw Yuanzhao wearing Daoist clothing. All [of them] came to her house to assemble and talk. [They] shifted about for a time, then departed. [After] a number of days, someone reached Yuanzhao’s house and asked for her. [Her] household said, “She has died.” Several successive generations of people from the area came, and each said something similar to, “Just yesterday [Wu] arrived at my house, how [can it be that she is] suddenly [dead]?” That day several people asked to inspect her [body], [and] then, [they] say, her corpse became unfastened¹⁷⁹ in the daylight. This was in the eleventh year of Song Gaozong’s Shaoxing reign period.¹⁸⁰

B14. Transcendent Lady Sun 孫仙姑¹⁸¹

Transcendent Lady Sun’s 孫仙姑 given name was Bu’er 不二¹⁸² and her monastic name was Qingjing sanren 清靜散人.¹⁸³ She was Sun Zhongyi’s 孫忠翊¹⁸⁴ young

¹⁷⁹ I.e. she rose to heaven.

¹⁸⁰ I.e. 1141.

¹⁸¹ Sun Bu’er is the only woman to be considered one of the Seven Perfected, a collection of Daoists associated with the Quanzhen School and its founder, Wang Zhe (who is featured in this biography). For more on Sun, see Despeux and Kohn, eds., *Women in Daoism*, 140–149; Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “Sun Bu’er,” 922–924.

daughter, and was from a bold and unreserved family from Ninghai (District) 寧海.¹⁸⁵

In the spring of the second year *wuxu* 戊戌¹⁸⁶ of Jin 金¹⁸⁷ Taizu's 太祖¹⁸⁸ Tianfu 天輔¹⁸⁹ reign period,¹⁹⁰ [Sun's] mother dreamt that seven fluttering cranes danced above [their] family household. Each crane gradually entered into [her] bosom, and, [when she] awoke [she] was pregnant. On the fifth day of the first lunar month of the third year *jihai* 己亥,¹⁹¹ [she] gave birth. [Sun] was born [and was already] intelligent, gentle, virtuous, true, restrained in manner, and upright in nature. [When it came] time [for her] to select a mate, her father, Zhongyi, heard the Master of Refinement Wumeng 煉師無夢¹⁹² praising Ma Yifu 馬宜甫¹⁹³ as capable of [becoming] a Perfected Transcendent. [Sun's father] thereupon married her off [to Ma]. [After some time, Sun] gave birth to three children, and [she] taught each of them through methods of righteousness. Yifu was immensely wealthy through his family, [and he] always assisted the poor. The Transcendent Lady certainly complied with [this] and assisted him.

¹⁸² Meaning "Non-dual". This was not actually Sun's original given name, but was the name granted her by Wang Zhe. Her original given name was Fuchun 富春, meaning "Abundant Youth".

¹⁸³ Meaning "Wayfarer of Peaceful Quietude".

¹⁸⁴ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

¹⁸⁵ Located in today's Zhejiang Province.

¹⁸⁶ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

¹⁸⁷ Dynasty lasting 1115–1234.

¹⁸⁸ An emperor of the Jin Dynasty (1068–1123).

¹⁸⁹ (1117–1123).

¹⁹⁰ I.e. 1118.

¹⁹¹ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle. This date would be 16 February 1119.

¹⁹² This may be in reference to the Song Dynasty Daoist priest Zhang Wumeng 張無夢, though the assumed dates for Zhang, c. 985–1065, are too early for this figure. For a brief discussion of Zhang, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Chen Jingyuan," 251.

¹⁹³ The courtesy name of Ma Yu 馬鈺 (1123–1184), a Song Dynasty Daoist who was also considered one of the Seven Perfected. The relationship between Sun and Ma became near legendary. For more on Ma, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Ma Yu," 729–730.

In the seventh year *dinghai* 丁亥¹⁹⁴ of [Jin] Shizong's 世宗¹⁹⁵ Dading 大定¹⁹⁶ reign period,¹⁹⁷ Founder Chongyang 重陽祖師¹⁹⁸ himself came [from] the Zhongnan Mountains and [tried to] convert Yifu. The Transcendent Lady soaked up [these conversion attempts] and [also] entered the Dao,¹⁹⁹ [and the Founder] constructed a cloister in which she dwelt. The husband and wife honored [the Founder] as if [he were] a god, and served him as if [he were] a lord. [The Founder] drew a picture of a skeleton, and was determinedly hopeful to convert the husband and wife. [He] wrote a hymn on this subject, saying, "The sadness and anxiety of people is lamentable, I must now draw a picture of a skeleton. [Those who] only assemble greed and sin in their lifetimes are unwilling to stop and will only come to this."²⁰⁰ The Transcendent Lady did not yet [believe] the words of this pledge were genuine.

That winter, the Founder promised to shackle [himself inside] the cloister for one hundred days, restricting [himself] to one meal every five days. He himself came to Yifu through repeated manifestations of his spiritual transformation, and through this power [sought] to convert [Sun and Ma] on ten occasions. [The Founder showed how to] rescue [Sun and Ma] from the hells, and admonished [them] about the Three Acts²⁰¹ and the ten degrees of transgressions. On ten [occasions], [the Founder] used

¹⁹⁴ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

¹⁹⁵ An emperor of the Jin Dynasty (1123–1189).

¹⁹⁶ (1161–1189). The characters given, 太定, contain a scribal error.

¹⁹⁷ I.e. 1167.

¹⁹⁸ The monastic name of Wang Zhe 王嘉 (1113–1170), founder of the Quanzhen School. Wang, the son of a wealthy family, had a sordid past before his conversion to Daoism. His role in the relationship between Sun and Ma will be addressed later in this biography. For more on Wang, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Wang Zhe," 1022–1023.

¹⁹⁹ I.e. became a Daoist.

²⁰⁰ I.e. death.

²⁰¹ A notion found in Buddhist texts. The Three Acts are improprieties of the body, of speech, and of the mind.

cut pears to demonstrate the subtle uses of the ninefold elixir,²⁰² and also bestowed [upon Sun and Ma] acorns, telling and admonishing [them] to [follow] the Dao.²⁰³ Through his repeated appearances, [the Founder] unendingly [sought to] sink [their marriage] and assets. [Sun and Ma] were ignorant of [this] from the outset.

One day, [Sun] saw that the Founder was greatly intoxicated. [He] came directly into her dwelling and lied down in her bedroom. The Transcendent Lady reproached his insolence, angrily padlocked the door [to the room he was in], and ordered a family servant to call for Yifu at the market and inform him [of the Founder's actions]. Yifu [heard this and] said, "The Master and I have been chatting about the Dao and have not left our seats. How can this be?" [They] reached the house and opened the lock, [finding] the room to be empty of anyone. [They] peeped into the locked cloister and found the Founder sleeping heavily. Only then did [the Transcendent] Lady become well disposed [toward the Founder].

On another day, the Founder returned and drew [an image] of a heavenly hall on a single scroll. [He] showed it to them, saying, "This is the result [you will] be able [to attain if you] leave home. I decided to tell you this." In summer, during the fourth month of the year *jichou* 己丑,²⁰⁴ after [the Founder] had conveyed all of this, Zhou Botong 周伯通,²⁰⁵ of the same canton, abandoned his home and founded Jinlian Hall

²⁰² The ninefold elixir is an elixir made by transforming cinnabar into nine different forms. It was used to attain immortality or transcendence. For a discussion of the ninefold elixir, see Schipper, *Taoist Body*, 177–178.

²⁰³ During his voluntary seclusion, Wang gave split pears and acorns to Sun and Ma in an attempt to break them apart. He wished for the two to become full members of his school, which, being heavily monastic, did not allow for mixed-sex dwellings. For more on this, see Eskildsen, *Early Quanzhen Masters*, 9, 209 n. 57.

²⁰⁴ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle. Based on the previous dates, it would appear this is in May 1169.

²⁰⁵ I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

金蓮堂.²⁰⁶ [Zhou] invited the Founder, Danyang 丹陽,²⁰⁷ and others to serve as abbots. On the fifth day of the fifth month,²⁰⁸ the Transcendent Lady abandoned her three children, rejected and severed [herself from] the innumerable causes and effects, and set out for [Jinlian] Hall in order to be elucidated on transcendence. At dawn, the Founder expelled Danyang from [Jinlian] Hall. [When the Transcendent] Lady arrived, [the Founder] ordered her to burn a document of allegiance before a Daoist [altar]. [He then] bestowed upon her the given name Bu'er and the monastic name Qingjing sanren, and conferred upon her a poem, which said:

[I] cut a pear in ten periods²⁰⁹ and [you are] as before [that] fated relationship,

Heaven grants your original nature [before your] wedding day.

For this reason, [you] should certainly not leave for a time,

[You should] first come and only bind [yourself at] Jinlian [Hall].

The Founder led her to the streets to beg, and ordered her not to make her dwelling within the cloister, [but to] continue transmitting the essential Dao.

[At that time,] the Transcendent Lady was in her fifty-first year. [In the] fall of that year, the Founder assisted Qiu 丘, Liu 劉, Tan 譚, and Ma²¹⁰ in returning to Bianliang [Prefecture] 汴梁.²¹¹ The next year²¹² the Founder ascended as a

²⁰⁶ Meaning “Hall of the Golden Lotus”.

²⁰⁷ The monastic name of Ma Yu.

²⁰⁸ I.e. 1 June 1169. The characters given, 重五, refer to the fact that these are “stacked fives.”

²⁰⁹ A reference both to the splitting of the pears as noted above, as well as to the dissolving of Sun and Ma’s union.

²¹⁰ Four of Wang’s followers, all counted among the Seven Perfected. They are as follows: Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (1148–1227) (there is some confusion as to whether the character given, 丘, or another Qiu, 邱, is the correct version), Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄 (1147–1203), Tan Chuduan 譚處端 (1123–1185), and Ma Yu.

²¹¹ Known today as Kaifeng, located in today’s Henan Province.

transcendent. In the twelfth year *renchen* 壬辰,²¹³ Danyang returned the Transcendent's²¹⁴ corpse to Liujiang 劉蔣 [Village] in the Zhongnan Mountains. [He] then joined the Founder to the soil of the cloister.²¹⁵ Danyang assisted in the affair [of burying Wang], and, when it was finished, he [built] a mourning hut [with Wang's] corpse residing under a crude wall.

In the sixteenth year *bingshen* 丙申,²¹⁶ the Transcendent Lady also passed through Tongguan [District] 潼關²¹⁷ and, together with [Ma], decided to discuss and decide the question of [their] emotions. Danyang composed a Sieved Pebbles 浪淘沙²¹⁸ [poem] and sent it to the Transcendent Lady. The Transcendent Lady conveyed courtesies remotely and thanked [Ma]. Both resided in a walled cloister, [and each] went to their appointed place to transmit [the Dao]. [Sun] moved eastward to Luoyang 洛陽²¹⁹ [Prefecture].

[In Luoyang] was Transcendent Lady Feng 風,²²⁰ [who] was a minor exorcistic woman. Metropolitan Graduate 進士²²¹ Wang Yu 王宇²²² composed and inscribed a preface about Transcendent [Lady Feng], saying, “Transcendent Lady

²¹² I.e. 1170.

²¹³ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle. This year would have been 1172.

²¹⁴ I.e. Wang.

²¹⁵ I.e. interred Wang at the cloister.

²¹⁶ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle. This year would have been 1176.

²¹⁷ Located in today's Shaanxi Province.

²¹⁸ There are a number of terms used to refer to poetic styles, and, oftentimes, these terms are nested. These terms can refer to anything from meter, to rhyme scheme, to tonal patterns. “Sieved Pebbles” is a form of the *ci* 詞 variety of lyrical poems, in which two twenty-seven character lines have a consistent rhyming pattern. For more on this style, see Chen, “The Rise of the Tz'u,” 239–240.

²¹⁹ Located in today's Henan Province.

²²⁰ An exorcist from Henan who lived c. 12th century. For a brief discussion of Feng, see Despeux and Kohn, eds., *Women in Daoism*, 147.

²²¹ See Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, “chìn-shih,” 167.

²²² I have been unable to locate this figure outside this text.

Feng had her origins through the Western Pass 關西²²³ in the Huangtong 皇統²²⁴ reign period. [She] came and resided all over the eastern [regions]. [She] did not make manifest her family name or age, and [she] did not say from whence [she] came, though [she] did have the voice of a person from Shaanxi. [She] begged for food and had a meager existence. [She] had dirt upon [her] face, a frazzled head, and the filthy body of an ancient demon. In the daylight [she] roved madly through the market square, and at night dwelt at a desolate ancestral hall in a moor. [She] gave rise to neither love nor hate; she neither spoke nor acted. [She] lived a simple life of non-action, and [her] trust in nature was self-arising. [She] built inside the cultivated transcendent Dao, and outside [she] concealed [her] transcendent traces. [She] was able to blurt out words at ease, [and with them] declare profundities. She had said, ‘Green leaves [cover] the entire sky forever; yellow flowers fill the open earth. [One] can seek for thousands of *li* and never obtain [them], in ten thousand *li* [one] can seize [them] soon.’ [She] also said, ‘[When] the oil is exhausted, the dry lamp extinguishes itself, [but you] still see people raising the lantern airily.’ There were more sayings like these than [I can] exhaustively copy.”

The Transcendent Lady reached Luoyang and made her dwelling [in Transcendent Lady Feng’s grotto]. Transcendent Lady Feng’s dwelling had two grottoes, and she ordered Transcendent Lady [Sun] to take the lower grotto, [while] she took the upper grotto. [Sun] always amassed stone tiles at the front [of her grotto], and all the men who passed the lower grotto had to knock on the stone tiles to pass. [This kept] demons from outside from being able to [break through] the barrier. [Sun]

²²³ I.e. Tongguan.

²²⁴ Reign period of Jin Xizong 熙宗 (1119–1150). Era dates were 1141–1149.

moreover taught [Daoism] and encouraged practice, and, after six years, [she had] completed her Daoist [teachings]. [Sun] went and converted [different] classes of people, and those who turned toward [the Dao] were great in numbers.

[Sun] once composed “Casting Lots” 《卜筮子》²²⁵ and displayed it. [It] said:

[I] make [my] hands into fists and wear [my] clothing expectantly.

Fire and water repeatedly mix and marry.

The innumerable rays of the morning sun are born in the seabed,

[And] each runs into and penetrates the Three Passes 三關.²²⁶

Transcendent music plays repeatedly.

I drink the wine of Purest Cream 醍醐.²²⁷

Miraculous drugs arrive²²⁸ from the [Heavenly] Metropolis in an instant,

They are already Nine Revolutions Cinnabar 九轉丹.²²⁹

On the last day of the final month of winter in the twenty-second year *renyin* 壬寅,²³⁰ [Sun] suddenly spoke to her disciples, saying, “[The] Master²³¹ has truly ordered me [to come], and so [I] should go to the Jade Pond 瑤池.²³² The time is quickly arriving.” With that, [Sun] changed clothes and asked [her disciples], saying,

²²⁵ A poem.

²²⁶ There are a number of passes that, when referred to collectively, are called the Three Passes. Most of these include Tongguan, and are centered around today’s Shaanxi, Henan, Hebei, or Shaanxi provinces.

²²⁷ A term found in inner alchemy, used to refer to elixirs.

²²⁸ The character given, 無, seems to be mistaken for the character 來.

²²⁹ Another means of referring to the ninefold elixir.

²³⁰ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle. This would have been 25 January 1183.

²³¹ This likely refers to Wang.

²³² Located in the Kunlun Mountains 崑崙山, the alleged home of the Queen Mother of the West.

“[What] is the approximate moment of heaven?”²³³ [Her disciples] responded, saying, “It is the hour of the horse.” [Sun] ordered writing paper and brushes [be brought], [and she] wrote a hymn about abandoning the world, which said:

Three thousand meritorious deeds fulfilled, [I will] escape the Three
Realms,

[I will] jump outside of what is bundled in *yin* and *yang*.

[I will] obtain freedom from the hidden and manifest, from the warp
and weft,

My drunken celestial soul²³⁴ shall not again return to Ninghai.

[When her] writing was finished, [Sun] sat cross-legged, and, ere long, [she] transformed. All day a fragrant wind flowed and spread, and propitious vapors hung heavily without dispersing.

[At that] time, Danyang was dwelling in a ringed wall in Ninghai. [He] heard and was startled by transcendent music from the sky, and, when [he] looked up to examine it, [he] saw the Transcendent Lady riding a multi-colored cloud. [The Transcendent Lady] passed, and a transcendent boy and jade girl were encircling her, carrying banners, insignia, and ceremonial weapons. [The Transcendent Lady] looked down and addressed Danyang, saying, “I must first return to Peng Island 蓬島.”²³⁵

²³³ I.e. “What time is it?”

²³⁴ In Chinese thought, the “soul” is divided into two parts, the celestial soul 魂 and the earthly soul 魄. Upon death, each of these souls departs from the body, with the celestial soul going upward and out, and the earthly soul descending downward. For more on this idea, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, “*hun* and *po*,” 521–523; Schipper, *Taoist Body*, 36–37.

²³⁵ I.e. Penglai

In the spring of the year *xinchou* 辛丑²³⁶ in the Yuan 元²³⁷ [Dynasty],²³⁸ Zhao Zongguan 兆總管²³⁹ and Tian Houjiang 田侯將 interred Founder Chongyang's transcendent moltings at the capital. Lineage Master Qinqhe 清和宗師²⁴⁰ [wished to gather] several masters together at the place where [Wang] preached. [When] the entourage reached the Zhongnan Mountains, they first dealt with the Transcendent Lady's grave. [They] shifted her [place of] interment from an abbey to Jinlian Hall. For a long time, Daoist nuns from ten directions had been ordained at that place.²⁴¹ In the year *jiachen* 甲辰,²⁴² the esteemed dynasty ordered the abbey²⁴³ changed to a palace. In the first month of the year *jisi* 己巳 in the Yuan [Dynasty],²⁴⁴ [Sun was] honored with the conferment [of the title] Perfected [Sun] the Chaste Follower of Virtue of the Abyss of Peaceful Quietude 清靜淵貞順德真人.

²³⁶ One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle.

²³⁷ Dynasty lasting 1271–1368.

²³⁸ Though this is ambiguous because there is no reign name mentioned, a date given later signifies this as the year 1301.

²³⁹ I have been unable to locate this and the following figure outside this text.

²⁴⁰ The monastic name of Yin Zhiping 尹志平 (1169–1251), a Quanzhen patriarch. The sequence of events here is a bit confusing, as Yin should have been dead at this point when Wang's body was reinterred. For more on Yin, see Pregadio, ed., *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, "Yin Zhiping," 1171–1172.

²⁴¹ I.e. the abbey.

²⁴² One of the years of the sexagesimal cycle. As above, though this is ambiguous because there is no reign name mentioned, a date given later signifies this as the year 1304.

²⁴³ I.e. the abbey at which Sun had been interred.

²⁴⁴ I.e. 1329.

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