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How To Live A Good Life And Afterlife: Conceptions Of Post-Mortem Existence And Practices Of Self-Cultivation In Early China

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Abstract

In the field of sinology, a widespread truism is that mind-body holism is a defining characteristic of early Chinese conception of human life. In this dissertation, we wish to demonstrate that contesting notions of life and death co-exist in early China, against the presumption that mind-body dualism never arises in early China. First, through examining elite burials from Western Zhou through the Han, we demonstrate how the diametrically opposed visions of the dead (that of an ancestral spirit who lacks eternal existence and that of an immortal with a transcended physical form) were seamlessly combined in the burial practices from Eastern Zhou to the Han. Second, through studying the visions of life and self-cultivation practices as portrayed in several early Chinese texts, we demonstrate that mind-body holism and mind-body dualism co-exist in early China, with the former prominent in “Neiye,” Mencius and parts of Huainanzi, and the latter prominent in Zhuangzi and the other parts of Huainanzi. Although “Neiye” and Mencius endorse different kinds of self-cultivation, their strands of self-cultivation both involve a transformation of the mental-spiritual as well as physical-physiological aspects of life. In contrast, Zhuangzi has a prominent body-mind dualism, holding that the body disintegrates upon death and joins in the cosmic transformation, but the spiritual entity, if properly attended to, can transcend the physical form and gain an eternal existence through merging with the cosmic ancestor. Self-cultivation in Zhuangzi, therefore, primarily involves the attendance to the spiritual aspect of life. Huainanzi portrays two diametrically opposed views of human life, each of which fits a special type of human exemplar. Parts of it follow the Zhuangzian dualism and hold that the spirit may remain eternally unchanged despite corporeal decay. Parts of it follow the “Neiye” tradition and hold that life is sustained by the union of the spirit and body, both of which are depletable or destructible. With the distinction between the two types of human exemplars predestined in the cosmogonic process, they diverge fundamentally in their impact on the cosmic order, and the boundaries between them can never be crossed through self-cultivation.

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HOW TO LIVE A GOOD LIFE AND AFTERLIFE:
CONCEPTIONS OF POST-MORTEM EXISTENCE
AND PRACTICES OF SELF-CULTIVATION IN EARLY CHINA

Ying Zhou

A DISSERTATION

in

East Asian Languages and Civilizations

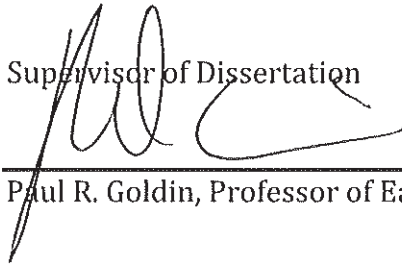
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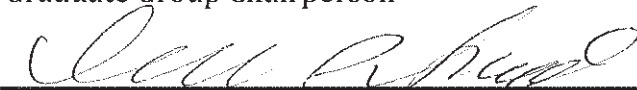
2019

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Individual life terminates but the lineage continues.

ABSTRACT

HOW TO LIVE A GOOD LIFE AND AFTERLIFE: CONCEPTIONS OF POST-MORTEM EXISTENCE AND PRACTICES OF SELF-CULTIVATION IN EARLY CHINA

Ying Zhou

Paul R. Goldin

In the field of sinology, a widespread truism is that mind-body holism is a defining characteristic of early Chinese conception of human life. In this dissertation, we wish to demonstrate that contesting notions of life and death co-exist in early China, against the presumption that mind-body dualism never arises in early China. First, through examining elite burials from Western Zhou through the Han, we demonstrate how the diametrically opposed visions of the dead (that of an ancestral spirit who lacks eternal existence and that of an immortal with a transcended physical form) were seamlessly combined in the burial practices from Eastern Zhou to the Han. Second, through studying the visions of life and self-cultivation practices as portrayed in several early Chinese texts, we demonstrate that mind-body holism and mind-body dualism co-exist in early China, with the former prominent in “Neiye,” Mencius and parts of Huainanzi, and the latter prominent in Zhuangzi and the other parts of Huainanzi. Although “Neiye” and Mencius endorse different kinds of self-cultivation, their strands of self-cultivation both involve a transformation of the mental-spiritual as well as physical-physiological aspects of life. In contrast, Zhuangzi has a prominent body-mind dualism, holding that the body disintegrates

upon death and joins in the cosmic transformation, but the spiritual entity, if properly attended to, can transcend the physical form and gain an eternal existence through merging with the cosmic ancestor. Self-cultivation in Zhuangzi, therefore, primarily involves the attendance to the spiritual aspect of life. Huainanzi portrays two diametrically opposed views of human life, each of which fits a special type of human exemplar. Parts of it follow the Zhuangzian dualism and hold that the spirit may remain eternally unchanged despite corporeal decay. Parts of it follow the “Neiye” tradition and hold that life is sustained by the union of the spirit and body, both of which are depletable or destructible. With the distinction between the two types of human exemplars predestined in the cosmogonic process, they diverge fundamentally in their impact on the cosmic order, and the boundaries between them can never be crossed through self-cultivation.

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INTRODUCTION

Reflections on some Theoretical Problems

In the field of sinology, a widespread truism is that the early Chinese world view is monistic, with *qi* being its basic substance.¹ The most prominent proponents of this view are A. C. Graham and Roger T. Ames. Graham asserted that “[the dichotomy of mind/body] never emerged in pre-Han philosophy.”² Ames states that, “in ... the classical Chinese tradition,” “body and mind were not regarded as different ‘kinds’ of existence in any essential way,” and “it was not that the Chinese thinkers were able to reconcile this dichotomy [i.e., the mind/body problem]; rather, it did not arise.”³ Benjamin I. Schwartz hinted at a similar position when he wrote: “*qi* comes to embrace properties which we would call psychic, emotional, spiritual, numinous, and even ‘mystical.’” It is precisely at this point that Western definitions of ‘matter’ and the physical which systematically exclude these properties from their definition do not at all correspond to *qi*.⁴

Scholars on the Chinese and Japanese sides also eagerly embrace this purportedly distinctive Chinese tradition, claiming that *qi*-based view of life is a unique characteristic of early Chinese thought, setting it apart from the so-called “Western” mind-body dualism. Yang Rur-bin 楊儒賓, for example, suggests that a mind-*qi*-body union (心-氣-形一體) is

¹ For examples of scholars who endorse this view, see chapter 3, n. 570 and chapter 4, n. 778.

² A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1989), 25.

³ Roger T. Ames, “The Meaning of Body in Classical Chinese Philosophy,” in *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*, eds. Roger T. Ames, Wimal Dissanayake and Thomas P. Kasulis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 163.

⁴ Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1985), 181.

a shared notion in classical Confucian, Daoist and Medical texts, in contrast to the Cartesian mind-body dualism.⁵ Maruyama Toshiaki 丸山敏秋 further explains, from the perspective of the *qi*-based cosmology, why body-mind dualism was impossible in early China. According to him, *qi* is not only the material base of the physical world, but also the source of life and human spiritual existence, responsible for spiritual, mental and emotional activities. And for this reason, the body-mind dichotomy did not occur in early China.⁶

Is the aforementioned proposition applicable to all early Chinese texts? Let us consider the following statement from *Zhuangzi*.

陰陽之氣有沴，其心閒而無事

There was a disorder in his yin and yang *qi*, but his mind was at ease, as though there was nothing the matter.⁷

If, as suggested above, *qi* is responsible for the psychic, mental and emotional aspects of life, would it be possible that one's heart/mind would not be affected when one's *qi* is in disorder? Very likely not.

Next let us take a look at a passage from *Huainanzi*.

稽古太初，人生於無，形於有，有形而制於物。能反其所生，故未有形，謂之真人。真人者，未始分於太一者也。

In Antiquity, at the Grand Beginning, human beings came to life in “Non-being” and acquired a physical form in “Being.” Having a physical form, human beings came under the control of things. But those who can return to that from which they were born, as if they had not yet acquired a

⁵ Yang's words, in Chinese, are quoted as below: “孟子的心氣形的理論架構可視為儒家身體觀或身心觀的共相：它同時與道家、醫家設想的身體觀有重疊的成分。...笛卡爾式的身心二元反而是獨特的，孟子的形-氣-心一體論才是正常當理之談。” See Yang Rur-bin 楊如賓, *Rujia shenti guan* 儒家身體觀 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan wenshizhe yanjiusuo, 1996), 4.

⁶ His message, in Chinese, is quoted below, “氣並不只是物質的根源，它也是生命的根源與精神源泉 ... 人類的精神活動心思運作甚至也由氣擔負... 西洋的心物(身心)二元論(二分法)就不會由此產生。” See Maruyama Toshiaki 丸山敏秋, “Zhongguo gudai qi de tezhe” 中國古代氣的特質, trans. Lin Yifang 林宜芳, in Yang Rur-bin ed. *Zhongguo gudai qilun ji shenti guan* 中國古代氣論及身體觀 (Taipei: Lujiu, 1997), 159.

⁷ See chapter 3, n. 617.

physical form, are called the “True Person.” The True Person are those who have not yet begun to differentiate from the Grand One.⁸

Let us briefly clarify several key terms, which will be further explicated in chapter 4. *Taiyi*,⁹ used here as an appellation of the *dao*, is the cosmic origin, the primordial state before the differentiation of *qi*. *You* 有 connotes the metaphysical realm where the primordial *qi* started to differentiate into multiple material beings, whereas *wu* 無 is the stage before the occurrence of material beings.¹⁰ This passage clearly states that human life came into existence in the realm of *wu*, indicating that it takes places before the differentiation of *qi* into the multifaceted material world.¹¹ This assertion apparently contradicts the above-mentioned assumption that the early Chinese view of human life is one that is made up of the refined and turbid *qi*.

The assumption that early Chinese thought features a lack of body-mind dichotomy is one of the most tenacious misconceptions still widely accepted in the field sinology. As a matter of fact, misconceptions of Chinese thought have occurred and continued ever since the West first encountered China at the time of Matteo Ricci (1552-1610). From Voltaire’s admiration for the Confucian ethics to Hegel’s criticism of China for its lack of true history,¹² from Weber’s observation that China failed to develop capitalism because of the

⁸ See chapter 4, n. 790.

⁹ *Taiyi* may also represent an astral body and a Heavenly deity. See Li Ling, “An Archaeological Study of *Taiyi* (Grand One) Worship,” trans. Donald Harper, *Early Medieval China* 2 (1995-96): 14-16, 22-24. For more on *Taiyi*, see chapter 4, n. 791.

¹⁰ For detailed discussion of these terms, see chapter 4, ns. 791-795.

¹¹ Note that a similar assertion can be found in a later text *Taishang laojun kaitian jing* 太上老君開天經. See chapter 4, n. 796.

¹² George W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1990).

Confucian ideology¹³ to François Jullien's celebration of the Zhuangzian liquidation of the Christian-Cartesian material-spiritual dichotomy, Western thinkers' perception of Chinese thought have evidently swung between two extremes: denigration or idealization.

What is common among the above-mentioned positions is the tradition of imagining China as an "ideological other." If the west endorses a divinely created world, then China should have a spontaneously generated cosmos.¹⁴ If the western tradition characterizes a causal thinking, then the Chinese mode of thought should be distinctively correlative.¹⁵ If the Platonic or Christian tradition has body-mind dualism, then the Chinese texts should embrace a mind-body holism.¹⁶ If the Christian tradition prioritizes the soul over the body, then the Chinese tradition should celebrate the "primacy of body over mind."¹⁷

What underlies this creation of an "ideological other" is the tendency to imagine Chinese thought as being monolithic, as if there were a unique "Chinese" way of thinking underlying all early Chinese texts. Again take Ames as an example: regarding body-mind

¹³ Max Weber, *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Daoism*, trans. Hans H. Gerth. (New York: Fress Press, 1951), 226-248. For a brief summary of Weber's contrast between Protestantism and Confucianism, see Michael Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), 5-7.

¹⁴ For studies challenging this "myth," see Michael J. Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 12-20; *To Become a God*, 1-4. For an overview of the prominent scholars holding this view and a thorough study which debunks this myth, see Paul R. Goldin, "The Myth That China Has No Creation Myth," *Monumenta Serica* 56 (2008): 1-22, ns. 1-6.

¹⁵ That correlative thinking being the predominant Chinese structure of thought is first proposed by Marcel Granet in *La Pensée Chinoise* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1950). Following Granet, Benjamin Schwartz asserts that correlative thinking has left "a lasting mark on the entire subsequent development of the 'philosophy of nature' in China ever since it gained prominence in the third century B.C. Schwartz even suspects that correlative thinking may represent a "truly archaic level of the [Chinese] culture, in spite of the lack of evidence for its early existence in available textual resources. See Schwartz, *The World of Thought*, 350-51. For a thorough study of the rise of correlative thinking as a reaction to the dominant religious tradition established since the Shang, with solid textual and archaeological evidence, see Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹⁶ See ns. 1-5 above.

¹⁷ See Jung Hwa Yol, "Review of Jullien, François, Vital Nourishment: Departing from Happiness," *Dao* 9 (2010): 361-62.

holism as a defining characteristic of Chinese thought, Ames cites passages from “*Neiye*,” *Zhuangzi*, and *Lunheng* 論衡 to support his proposition.¹⁸ At one point, Ames’ reading of a *Zhuangzi* passage, which concludes with the statement, “Therefore, if virtue is preeminent, the body will be forgotten” 故德有所長，而形有所忘， has led him to conclude that “there are situations in which the physical disposition of the body fades into the background and becomes, in a sense, imperceptible. What is ‘seen’ is solely the disposition of the mind.”¹⁹ Ames sees this as an indication that “the notion of body is...a disposition which can only be understood by reference to the intellect.” However, had he not been under the bias of mind-body holism and had he set *Zhuangzi* apart from “*Neiye*,” he might have reached a totally different conclusion about this passage, that the mind (represented by *de* 德) and body (*xing* 形) are presented as diametrically opposing entities in *Zhuangzi*, with the injuries to or loss of the body unable to affect the integrity of the mind. The latter conclusion, as will be demonstrated in chapter 3 of this dissertation, can be corroborated by extensive textual evidence from *Zhuangzi*.

Contents

In an effort to debunk the presumption that there is a single understanding of human life in early China, this dissertation attempts to reconstruct the different perceptions of life and death reflected in both archaeological and textual sources. It traces archaeological material from the Shang through the Han to illustrate how the mainstream perception of

¹⁸ Ames, “The Meaning of Body,” 163-68.

¹⁹ Ames, “The Meaning of Body,” 168.

the dead as ancestral spirits has shaped burial traditions throughout this period. Also, it analyzes competing notions concerning the nature of life and the fate of the dead, examining how they arise in reaction to the mainstream ideology and how they react to one another. These trends vary from the pursuit of physical immortality (or “post-mortem immortality,” when attainment of the former are deemed unlikely) through macrobiotic cultivation and/or burial provisions, to an acceptance of the natural human life form and life span and a devotion to self-cultivation so as to live a good life; from a ready submission to the fate of physical death, yet with aspirations of spiritual immortality through the practice of a distinct type of self-cultivation, to a bifurcated view of human life, positing human beings as belonging to different groups, with each group having a distinct life and fate predestined in the cosmogonic process.

In order to analyze the issues in their full complexity, this dissertation will not only deal with archaeological material and ritual texts, but also cover in detail several philosophical texts: “*Neiye*,” *Mencius*, *Zhuangzi* and *Huainanzi*. Some of these texts embrace monism and mind-body holism, seeing the mind and body as consisting of *qi* of different degrees of refinement; some embrace mind-body dualism, seeing human spirit as separable from the body and able to return to the primordial state before the generation of *qi*.

As will be shown in this dissertation, various conceptions of human life and fate of the dead emerged. 1) Upon death one is turned into an ancestral spirit sustained by the commemoration of the descendants and lacking an eternal independent existence. 2) One is able to become an immortal transcending the economy of sacrificial worship and possessing an indestructible physical form. 3) One is able to become an immaterial spirit

separable from the body and, under certain circumstances, able to attain eternal existence by merging with the cosmic ancestor. 4) As a semi-divine figure generated before the material world, one is able to align the cosmos (or subvert the cosmic order when his power is abused) and return to the cosmic ancestor through proper means of self-cultivation.

Methods of Analysis

First, this study is intended to be interdisciplinary. Philosophers, art historians and experts on religion have approached early China from distinct perspectives. By drawing on works by scholars in all these fields and dealing with textual sources as well as archaeological material, this dissertation aims to represent a comprehensive picture of the diverse perceptions of human life and the world of the dead in early China at the elite level.

Second, aiming at offering a dynamic rather than static delineation of ideas on life and death in early China, this study pays attention to changes in the connotations of keywords in different texts and traces how different texts interact with each other through their definition and redefinition of these terms. Take *qi* and *jing* 精 as two examples. *Qi* in “*Neiye*” conveys the physical and spiritual aspects of man, whereas in *Mencius* it has a prominent ethical dimension. Thus although “*Neiye*” and *Mencius* both embrace a mind-body holism, they endorse distinct versions of self-cultivation, with the former aimed at promoting physical health and attaining spirit-like potency and the later aimed mainly at moral perfection. *Jing* 精 in “*Neiye*” connotes the pure and refined *qi*, whereas in some of *Zhuangzi* passages it connotes a spiritual existence from which *qi* is generated. Thus “*Neiye*” and *Zhuangzi* differ greatly in their perceptions of the spiritual essence as well as the

relationship between human spiritual and physical aspects. Therefore, although these texts employ the same terms, the different nuances in different texts might be even more significant than the shared terminology.

Third, this study attempts to break away from the tradition of identifying and classifying texts into so-called schools (*jia* 家), the drawbacks of which have been noticed by Michael Puett, Paul R. Goldin and Yuri Pines. As Puett points out, “that the attempt to categorize texts in terms of schools is usually unhelpful and often misleading: rather, our concern should be to explicate the claims of each text within the debates of the time.”²⁰ Goldin also calls on scholars not to be limited by classifying texts according to the so-called “schools” identified by Sima Tan 司馬談, stating that “the real task of a modern critic is to consider the arguments themselves and the ways in which thinkers presented new ideas and responded to old ones.”²¹ This dissertation follows the suggestions by Puett and Goldin, and examines the spirit-body relationship reflected in the above-mentioned texts, focusing on how these texts present their distinct perceptions of human life and how they offer their unique versions of self-cultivation based on such perceptions. Hopefully, this will help to lead to a full recognition of the diversity of ideas produced in the fertile soil of philosophical debates in early China.

Outline

Chapter One discusses how commemoration of ancestors and immortality-seeking

²⁰ Puett, *To Become a God*, 25.

²¹ Paul R. Goldin, “Insidious Syncretism in the Political Philosophy of *Huainanzi*,” in *After Confucius: Studies in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), 91.

converged to shape funerary practices in early China. In the mainstream system of commemoration institutionalized from the Shang onward, deceased elites were conceived primarily as powerful spirits who could ascend to Heaven and periodically descend to the lineage temples in order to receive sacrifices. However, as potent as they were, the ancestors lacked a perpetual independent existence. Their power and existential status depended instead on sacrifices and commemoration by the living descendants, and were correlated to the social political status of their lineage.²² Thus the living and the dead formed a reciprocal relationship, with the continuity of the lineage being their primary concern.

In Eastern Zhou, however, the making of ancestors was no longer the single motivation underlying elite mortuary practices. By the fourth century B.C.E., the belief that people could manage to avoid death and attain permanent life with a transformed body had been attested. From the Warring States period through the Han, the belief in post-mortem immortality was attested by abundant symbols of regeneration and tokens of immortality interred in tombs. The notion of an immortal with perpetual independent existence outside the sacrificial circle is irreconcilable with that of a dependent ancestor. Yet the two diametrically opposed notions can both find expression in a single mortuary setting, as attested by many Warring States and Han elite burials. Moreover, evidence for the effort to build a blissful underground home for the dead as well as to avoid the contamination of the dead and to put the dead under bureaucratic control can also be found in many Han burials. The composite nature of burials thus reveals the existence of bifurcated attitudes toward

²² For discussion of the structured amnesia and the gradually forgotten ancestors, see K. E. Brashier, *Ancestral Memory in Early China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 102-183.

death and the dead in early China.

Chapter Two discusses the perceptions of life and practices of self-cultivation in “*Neiye*” and *Mencius*, with each offering a distinct reaction to the mainstream sacrificial culture. In the theistic worldview of ancestral worship, humans try to harness the power of spirits through propitiation and offering food sacrifices. Ancestral spirits from higher-ranking lineages are supposedly more powerful and longer-lasting than those from lower-ranking lineages. “*Neiye*” reacts to this cosmic and social hierarchy by positing a monistic cosmology in which humans and spirits are both made of *qi*, with the former consisting of a combination of refined and turbid *qi*, the latter purely of refined *qi*. Through apophatic and macrobiotic self-cultivation, the adept can gain access to and retain the refined cosmic *qi* (called *jing* 精) in his person, the holistic benefits of which include an enhanced physical condition, a prolonged life span, and above all, a spirit-like knowledge and grasp over the world.

Like “*Neiye*,” *Mencius* endorses a mind-body holism, holding one’s physical condition to be indicative of and dependent upon one’s inner spiritual status. Nonetheless, self-cultivation in *Mencius* is different from that in “*Neiye*” in that it requires the persistent practice of good acts in accordance with the moral predisposition rooted in one’s heart-mind (*xin* 心). By this process, a flood-like *qi* (*haoran zhi qi* 浩然之氣) is cultivated. The cultivation of *qi* can in turn build one’s physical and moral stamina so that one can stick to good acts when confronted with increasingly challenging situations. Mencian self-cultivation thus draws on the notion of *qi* but gives it a distinct moral dimension.

Chapter Three discusses the distinctive mind-body relationship and understanding of

self-cultivation in *Zhuangzi*. *Zhuangzi* strongly reacts to the “*Neiye*”-*Mencius* mind-body union, suggesting that one’s physical condition is irrelevant and even in conflict with one’s inner spiritual status. The vision of the ideal body in *Zhuangzi* forms a sharp contrast with that presented in “*Neiye*” and *Mencius*, with the former exalting a withered or deformed body, and the latter favoring a healthy, robust body and radiant countenance. What is more, *Zhuangzi* embraces a mind-body dualism, indicating that the properly cultivated spirit is separable from the body, and that it can survive death of the physical form, transcend the physical world, and gain an eternal existence in union with the cosmic origin. In the cosmogonic hierarchy delineated in *Zhuangzi*, the spiritual essence (*jing/jingshen*) is derived directly from the *dao*. It is not presented as a type of *qi*, but as that from which *qi* is derived.²³

Zhuangzian self-cultivation is a reaction both to the craze for physical immortality described in chapter 1 and to the traditions of self-cultivation described in chapter 2. If the adepts of macrobiotic cultivation mentioned in chapter 1 aim to gain an eternal existence with an imperishable body, then the adepts in *Zhuangzi* set “spiritual immortality” as their final goal. If the “*Neiye*” self-cultivation is aimed at retaining *jing* in the body, then *Zhuangzian* self-cultivation is to free the *jing/jingshen* from the constrictions of the physical form and the social-cultural values associated with it. Longevity is not a primary concern in *Zhuangzi*; following the cosmic order to live out the Heavenly allotted life span is only one rung in the ladder of self-cultivation in *Zhuangzi*, with the ultimate goal being an intact spiritual essence liberated from the body and returning to the cosmic ancestor.

²³ For further discussion on this, see chapter 3, n. 664.

Zhuangzian exemplars first surrender to Heaven (which represents the *dao* in the phenomenal world), then transcend Heaven by merging with the *dao*. As a result, they may even return to assist Heaven.

Chapter 4 discusses two different visions of human life and cosmogony in *Huainanzi*. Crucially, the two visions of life in “*Neiye*” and *Zhuangzi* can both be found in *Huainanzi*, for humans in *Huainanzi* are presented as belonging to different tiered groups, with each of the aforementioned visions of life fitting a special group of people. On top of the ladder is the True Person (or Ultimate Person), whose life contains a formless part generated before the differentiation of *qi* into the multifaceted phenomenal world. They resemble the Zhuangzian paragons in that both possess an indestructible spirit, which can survive physical death and merge with the cosmic origin. Self-cultivation for the True Person, like that for the Zhuangzian adepts, involves a repudiation of the physical components of life, roaming beyond the phenomenal world and a spiritual union with the *dao*.

The life of the sage and ordinary people, in contrast, is made up of the refined (constituting the spiritual essence) and turbid *qi* (constituting the physical form). The spirit and the body are thus both perishable and subject to recycling at the material level. What is more, the physical and spiritual aspects of life are interconnected and affect each other. Self-cultivation for sages, as for the adepts of “*Neiye*,” involves an attendance to the spiritual as well as physical aspects of life, and an effort to lodge the spiritual essence securely within the body, which will grant them spirit-like foreknowledge and potency. Nonetheless, even sages are subject to the Heavenly order and cannot escape the fate of physical as well as spiritual destruction, though they can face death with equanimity.

In the cosmic and political hierarchy of *Huainanzi*, the True Person is positioned above

Heaven. Such beings are in fact semi-divine thearchs with the potential to rectify the course of Heaven and Earth and adjust the cosmic order. Born directly out of the One, holding fast to the *dao*, the True Person/the Thearch thus embodies *Taiyi* in the phenomenal world and can impact whatever is below him in the cosmic and political hierarchies. However, if he were to abandon the *dao* and fail to embody *Taiyi*, the Thearch would wreak great havoc by subverting the entire cosmic order. In contrast, the sage, positioned below Heaven, has no fundamental impact on the cosmic order. He is instead responsible for governing and regulating ordinary people, creating human institutions and customs in accordance with the Heavenly order laid out by the True Person. With the distinction between the True Person/Thearch and the sage predestined in the cosmogonic process, the boundaries between them can never be overcome through self-cultivation.

CHAPTER 1 ANCESTOR-MAKING AND IMMORTALITY-SEEKING AS SEEN THROUGH ZHOU AND HAN BURIALS

This chapter reviews changes in burial traditions from the Western Zhou to the Han. Examining selected archaeological materials against textual evidence, it aims to clarify the notions of the afterlife underlying burial practices in early China. Characterized by a single ritual dimension, Western Zhou burials served mainly to smooth the underground meeting between ancestors and the newly-deceased so as to transform the latter into ancestral spirits. Animalistic motifs and cosmic elements abounded in Eastern Zhou burials, suggesting an essential role that cosmic spiritual forces played in facilitating the afterlife journey. The trend of immortality seeking, which was a reaction to ancestor worship, converged with the latter in shaping the burial traditions from the Warring States period onward. Burials of the two Han dynasties exhibit a composite nature, with scenes of underground sacrifices, tokens of immortality, and objects of daily lives all combined in a single tomb setting. I shall argue here that this composite nature reveals a coexistence of conflicting notions of the afterlife as well as bifurcated attitudes toward death and the dead. On the one hand, all possible means were provided to guarantee an eternal blissful afterlife. On the other hand, measures were taken to immure, through ritual or legal means, those who were unlikely to be sustained as benign spiritual forces in the netherworld, which was imagined to be governed by an underworld bureaucracy.

Part I Ancestor Worship as Seen in Western Zhou Burials

Tomb structure and grave goods are often regarded as reliable sources for the notions of afterlife in a society. As Jessica Rawson states, “the future life would have been envisaged both in terms of the space provided and in terms of the character and value of the burial goods.”²⁴ Western Zhou elite tombs exhibit a remarkable degree of uniformity in their structure and contents. The typical Western Zhou aristocratic tomb was a vertical pit tomb with a wooden chamber at the bottom of the pit, often with one or two tomb access ramps (*mudao* 墓道, or dromos) leading to the chamber. There were often narrow two-level platforms (*ercengtai* 二層台) built around the bottom of the tomb and what modern archaeologists call a waist pit (*yaokeng* 腰坑) beneath the chamber. Large tombs for high-ranking aristocrats also had associated chariot-and-horse pits.²⁵

Wooden nested coffins were placed at the center of the chamber.²⁶ The coffins divided the space inside the chamber into two parts: that between the coffin and chamber and that inside the coffin. Large bronze and ceramic vessels were placed in the space between the coffin and the chamber. Small jade and bone objects were generally concentrated in the coffin.²⁷

²⁴ Jessica Rawson, “Ancient Chinese Ritual as seen in the material world,” in *State and Court Ritual in Ancient China*, ed. Joseph P. McDermott (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 30.

²⁵ Jessica Rawson, “Western Zhou Archaeology,” in *Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, eds. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 358.

²⁶ Most of Western Zhou tomb chambers were not divided into sections. The only exception currently known is an early Western Zhou tomb of the Yu lineage cemetery at Rujiazhuang 茹家莊, Baoji 寶雞. The tomb of the lineage head (Rujiazhuang Tomb 1) was partitioned into two compartments, one containing the nested coffin of Yubo, and the other that of his consort Er. See Lu Liancheng 盧連成 and Hu Zhisheng 胡智生, *Baoji Yu guo mudi* 寶雞弓魚國墓地 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1988), 272.

²⁷ Alain Thote, “Shang and Zhou Funeral Practices: Interpretations of Material Vestiges,” in *Early Chinese Religion: Shang through Han (1250BC-220AD)*, eds. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 121.

The grave goods of Western Zhou noble tombs were primarily bronze vessels accompanied by high-quality pottery objects. These vessels fall into three major categories: ritual vessels, musical instruments, and weapons. They all served as a status marker for the deceased and generally correlated with tomb occupant's rank. Tombs of the lineage heads often contained complete sets of ritual vessels, including food containers, liquor containers and drinking vessels, as well as water containers and washing vessels.

The number of the core sets of *ding* 鼎 and *gui* 簋 also roughly correlated with the occupant's rank. According to the sumptuary rules tentatively reconstructed from archaeological data by Yu Weichao 俞偉超 and Gao Ming 高明, in Early Western Zhou, tombs of the lineage head often contained 5 *ding* and 4 *gui*²⁸ or 3 *ding* and 2 *gui*;²⁹ tombs of lower-ranked aristocrats often contained a set of 1 *ding* and 2 *gui*, 1 *ding* and 1 *gui*, or 2 or 1 *ding*.³⁰ In late Western Zhou and early Springs and Autumns period, other

²⁸ For example, in Rujiashuang Tomb 1 of the Yu lineage cemetery at Baoji 寶雞, Er's compartment contains a set of 5 *ding* of same typology in descending size (*lieding* 列鼎) and 4 *gui* 簋; Yu Bo's compartment contains 5 round-shaped *ding* (*yuanding* 圓鼎), 3 square-shaped *ding* (*fangding* 方鼎), and five *gui*. (Yu and Gao hold that 5 *yuanding* and 4 *gui* form one set, and the *fangding* and the rest *gui* form an accompanying set.) See Baoji Yuguo mudi, 274, 282. Baocaipo 白草坡 Tomb 1 at Lingtai 靈臺, Gansu 甘肅 has yielded 5 *ding* and 3 *gui* (Yu and Gao surmise that originally there might be 4 *gui*, considering that the tomb was not intact upon excavation.) See Gansusheng bowuguan wenwudui 甘肅省博物館文物隊 “Gansu Lingtai Baicaipo Xizhou mu” 甘肅靈臺白草坡西周墓, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 1977.2: 99-129; Yu Weichao and Gao Ming, “Zhou dai yongding zhidu yanjiu (zhong)” 周代用鼎制度研究(中), *Beijing daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 北京大學學報(哲學社會科學版) 1978.2: 85-86. Other examples of this combination include: Tomb I 12 M 13 (dated to Early-Mid Western Zhou) of the *Jin* lineage cemetery at Beizhao 北趙, which is claimed to be tomb of the wife of a certain *Jin Hou* 晉侯. See Beijing daxue kaoguxue xi 北京大學考古學系 and Shanxisheng kaogu yanjiusuo 山西省考古研究所, “Tianma—Qucun yizhi Beizhao Jin Hou mudi di'erci fajue” 天馬—曲村遺址北趙晉侯墓地第二次發掘, *Wenwu* 文物 1994.1: 5-8.

²⁹ Examples of this combination include tomb of the Lu 魯 lineage head at Zhuangbai 莊白, Fufeng 扶風 and tomb of Feng Ji 豐姬 (possibly wife of a lineage head) at Liujia 劉家, Fufeng, See Yu and Gao, “Zhou dai yongding zhidu yanjiu (Zhong),” 86.

³⁰ Examples of these combinations are widely found in modern day Shan'xi 陝西, Beijing 北京, Henan 河南 and Gansu 甘肅. See Yu and Gao, “Zhou dai yongding zhidu yanjiu (Zhong),” 86-87.

combinations, including 9 *ding* and 8 *gui*,³¹ 7 *ding* and 6 *gui*,³² or 5 *ding* and 4 *gui*,³³ could be found in tombs of high officials of the royal court or territorial lords. Tombs of lower-ranked aristocrats often contained a set of 2 *ding* and 1 *gui*, 1 *ding* and 1 *gui*, or 2 (or 1) *ding*.³⁴

In Western Zhou burials, musical instruments were found most often in tombs of the top-ranking males, such as the lineage heads and crown princes. Many of the Western Zhou state cemeteries that have been at least partially excavated, including those of the Yan 燕 lineage (at Liulihe 琉璃河 near Beijing 北京), Yu lineage (near Baoji 寶雞 in Shaanxi 陝西), Guo 虢 lineage (at Sanmenxia 三門峽 in Henan 河南) and Jin 晉 lineage

³¹ Late Western Zhou tombs with this type of combination include Tomb 2009 (tomb of Guo Zhong 虢仲) of the Guo lineage cemetery at Sanmenxia 三門峽 and the tomb of a Zeng lineage head (*Zeng Hou* 曾侯) at Sujialong 蘇家壟, Jinshan 京山, Hubei 湖北. See Hou Junjie 侯俊傑 and Wang Jianming 王建明, “Sanmenxia Guoguo mudi 2009 hao mu huo zhongda chengguo” 三門峽虢國墓地 2009 號墓獲重大成果, *Guangming ribao* 光明日報, Nov-02, 1999; Hubeisheng bowuguan 湖北省博物館, “Hubei Jingshan faxian zengguo tongqi” 湖北京山發現曾國銅器, *Wenwu* 文物 1972.2: 47-53.

³² Examples of this type of combination are Tomb 2001 (tomb of Guo Ji 虢季), Tomb 2011 (tomb of the crown prince 虢太子) of the Guo Lineage Cemetery at Sanmenxia, and Tomb 1054 at Shangcunling 上村嶺 (tomb of the crown prince). See Henansheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 河南省文物考古研究所 and Sanmenxia shi wenwu gongzuodui 三門峽市文物工作隊, *Sanmenxia Guo guo mu* (di yi juan) 三門峽虢國墓(第一卷) (Beijing: Wenwu, 1999), 30-35; 321; Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國社會科學院考古研究所, *Shangcunling Guoguo mudi* 上村嶺虢國墓地 (Beijing: Kexue, 1959), 28-31, 55.

³³ E.g., Tomb 1706 and Tomb 1810 of the Guo Lineage cemetery at Shangcunling, see *Shangcunling Guoguo mudi*, 33-35, 37, 66, 75.

³⁴ Yu and Gao, “Zhou dai yongding zhidu yanjiu (zhong),” 92-93. The real picture of Western Zhou sumptuary rules might be more complicated than what is reconstructed by Yu and Gao. In fact, Western Zhou tombs so far excavated exhibit a larger variety of combinations of *ding* and *gui* than those reported by Yu and Gao: the sets of 8 *ding* and 6 *gui*, 7 *ding* and 5 *gui*, 5 *ding* and 6 *gui*, 4 *ding* and 2 *gui*, 3 *ding* and 1 *gui* have all been yielded in Zhou aristocrats’ tombs. See Bi Jingwei 畢經緯 “Shandong Dongzhou dinggui zhidu chulun—yi zhongyuan diqu wei canzhao” 山東東周鼎簋制度初論—以中原地區為參照, *Guanzi xuekan* 管子學刊 2010.3: 53-59; Xie Yaoting 謝堯亭 “Tianma—Qucun mudi yong dinggui li de kaocha” 天馬—曲村墓地用鼎簋禮的考察, *Wenwu shijie* 文物世界 2010.3: 18-24. For a critique of Yu and Gao’s study, see Lin Yun 林沅 “Zhou dai yongding zhidu shangque” 周代用鼎制度商榷, *Shixue jikan* 史學籍刊 1990.3: 12-23.

(at Tianma-Qucun 天馬曲村 near Houma 侯馬 in Shanxi 山西), have yielded some musical instruments.³⁵ Weapons were found primarily in male elites' tombs as well.

However, far from being representative of the full range of their occupants' worldly possessions, the grave goods of the Western Zhou period are extremely limited in their types. As Jessica Rawson suggests, they were carefully selected to “provide for the ideal needs of the dead,”³⁶ or in other words, to help the dead fulfill their ideal roles. Then what beliefs about the ideal roles and needs of the dead might such burial objects reflect? To answer this question, it is necessary to examine the essential features of these objects.

The major categories of burial objects placed in the space of between the coffin and chamber were all essential elements of ancestor worship. Ritual vessels and musical instruments are material representations of the grand ceremonies in which ancestral spirits were entertained and lineage solidarity strengthened. In the ritual of ancestral sacrifice, solemn music and the fragrant smell of cooked sacrifices serve to attract and please the spirits, who would send down blessings in return, as in “Zhi jing 執競” (Mao 274), a hymn in the *Odes*.

³⁵ The earliest musical instruments so far excavated are from the early Western Zhou Yu lineage cemetery at Baoji. Rujiazhuang Tomb 1 contained a set of *yongzhong*-bells 甬鐘 and a *ling* 鈴. Zhuyuangou 竹園溝 Tomb 7 contained a set of *yongzhong* bells. Zhuyuangou Tomb 13 contained a *nao* 鐃. See *Baoji Yu guo mudi*, 49-50, 96-97, 281-82. Similar musical instruments were also found in the *Guo* and *Jin* lineage cemeteries. In the Sanmenxia cemetery, Tomb 2001 (Guo Ji's 虢季 tomb) contained a set of 8 *yongzhong* bells, a single *zheng* 鉦 bell and a set of chime stones. The inscriptions on the *yongzhong* bell indicated that they were intended to be used in sacrifices to the Guo lineage ancestors. Tomb 2011 (the Crown Prince's tomb) contained two sets of chime-stones and a single *zheng* bell. See *Sanmenxia Guo guo mu*, 71-78, 340, 368-73. Sets of bells (*liezhong* 列鐘) were also found in the *Jin* lineage cemetery at *Beizhao* 北趙, in tomb I12 M 9, which is claimed to be the tomb of a lineage head (*Jin hou* 晉侯). See “Tianma—Qucun yizhi Beizhao Jin Hou mudi di'erci fajue” 天馬—曲村遺址北趙晉侯墓地第二次發掘, 4-5.

³⁶ Rawson, “Western Zhou Archaeology,” 371.

鐘鼓喤喤、磬筦將將、降福穰穰。
降福簡簡、威儀反反。
既醉既飽、福祿來反。

“The bells and drums go *huang-huang*,
The chime stones and flutes go *jiang-jiang*;
The blessings sent down are *xiang-xiang*.
The blessings sent down are *jian-jian*;
The awe-inspiring demeanor is *fan-fan*;
[The spirits,] They are drunk, they are satiated—
Blessings and fortune come in return!”³⁷

Admittedly, the poetic representation alone is not sufficient to support the function of these burial objects. Lothar von Falkenhausen has warned against making hasty generalizations based on textual evidence from historical or literary sources. As he points out, “even though the Chinese classics sometimes record events and ideas that seem to converge with the tenets of anthropological theory, such incidental, anecdotal evidence can be adduced only as an illustration, never as the basis of an argument.”³⁸ Yet in this case, the scenario illustrated in the above-quoted hymn is consistent with conclusions drawn from archaeological sources and thus may serve as a good illustration.

Ritual vessels and music instruments were cast primarily for the purpose of ancestral sacrifice.³⁹ Inscriptions indicate that the vessels were often dedicated to one or more ancestors.⁴⁰ These inscriptions often convey the will to piously serve the ancestral spirits

³⁷ Translation by Martin Kern, “Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*: The Evolution of the Ancestral Sacrifice during the Western Zhou,” in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC-220AD) Vol. I*, eds. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 167.

³⁸ Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250B.C.): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2006), 22.

³⁹ Martin Kern, “Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*,” 188.

⁴⁰ See Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 83. See also Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions,” and Gilbert L. Mattos, “Eastern Zhou Bronze Inscriptions,” in *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts*, ed. Edward L. Shaughnessy (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China; Institute for East Asian Studies, University of California Berkeley, 1997), 65-67, 71, 76, 81 and 86.

with music and food and the wish that the spirits be pleased and send down abundant blessings.⁴¹ Many also eulogize the merits of the ancestors and express the will to pass on their merits to the descendants.⁴² What is more, Western Zhou tomb assemblage of sacrificial vessels were by and large equivalent to the temple assemblage excavated in hoards,⁴³ suggesting that the same sets of vessels used in ancestral sacrifices were buried in tombs. As Alain Thote points out, many of the ritual vessels buried in tombs were what the tomb occupants used in the sacrifices to their ancestors during their lifetime.⁴⁴

Chariots and weapons, basic necessities for warfare and hunting, are also closely related to ancestor worship. Warfare is an essential means to defend and expand the land properties that ancestors have attained for the lineage through their cumulative achievements. And hunting is both a means to acquire sacrificial animals and akin to sacrificial ceremonies by its very nature.⁴⁵ Thus the weapons interred in tombs also bear witness to the service the tomb occupant offered to his ancestors during his lifetime and his contribution to the continuity of the lineage.

Why were such essential elements of ancestral sacrifice interred in tombs? Hayashi Minao suggests that the existence of such vessels in the tomb indicate that the deceased was expected to continue to perform the same ritual duties in the afterlife as during his life

⁴¹ This can be shown by the highly formulaic patterns such as “to piously serve our august ancestors 以孝于我皇祖文考” and “to pray for 用祈...,” which occur frequently in Zhou Inscriptions. For examples of these patterns, see Gilbert L. Mattos, “Eastern Zhou Bronze Inscriptions,” 89, 97.

⁴² See Chen Yinjie 陳英傑, *Xizhou jinwen zuoqi yongtu mingci yanjiu* 西周金文作器用途銘辭研究 (Beijing: Xianzhuang, 2008), 239-323.

⁴³ This conclusion is drawn by von Falkenhausen based on the comparison between ritual vessels in the Zhuangbai 莊白 hoards and major Western Zhou tombs, see von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 298.

⁴⁴ Thote, “Shang and Zhou Funeral Practices,” 124.

⁴⁵ For an excellent discussion on how warfare and hunting are related to ancestor cult, see Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, c1990), 15-28.

time. According to Hayashi, it is strange that many of the vessels with the inscription “may sons and grandsons eternally use this [vessel] for sacrifice” (子子孫孫永寶用) were interred in tombs, for bringing them underground would apparently deprive the living descendants of the chance to use them and thus seemed to be against the will of the fathers and grandfathers, under whose patronage these vessels were cast.⁴⁶ He resolves the tension with the hypothesis that the descendants would eventually join the owner of the vessel in the family grave and continue performing sacrifices to their common ancestors with these family treasures.⁴⁷

Hayashi’s thesis is not airtight. First, both bronze inscriptions and textual records indicate that the ancestral spirits were supposed to dwell primarily in Heaven, not in the earth.⁴⁸ Second, in the Shang and Zhou ancestral sacrificial system, death signified a great transformation in an aristocrat’s role. Upon death, he would be transformed from the performer to the recipient of sacrifices. The dead were constructed and sustained by series of ritual sacrifices as powerful spirits whose major role was to confer protection and blessings onto their descendants.⁴⁹ To be sure, some filial sons wished to continue serving their ancestors even after death, as Hayashi demonstrates with the Ai Chengshu *ding* 哀

⁴⁶ Hayashi Minao, “Concerning the Inscription ‘May Sons and Grandsons Eternally Use This [Vessel],’” tr. Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, *Artibus Asiae* 53.1-2 (1993): 51.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁸ See von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 299; Martin Kern, “Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*,” 153.

⁴⁹ On the construction of ancestors through ritual sacrifices from the Shang 商 to Han, see David Keightley, “The Making of Ancestors: Late Shang Religion and Its Legacy,” in *Religion and Chinese Society*, vol. I, ed. John Lagerwey (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2004), 3-63.

成叔鼎 inscription.⁵⁰ Yet the major role of the deceased was to protect and confer blessings, rather than to perform sacrifices.

Another possible interpretation is that the deceased was interred with family treasures so that he could have a smooth meeting with his ancestors in the next world before he joined their ranks. According to the later ritual canon, the transition from newly deceased human to ancestral spirit took place during the *fu* 祔 ritual at the lineage temple after the burial, during which the ancestors were formally notified of the elevation of the newly-deceased to their rank.⁵¹ Such a sequence indicates that it was possible for the ancestors to descend into tombs to check on the burial before they returned to the lineage temple to receive sacrifices and welcome the newly deceased.

The belief that ancestors would descend into the tomb to greet the newly deceased seems to have been commonly accepted from the Zhou to the Han. This can be inferred from the concern among elites to bury the body intact, well dressed, and finely decorated. The motivation, as illustrated in the examples below, is not to disgrace the ancestors.⁵² Apparently, if the ancestors were not supposed to be present in the underground tomb, they would not be aware of how the cadaver was treated.

A record in *Zuozhuan* 左傳, dated to the second year of Duke Ai 哀公二年 (594 B.C.), indicates that for a Zhou aristocrat, the maintenance of an intact body upon death was even more important than the preservation of life:

⁵⁰ Hayashi Minao, “Concerning the Inscription ‘May sons and Grandsons Eternally Use This [Vessel],’” 57. For more on the inscription, see Zhang Zhenglang 張正烺, “Ai Chengshu *ding* shiwen 哀成叔鼎釋文,” *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究 5 (1981): 27-33.

⁵¹ This ritual procedure will be further elaborated on page 49.

⁵² See ns. 53 and 57 below.

衛太子禱曰，曾孫蒯聵，敢昭告皇祖文王，烈祖康叔，文祖襄公... 蒯聵不敢自佚，備持矛焉，敢告無絕筋，無折骨，無面傷，以集大事，無作三祖羞，大命不敢請，佩玉不敢愛... “The Prince of Wei made a prayer, saying, I, your distant descendant Kuaikui, venture to report to you, my august ancestor King Wen, my distinguished ancestor Kangshu, my accomplished ancestor Duke Xiang, ... not daring to indulge myself with sloth, I am here with my spear in my hand, I presume to pray to you that my sinews may not be injured, my bones not broken, and my face not wounded, so that the great engagement will be accomplished and you, my ancestors, may not be disgraced, I dare not ask for the preservation my life, not grudge the jade at my girdle.”⁵³

In the “Xiaoxing” 孝行 chapter of *Lüshi chunqiu*, Yuezheng Zichun 樂正子春 explains that one’s body is what one received from one’s parents, and one should return an intact body to them upon one’s death.⁵⁴ One piece of direct evidence of the meeting between ancestors and descendants comes from the Eastern Han tomb stele for Xu Aqu 許阿瞿, a newly deceased child. According to the inscriptions, the ancestors would come to comfort him in the subterranean world:

許阿瞿身，年甫五歲，去離世榮。遂就長夜，不見日星。神靈獨處，下歸窈冥。永與家絕，豈復望頁⁵⁵。謁見先祖，念子營營。二增仗人，皆往弔親。瞿不識之，啼泣東西。...

Xu Aqu had just turned five when he departed from the glory of [this] world. Thereafter, he approached [the world of endless] long nights, not being able to see the sun or star. His spirit stayed alone and entered the dark netherworld. Eternally separated from his (living) family members, how could he see their faces again? [He] paid a visit to his ancestors. Thinking of their descendant, Aqu’s great grandparents all went to comfort him. Not knowing any of them, Aqu wept loudly in all directions.⁵⁶

⁵³ Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 1616-17. Translation by James Legge, *The Chinese Classics Vol 5 The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen Part II* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 799. All the Wade-Giles in translations are converted to pinyin romanizations for the sake of consistency.

⁵⁴ See Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷, *Lüshi Chunqiu xin jiaoshi* 呂氏春秋新校釋 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2002), 737-38.

⁵⁵ This character is not clear. The excavators interpreted it as 顏, instead of 頁. See Nanyang shi bowuguan 南陽市博物館, “Nanyang faxian donghan Xu Aqu muzhi huaxiangshi” 南陽發現東漢許阿瞿墓誌畫像石, *Wenwu* 文物 1974.8: 73-75.

⁵⁶ Gao Wen 高文, *Han bei jishi(xiudingben)* 漢碑集釋 (修訂本) (Luoyang: Henan daxue, 1997), 354-55. Translation my own.

There are also records of Han elites articulating the concern that ill fame in their life time or blemishes on their body could be a source of disgrace upon meeting their ancestors. According to the *Hanshu* biography of Feng Fengshi 馮奉世, during the reign of Emperor Ai 哀帝, Feng Fengshi's daughter, the Empress Dowager of Zhongshan 中山太后, was falsely accused of committing rebellion. Fengshi's son Feng Can 馮參 was implicated in the case and forced to commit suicide. Right before his death, Feng Can lamented that he and his sister dared not grieve for their fate of having to die with the ill fame, but were only "distressed that they would bring shame onto their ancestors when meeting them underground" 傷無以見先人於地下.⁵⁷

Although no early textual materials can be found to support the importance of meeting ancestors with an intact body and the proper paraphernalia in the grave, archaeological evidence of meticulously treated body indicates that the tradition probably started early, possibly in the Western Zhou period. The extensive jade body decorations and remnants of cloth in some Western Zhou tombs bear witness to how carefully the body was treated before burial. For example, in the late Western Zhou tomb of Guo Ji 虢季 at Sanmenxia, Henan, remnants of over ten layers of red or yellow cloth, about 10 centimeters thick, were found beneath and over the body. In addition, a large amount of jade jewelry, including many animal-shaped plates, complicated head decorations and a necklace made of 7 arcs were found on the body.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ See *Hanshu* 漢書 Ch. 79, Wenyuange Siku Quanshu 文淵閣四庫全書 V. 250 (Taipei: Shangwu, 1986), 717.

⁵⁸ *Sanmenxia Guo guo mu*, 20-21, 26-29.

In the context of the underground meeting between ancestors and the newly deceased, the grave goods of ritual vessels take on a new meaning. Like a well-treated body without blemish, which is seen as a prerequisite for the deceased to be accepted by the ancestors, the ritual vessels in the grave served to prove the identity of the deceased and thus help him win the approval of the ancestors.

Remains of food sacrifices in some Zhou ritual vessels have led Alain Thote to suggest that sacrifices were probably made at the tomb before the interment.⁵⁹ But given that a series of funerary sacrifices for the deceased were made at the ancestral temple before the interment, it is more likely that the vessels were first used in mortuary sacrifices to the deceased and then carried to the tomb to be buried there.⁶⁰ In his study of the funerary rituals in *Yili* 儀禮, Chen Gongrou 陳公柔 concluded that after the last sacrifice made in the ancestral temple before the interment, all or at least some of the ritual vessels were carried to the tomb to be interred.⁶¹ In a more recent study, Jiang Qiyan 江奇艷 has examined the “great sending-off sacrifice” (*daqiantian* 大遣奠) in *Yili* in the light of the animal bones and meat sacrifices found in the Baoshan 包山 tomb, and confirms that the vessels used in this last funerary sacrifice at the temple were carried to the tomb to be buried, with the sacrificial victuals remaining in them.⁶²

⁵⁹ Thote, “Shang and Zhou Funeral Practices,” 124.

⁶⁰ According to Wu Hung, grave sacrifices in the Shang and Zhou period can hardly be attested by textual materials. Wu Hung argues that Shang and Zhou grave sacrifices, if existed at all, were only secondary to temple sacrifices. See Wu Hung, “From Temple to Tomb: Ancient Chinese Art and Religion in Transition,” *Early China* 13 (1988): 78-115.

⁶¹ Chen Gongrou 陳公柔, “Shisangli, jixili zhong suo jizai de sangzang zhidu” 士喪禮、既夕禮中所記載的喪葬制度, *Kaoguo xuebao* 考古學報 1956.4: 67-84.

⁶² Part of the animal sacrifices, called *baosheng* 苞牲 (legs wrapped in leaves) were took out from the sacrificial vessels, wrapped in grass leaves and put separately in the burial chamber. See Jiang Qiyan 江奇

The remains of sacrifices in the ritual vessels serve as the proof that proper rituals were performed to transform the newly deceased into an ancestor. The “Shisangli” 士喪禮 and “Jixili” 既夕禮 chapters of *Yili* describe six different mortuary sacrifices that were performed before the interment.⁶³ According to Constance A. Cook, these mourning sacrifices are essential to the elevation of the deceased to the rank of an ancestor.⁶⁴ The climax of this series of rituals is the previously-mentioned *fu*-ritual, which signifies the ancestors’ acceptance of the newly deceased.

Thus the ritual vessels in tombs reflect different rituals performed in the process of ancestor making and ancestor worship. The inscriptions on the vessels record the ritual duties that the deceased had fulfilled in his lifetime. The sacrificial remains signify the descendants’ ritual service to him upon his death. The uniformity of tomb furnishings suggests that, in the mind of Western Zhou elites, ritual and musical instruments, as well as weapons and bodily decorations, were adequate for the afterlife, which was reduced to the basic ritual dimension, with the deceased being perpetually encoded into the lineage group as a link between the dead and the living. The deceased continued to receive sacrifices from his descendants and to perform his ritual duties to the lineage (e.g., to provide protection and supernatural blessings to his progeny).

艷, “Zailun ‘zangri qiandian de dianqi shifou songru kuang nei’” 再論 ‘葬日遣奠的奠器是否送於壙內’, *Sun Yatsen University Forum* 中山大學學報 26.8 (2006): 52-55.

⁶³ Chen Gongrou, “Shisangli, jixili zhong suo jizai de sangzang zhidu,” 72-74.

⁶⁴ Constance A. Cook, “Ancestor Worship During Eastern Zhou” in *Early Chinese Religion: Shang through Han (1250BC-220AD)*, eds. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 270.

Part II New Trends in Eastern Zhou Burial Tradition: Role of Cosmic and Animalistic Forces in the Afterlife

Eastern Zhou elite burials diverge from Western Zhou norms in many respects. Tomb chambers were divided into multiple sections, with each part serving a special purpose and containing distinct categories of burial objects. Various objects of daily life began to be added to the tomb furnishings. These new trends suggest that the conception of a one-dimensional afterlife was gradually replaced by the notion of a multi-dimensional afterlife, in which public duties and private life, ritual roles and personal enjoyment were enmeshed together.

What is more, human ritual elements no longer seemed adequate for the post-mortem transformation. Cosmic and animalistic motifs became prevalent in tomb settings from the fifth century onward, indicating an increasingly felt need to position the deceased in a proper cosmic setting, and to provide him with essential aids to facilitate his spiritual transformation, rebirth, and eventual ascension to the Heavenly sphere.

Cosmic Symbols in Eastern Zhou Tombs

The trend of positioning articles with cosmic symbols in tombs became predominant in the early Warring States. As von Falkenhausen and others have pointed out, the Warring States witnessed efforts to make the tomb a replica of the cosmos.⁶⁵ Zeng Hou Yi's 曾侯乙墓 tomb from the 5th century B.C. is the most renowned burial with images of

⁶⁵ von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 312-16.

cosmic symbolism. The five caskets found in the east chamber of this tomb create a cosmic surrounding and render the tomb a microcosmic representation of the universe.

The most noticeable casket is E 66,⁶⁶ which was meant to be a cosmic model, with its arch-shaped cover representing Heaven, its bottom representing Earth, and the four side boards representing the four directions. The central image on the cover was the diagram of the Big Dipper, surrounded by the names of the 28 lunar mansions (*xiu* 宿). The 4 side boards were also painted with images, except the back board, which was black all over, with nothing drawn on it.⁶⁷

In addition to the celestial image, images of directional animals were painted on the casket, with a bird (possibly representing the South) on the front board, and a dragon (of the East) and tiger (of the West) on the right and left side of the cover. Together with the (possibly) hidden dark warrior (of the North) on the back board, these animals match the (possible) pictographs of four directional deities. Together they form a coherent system,

⁶⁶ Hubei sheng bowu guan 湖北省博物館, *Zen Hou Yi Mu* 曾侯乙墓 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1989), 354-55.

⁶⁷ According to Huang Jianzhong, the images on the casket may represent the star constellations around the Spring Equinox, in the early evening during which period the other three groups of mansions are above the sky, whereas the mansions constituting the dark warrior on the north (*beigong xuanwu* 北宮玄武) should be below the horizon. See Huang Jianzhong 黃建中 et al., “Leigudun yihao mu tianwen tuxiang kaolun” 擂鼓墩一號墓天文圖像考論, *Huazhong shiyuan xuebao* 華中師院學報 1982.4: 37-38. Liu Xinfang 劉信芳 suggests that some images on the side boards are pictographs, representing the gods of three directions and seasons respectively, with that on the right side being god of east and spring; the front side, god of south and summer, and the left side, god of west and fall. He interprets the central image on the right sideboard as the pictograph *mang* 芒, which he regards as the God of the East, *Goumang* 句芒. He suggests that the central image on the front sideboard is *ju* 且, which is identical to the name of summer god on the Zidanku 子彈庫 silk manuscript; the central image on the left resembles the image of god of the west on the Zidanku silk manuscript. He further suggests that the black color on the back board is associated with winter, night and god of north (*xuanming* 玄冥). But his theory remains highly hypothetical, especially since there was little evidence indicating that the correlation system of seasons and directional deities were established in early Warring States period. See Liu Xinfang 劉信芳 and Su Li 蘇莉, “Zeng Hou Yi mu yixiang shang de yuzhou tushi” 曾侯乙墓衣箱上的宇宙圖式, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 2011.4: 51-52.

possibly embodying the cosmic model of *liuhe* 六合,⁶⁸ with both temporal and spatial dimensions.

Cosmic symbols are also found on *liubo* 六博 game boards excavated from some Chu 楚 tombs and the mausoleum of the Zhongshan 中山 kingdom in Hebei 河北.⁶⁹ *Liubo* paraphernalia started to be chosen as burial objects in mid Warring States period and gained prominence during the Han. The early patterns on the game board differed somewhat from those that flourished in the Han.⁷⁰ There were important similarities

⁶⁸ As a cosmic model envisioned in early China, *liuhe* 六合 refers to the cube-like universe within which the humans dwell, namely, Heaven, Earth, and the four directions. The *locus classicus* of *liuhe* is the “Qiwulun” 齊物論 chapter of *Zhuangzi*, which says, “As to what is beyond the Six Realms, the sage admits its existence but does not theorize. As to what is within the Six Realms, he theorizes but does not debate.” 六合之外，聖人存而不論；六合之內，聖人論而不議。 See *Zhuangzi jiaquan*, 莊子校註, ed. Wang Shumin 王叔岷 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2007), 72-73, Burton Watson, trans. *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 44. All the Wade-Giles in translations are converted to *pinyin* romanizations for the sake of consistency.

⁶⁹ See Jingzhou shi bowuguan 荊州市博物館 “Hebeiseng jingzhou shi tianxingguan er hao chumu fajue jianbao” 湖北省荊州市天星觀二號墓發掘簡報, *Wenwu* 文物 2001.9:16; Egang jijian zhihuibu wenwu xiaozu 鄂鋼基建指揮部文物小組 and Echengxian bowuguan 鄂城縣博物館, “Hubei Echeng Egang wushisan hao mu fajue jianbao” 湖北鄂城鄂鋼五十三號墓發掘簡報, *Kaogu* 考古 1978.4: 259; Hebeisheng wenwu guanlichu 河北省文物管理處, “Hebeisheng Pingshanxian Zhanguo shiqi Zhongshanguo muzang fajue jianbao” 河北省平山縣戰國時期中山國墓葬發掘簡報, *Wenwu* 文物 1979.1: 26.

⁷⁰ For a study of the evolvement of the *liubo* game boards and a list of *liubo* boards excavated up to the year 2010, see Huang Ruxuan 黃儒宣, “Liubo qiju de yanbian” 六博棋局的演變, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 中原文物 2010.1: 52-60.

among the charts on *liubo* boards, divination boards (*shi* 式盤),⁷¹ sundials (*rigui* 日晷)⁷² and TLV mirrors,⁷³ all of which functioned as cosmic charts in some respect.

The typical *liubo* game board is square, with a smaller square at the center and four Ts projecting outwardly from its sides, four Ls projecting inwardly along the circumference of the outer square, both in the cardinal directions, and four Vs at the corners of the outer square. (Naturally, Roman letters were unknown; the shapes are called T, L, and V today purely for the sake of convenience.)⁷⁴ There have been many speculations on the symbolic meaning of these marks. Schuyler Cammann was the first to discuss the cosmo-geographic symbolism of the TLV pattern. He applied the notions of “Middle Kingdom” (中國), the Four Seas (四海), Nine Regions (九州) and Four Seasons (四時) to his interpretation of

⁷¹ Diviner’s boards were found in late Warring States and Han burials. Mark Edward Lewis regards the charts on both *liubo* game board and the diviner’s board as depictions of cosmic structure. Li Ling 李零 considers the marks on the *liubo* board as an imitation of the earth board of the diviner’s board. See Mark Edward Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany, N.Y. : State University of New York Press, 2006), 274-75, 282. Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu kao(xiuding ben)* 中國方術考 (修訂本) (Beijing: Dongfang, 2000), 169. For more on the diviner’s boards, see Marc Kalinowski, “The Notion of ‘*shi*’ 式 and Some Related Terms in Qin-Han Calendrical Astrology,” *Early China* 35-36 (2012-13): 331-60.

⁷² Li Xueqin 李學勤 holds that the chart on the *liubo* board, which represents a cosmic model, was transferred to the sundial. For a list of the Han dynasty sundials, see Li Xueqin 李學勤, *Bijiao kaogu xue suibi* 比較考古學隨筆 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 1997), 24-26.

⁷³ TLV mirrors were found primarily in Han burials. According to Loewe, the earliest datable mirror bearing the TLV marks is from a 100 B. C. site. See Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise: the Chinese Quest for Immortality* (London; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1979), 158. Zhou Zheng 周鋒 has cited solid evidence to prove that images on the *liubo* board were transferred to TLV mirrors. See Zhou Zheng, “Guijujing ying gaicheng bojujing” ‘规矩镜’应改称‘博局镜’, *Kaogu* 考古 1987.12: 16-18.

⁷⁴ For a comprehensive study of *liubo*, see Armin Selbitschka, “A Tricky Game: A Re-Evaluation of *liubo* 六博 Based on Archaeological and Textual Evidence,” *Oriens Extremus* 56 (2017): 1-62.

the chart.⁷⁵ Following Cammann, Hayashi Minao, Michael Loewe,⁷⁶ Li Xueqin 李學勤,⁷⁷ and Li Ling 李零⁷⁸ all discussed the cosmic symbolism of the chart. They generally agree that the chart represents a macrocosmic model that marks the spatial axis of the universe and embraces the rotation of seasons along the temporal axis. Without solid evidence, though, these theories remain hypothetical. Yet the cosmic significance of the chart seems to be beyond doubt. As Mark Edward Lewis points out, the depiction of cosmic structure on the *liubo* board can be considered as a means to attain power through the creation of a microcosmic model and then acting in accord with it.⁷⁹

As Wang Aihe points out, the Warring States period witnessed the tendency to adjust all aspects of human activities to the movements of cosmic forces. The results of human endeavors were often seen to be based on the ability to grasp and follow the cosmic

⁷⁵ Cammann suggests that the central square represents the “Middle Kingdom,” with the Ts being its gates and the areas beyond the gates representing the “four seas”, which, in the imagination of the Han, were dwelled by the barbarians, mythical animals and spirits. The Vs on the outer circumference mark off the boundaries of the four quarters of the world and the Ls seem “to indicate the gates or partial barriers that set off the swamps at the ends of the Earth.” Furthermore, the Ls “serve to give the pattern as a whole a rotating effect, and perhaps they had the added function of representing the rotation of the four seasons, which were closely associated with the four directions.” See Schuyler Cammann, “The ‘TLV’ Pattern on the Cosmic Mirrors of Han Dynasty,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 68.4 (1948): 161-62, 164.

⁷⁶ Hayashi argues that the four Ts stand for the four end points on the two cosmic lines (*ersheng* 二繩) binding the universe, the four Vs mark the four corners of Heaven. Hayashi’s interpretation of the Ts and Vs have been generally accepted by Loewe. See Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, 74-75.

⁷⁷ Li Xueqin cites the phrase “the eight endpoints make a [liubo] game board” 八極為局 from the *Shizi* 尸子 to prove that the association between the *liubo* game board and the eight cardinal and ordinal directions was established in early China. See Li Xueqin, *Bijiao kaogu xue suibi*, 26-27.

⁷⁸ Li Ling suggests that the four Ts and the four circles (sometimes represented by birds or flowers) on the diagonals of the outer square stand for the four cardinal directions and four ordinal directions (*sifang bawei* 四方八位) formed by *ersheng* 二繩 and *siwei* 四維 (the imaginary cosmic lines binding the universe), while the end points of the Ls and Vs on the circumference of the outer square stand for the twelve node (*shier du* 十二度) which marks the division of the year and is presented by the 12 earthly branches. See Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu kao (xiudingben)*, 169-70.

⁷⁹ Lewis, *The Construction of Space*, 282-83.

order.⁸⁰ Under such circumstances, positioning cosmic charts such as the *liubo* boards in tombs must have been an effort to draw on cosmic forces to assist the afterlife.

Animal Motifs in Eastern Zhou Tomb Art

Zoomorphic designs on bronze ritual vessels had been common since the Shang and Western Zhou. Generally regarded as surface elements,⁸¹ zoomorphic images in Western Zhou burials usually did not possess meanings independent of the vessels themselves.⁸² In the Eastern Zhou, however, large animal sculptures and paintings of animal motifs started to appear as an essential part of the tomb setting.⁸³ The tomb of Zeng Hou Yi, for example, contained several bronze and wooden animal sculptures. Paintings of various animal images were also found on the double coffin and many other burial objects such as clothing, caskets, and horse helmets.

Sculptures of individual animals, real or hybrid, abounded in Warring States tombs. The most impressive is the bronze crane statue found in the east chamber of Zeng Hou Yi's tomb. Positioned next to the coffin, the crane features two deer antlers at its head and has two dragons carved on its sides to hold the wings. The phrase "Made by Marquis Zeng of

⁸⁰ Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 101-103.

⁸¹ This is discussed in Wu Hung, "From Temple to Tomb," ns. 18 and 106.

⁸² For a discussion of the function of animal motifs on bronze ritual vessels to denote a ritual vessel, to divide its category and to indicate the rank and ownership of the vessel, see Jessica Rawson, "Late Shang Bronze Design: Meaning and Purpose," in *The Problem of Meaning in Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes: Colloquies on Art & Archaeology in Asia No.15*, ed. Roderick Whitfield (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1993), 67-95.

⁸³ Admittedly, there are a few cases of bronze animal sculptures in Shang and Western Zhou tombs, such as the bronze tigers in Fu Hao's tomb and in the Shang tomb at Xingan 新幹, Jiangxi. But occurrence of them is relatively rare compared with the large number of animal sculptures in Warring States tombs. See Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國社會科學院考古研究所, Yin Xu Fu Hao Mu 殷墟婦好墓 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1980), 76; Jiangxisheng bowuguan 江西省博物館 and Jiangxisheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 江西省文物考古研究所, Xingan Shangdai da Mu 新幹商代大墓 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1997), 131.

Yi to be used on the occasion of death” (*Zeng Hou Yi zuo chi yong zhong* 曾侯乙作持用終) inscribed on its beak⁸⁴ suggests that it was made for the purpose of burial. Unlike Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, which often convey the themes of ancestor worship and concern for lineage solidarity, the inscription on the bronze crane refers only to the welfare of the spirit of the tomb occupant. Combining the features of bird, dragon and deer, and placed to the east of the coffin, with its head facing south, this sculpture probably serves to guide the soul of the deceased toward regeneration and life,⁸⁵ and to facilitate its movement to Heaven. This sculpture suggests a newly felt need to provide animal-shaped bronze burial objects (an apparent means to draw on animal power) to assist in the afterlife, and that sending off the deceased to his ancestors was no longer the only concern in the elite’s burial.

The intertwined motifs of deer, birds, and dragons also occur as decorations on one of the horse helmet pieces from the northern chamber. This helmet piece features several dragons, one with a deer head on one side and dragon head on the other, and another with a bird head and dragon tail.⁸⁶ The repetition of the similar animal motifs on different materials in various sections of the tomb shows that they were not randomly selected, but rather charged with important religious meanings in the tomb context.

In fact, the bird, dragon, and deer are all rich in symbolic meaning. First, these wild or mythical animals represent exotic, naturalistic, or supernatural power, through whose

⁸⁴ For description of the bronze crane, see *Zeng Hou Yi Mu*, 250; Yang Xiaoneng, *The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology: Celebrated Discoveries from the People's Republic of China* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art; New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), 296-98.

⁸⁵ In correlative cosmology, east is associated wood, spring, the season of rebirth, wherein the yang starts to gain an upper hand over the yin; south is associated with bird, summer, wherein the yang is at its prime.

⁸⁶ *Zeng Hou Yi Mu*, 347.

help human beings can gain access to the spiritual world. In her discussion of the bird motif in Shang and Western Zhou ritual art, Elizabeth Childs-Johnson proposes that the bird image is symbolic of the transformational force that can put man in contact with the spirits and that it functions as the “vehicular image representing supernatural access to the spiritual realm.”⁸⁷ In traditional shamanism, drawing on animal power is also a means to facilitate spiritual transformation and attain potency.⁸⁸ In addition, these animals’ ability to fly or to climb up mountains symbolizes access to the realm above, the sphere of Heaven where gods and spirits dwell. For this reason, dragons and birds are believed to be helpers for spiritual ascension. Finally, dragon and deer can serve as symbols of life and regeneration. According to Sarah Allan, snakes and dragons are universal symbols of death and rebirth.⁸⁹ Deer antlers, which are known to be periodically regenerated, are also a perfect symbol of revival and rebirth.⁹⁰

Antlers are frequently found in Warring States tombs. Many carved wood objects from Chu tombs have deer antlers fixed on them. For example, the two lacquered wood sculptures of deer in Zeng Hou Yi’s tomb both have real antlers fixed into holes at their heads.⁹¹ The fact that two similar deer sculptures were found in the burial chamber and

⁸⁷ Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, “The metamorphic image: A Predominant Theme in the Ritual Art of Shang China,” *The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Bulletin 70* (1998): 58.

⁸⁸ According to John Major, in the classic shamanism of northern Eurasian, the shamans would wear animal skins, masks with deer antlers in their preparation for being possessed by deities. See John Major, “Characteristics of Chu Religion,” in *Defining Chu Image and Reality in Ancient China*, eds. John Major and Constance Cook, 133.

⁸⁹ Sarah Allan, *The Shape of the Turtle: Myth, Art and Cosmos in Early China* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1991), 124-70. Snakes and fish are also endowed with the potential of transformation and rebirth in early Chinese literature. *Shanhaijing* describes the legends of a snake being transformed into a fish, and Zhuan Xu reviving to life by combining himself with the fish. See Yuan Ke 袁珂, *Shanhaijing jiaozhu 山海經校注* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1980), 416-17.

⁹⁰ For discussion on antler as the symbol of life, potency and flight, See Constance A. Cook, *Death in Ancient China: the Tale of One Man's Journey* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 139.

⁹¹ *Zeng Hou Yi Mu*, 381.

the central chamber, where most ritual vessels were positioned, indicates that they were supposed to play a double role: both to facilitate the spiritual regeneration of the deceased and to assist in the symbolic meeting between the newly deceased and his or her ancestors underground.⁹²

Some sculptures of birds on felines excavated from Chu tombs, which serve as stands for musical instruments, also have antlers poking out from the birds' body.⁹³ The most impressive of these antlered tomb objects, however, are the hundreds of *zhenmushou* 鎮墓獸, tomb-quelling animals (It should be noted that the term was adopted by modern Chinese archaeologists to refer to the hybrid animal sculptures positioned in tombs.) found in tombs in modern-day Hubei, Hunan, and Henan provinces.⁹⁴ Typologically, these antlered objects can vary from simple stands for antlers to animal-headed beasts or human-headed figures with painted antlers fixed on them. Many of the heads feature long protruding tongue and boggled eyes, which give them a ferocious look.⁹⁵ With only a few

⁹² This proposition is inspired by Constance A. Cook, who suggests that the placement of *zhenmushou* together with ritual elements indicates they should play a role in the underground feast held for the ancestral spirits on behalf of the tomb occupant, and furthermore in the transformation of the newly-deceased into a spirit. See Cook, *Death in Ancient China*, 141-142.

⁹³ For a study of the animal sculptures found in Chu tombs, see Zhao Hui 趙輝, et al., "Chu wenwu zhong dongwu diaoke zaoxing de wenhua neihan fenxi" 楚文物中動物雕刻造型的文化內涵分析, *Chu wenyi lunji* 楚文藝論集 (Wuhan, Hubei meishu, 1991), 178-190.

⁹⁴ Cortney Chaffin, *Strange creatures of Chu: Antlered tomb sculptures of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 2007: 90. In particular, Jiangling 江陵 area, known as the center of Chu culture, has yielded over four hundred *zhenmushou*. Each of the 156 Chu tombs at Yutaishan has yielded a *zhenmushou*. See Hubeisheng Jinzhou diqu bowuguan 湖北省荊州地區博物館, *Jiangling Yutaishan Chumu* 江陵雨台山楚墓 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1984).

⁹⁵ For detailed descriptions of these objects, with a focus on the regional variations, see Cortney Chaffin, *Strange creatures of Chu*, 90-115; For the typological and chronological variation of the tomb guardians, see Colin MaCKENZIE, "Meaning and Style in the Art of Chu," in *The Problem of Meaning in Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes: Colloquies on Art & Archaeology in Asia No.15* ed. Roderick Whitfield (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1993), 123-25.

exceptions, almost all the *zhenmushou* are placed near the head of the tomb occupant.⁹⁶ Their awe-inspiring visual effects and their position in the tombs have led scholars to agree on their apotropaic role.⁹⁷ Equally important is their role in aiding in the transformation of the deceased. Their protruding tongues, a prominent feature of the dead, may represent the process of death that the tomb occupant has gone through, while the antlers on top indicate a state of death being conquered and regeneration achieved. Constance A. Cook offered an overview of studies of the function and symbolic meaning of *zhenmushou*, highlighting their role in facilitating the transformation the deceased into spirit, and then in aiding and protecting the deceased's spirit in its travel across the dangerous territory filled with ghosts and hybrid beasts.⁹⁸

Because of differences in geographic and environmental conditions, wooden sculptures similar to those preserved in many of the Chu tombs have seldom been excavated in northern regions. But such animal motifs are not restricted to the Chu area. Series of bronze animal sculptures, furniture, and a *liubo* game board with animal decorations were found in the Warring States royal mausoleum of Zhongshan.

In King Cuo's tomb, there were two pairs of winged mythical beasts. One pair was found in the eastern storehouse, together with other objects that seem to have been used by the tomb occupant in his lifetime. The other was found in the western storehouse together

⁹⁶ Cortney Chaffin, *Strange creatures of Chu*, 92, 160.

⁹⁷ For the demon-repelling and apotropaic functions, see John Major, "Characteristics of Chu Religion," 132. Cortney Chaffin observes that most Chu tombs with antlered sculptures also have architectural elements. She thus concludes that these sculptures might serve to protect the passageway between compartments so that the spirit may travel safely in the tomb. See Cortney Chaffin, *Strange creatures of Chu*, 155-61.

⁹⁸ Cook, *Death in Ancient China*, 136-142.

with ritual vessels.⁹⁹ All four beasts had gold and silver inlays of birds in the clouds on their backs. Both the wings and the inlayed pattern suggest an association with flight and ascension.

The combined motifs of deer, birds, and dragons are demonstrated in a bronze table found in the east storehouse. The table is supported by sculptures of four dragons and four phoenixes, with two male deer and two female deer at its base. Two adjacent dragons are joined by feather-shaped and disc-shaped decorations. Besides conveying the message of spiritual transformation and flight, the equal number of male and female animals on the table may indicate a balance between yin and yang.

Snakes, and sometimes fish and turtles, also occur frequently in Warring States paintings and sculptures. They are often represented together with the above-mentioned animals, forming a scene of two forces in tension or in combat. A large portion of the inner coffin of Zeng Hou Yi, for example, was covered with groups of birds, snakes, and hybrid creatures. A noticeable scene on the coffin features a large bird (probably a phoenix) at the center, perching on a dragon, and surrounded by a fish and two snakes.¹⁰⁰ At the bottom right corner of the scene, there is a small deer under the claws of the dragon, apparently under the protection of the dragon and bird. If, as Alain Thote points out, this scene shows two antagonistic forces in combat,¹⁰¹ then the bird and dragon, which dominate the scene,

⁹⁹ The similar position of the winged beasts as the two deer sculptures in Zeng Hou Yi's tomb indicates that they were also supposed to play the same double role.

¹⁰⁰ Zeng Hou Yi Mu, 28-32.

¹⁰¹ Alain Thote and Thomas Lawton, "The Double Coffin of Leigudun Tomb No. 1: Iconographic Sources and Related Problems," in *New Perspectives on Chu Culture During the Eastern Zhou Period*, ed. Thomas Lawton (Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1991), 39.

and are represented as being larger and more powerful than the snakes, clearly represent the force gaining the upper hand.

Several layers of meaning have been attached to the scene of the bird fighting the serpent. First, snakes are dangerous and may pose a threat to the tomb and its occupant. Dragons and birds, as potent mythical animals and natural predators of snakes, represent forces that can suppress the snakes. Thus the scenes of animal confrontation can be interpreted as benevolent and protective forces gaining the upper hand over malevolent and destructive ones. Scholars tend to agree that the function of such scenes was to protect the deceased against evil.¹⁰²

Second, snakes and fish are cold blooded and belong to the watery subterranean domain. They might symbolize the dark and cold underworld. Birds and dragons, on the other hand, belong to the air and the sphere of Heaven,¹⁰³ and thus might be associated with the revival of life. Therefore, the scene of birds and dragons winning over snakes may symbolize death being conquered and regeneration achieved.

The motif of animals in combat is also seen on a painted lacquer screen excavated from Wangshan 王山 Tomb 1. The screen features sculptures of several groups of animals both at its base and on its body. At the base are masses of intertwined snakes smothering small birds, suggesting that death is predominant in the underworld. On the screen, snakes are

¹⁰² Liu Dunyuan 劉敦願, "Shilun Zhanguo yishu pin zhong de niao she xiangdou tici" 試論戰國藝術品中的鳥蛇相斗題材, *Hunan kaogu jikan* 湖南考古籍刊 1 (1981): 73-81; Michael Loewe, *Chinese Ideas of Life and Death, Faith, Myth and Reason in the Han Period* (London: George Allen&Unwin Ltd., 1982), 122.

¹⁰³ Alain Thote, "Aspects of the Serpent in Eastern Zhou Bronzes and Lacquerware," in *The Problem of Meaning in Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes: Colloquies on Art & Archaeology in Asia No.15* ed. Roderick Whitfield (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1993), 154; John Major, "Characteristics of Chu Religion," 129-131.

biting deer and toads, but they are seized in turn by large, ferocious-looking birds.¹⁰⁴ Apparently, this scene suggests the force of life winning over the force of death.

A similar contrast between terrestrial and celestial animals is shown on a “bird-column basin” (*niao zhupen* 鳥柱盆)¹⁰⁵ from the eastern storehouse of King Cuo’s tomb. The basin is supported by a round stem, which rests on a base with four groups of entwined snakes. At the bottom of the basin is a turtle, its back supporting a column, on top of which rests a bird, its claws tightly clutching the heads of two entwined snakes.¹⁰⁶ Apparently, the snakes and turtle of the underground world contrast with the bird, an animal of the celestial sphere representing flight and ascension. And the snakes being clutched by the bird suggests death being overcome in the celestial sphere.

The image of a bird seizing a snake is common in burials from late Spring and Autumn to the Warring States period. The cover of a bronze flask excavated from the tomb of a minister of Jin from the Zhao lineage (*Zhao qing* 趙卿) features a bird seizing a snake with its claws.¹⁰⁷ The pattern of a phoenix seizing one snake in its beak and stepping on another one is embroidered on a coat from Mashan 馬山 Tomb 1.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, a bronze sculpture of a bird stepping on a snake, excavated in 1933 from a tomb at Zhujiaji 朱家集, Shou Xian 壽縣, is now kept in the Anhui Provincial Museum 安徽省博物館. (Modern Chinese

¹⁰⁴ For detailed description of the screen, see Yang Xiaoneng, *The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology*, 316-17.

¹⁰⁵ This term was coined by modern Chinese archaeologists and was naturally unknown in the Warring States.

¹⁰⁶ Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiu suo 河北省文物研究所, *Cuo Mu: Zhanguo zhongshan guo guowang zhimu* 豐墓: 戰國中山國王之墓 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1995), 132.

¹⁰⁷ Hou Yi 侯毅 and Qu Chuanfu 渠川福, “Taiyuan Jinsheng cun 251 hao Chunqiu damu ji chemakeng fajue jianbao” 太原金勝村 251 號春秋大墓及車馬坑發掘簡報, *Wenwu* 文物 9 (1989): 69.

¹⁰⁸ See Hubeisheng Jingzhou diqu bowuguan 湖北省荊州地區博物館, *Jiangling Mashan yihao Chu mu* 江陵馬山一號楚墓 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1985), 67.

archaeologists coined the term *niaojianshe* 鳥踐蛇 to convey this motif.) Significantly, not one of the known burial objects with such images depicts the snake gaining the upper hand.

The excavation report suggests that the *niaozhupen* from King Cuo's tomb might have been used as a water container.¹⁰⁹ But the typology of this basin differs greatly from that of Shang and Zhou ritual vessel of this type. It is a good illustration of how traditional ritual vessels were adjusted to convey the animal motifs popular in the Warring States period.

In conclusion, the motif of bird-serpent fighting as represented in these objects might embody a spatial as well as temporal sequence. And its symbolism should be interpreted in the context of the spiritual transformation after death: in the underworld where the deceased was just interred, death was in control. But having been through the proper funerary and burial ritual, and provided with the assistance of cosmic and spiritual forces, the spirit of the deceased would regenerate, travel out of the underground coffin, and then ascend to the Heavenly sphere, where death would be conquered by life.¹¹⁰

Part III Ancestral Sacrifice and the Trend of Immortality Seeking Converge in the Han Tomb Art, with the Mawangdui Painting as a Representative

¹⁰⁹ *Cuo Mu*, 132.

¹¹⁰ A similar motif is represented in a much more complicated way in the famous Mawangdui painting, which shows snakes being subjugated by a mythical figure in the underworld, dragons and birds facilitating the afterlife journey in the human world, as well as birds celebrating the arrival of the spirit in the Heavenly sphere. See the discussion on pages 53-55.

The cosmic themes and the animal symbolism discussed above can be clearly seen in the silk painting and coffin paintings of the early Western Han Mawangdui Tomb 1, the well-known tomb of Lady Dai 軫. The painting on top of the innermost coffin forms a coherent visual system with the lacquered paintings on the outer coffins. Together they offer invaluable information on the views of afterlife in early China. They not only epitomize the previously discussed pictorial motifs in Eastern Zhou burials but also foreshadow elements pertaining to post-mortem regeneration and the spiritual journey in subsequent Han tomb art. What is more, an analysis of the painting will help to illustrate how human ritual procedures and the cosmic forces are integrated to bring about the post-mortem spiritual revival.

What does the Painting Depict?

The T-shaped painting consists of a lower vertical part and an upper horizontal part.

At the bottom of the vertical part is a watery sphere, featuring a mythic figure squatting on two copulating fish, raising a platform, with a snake tied to one of his legs. On the platform and below a jade chime stone (*qing* 磬) is a sacrificial scene. Three *ding*-tripods and two *hu*-vases are laid in the front. A sacrificial table, with ladles and ear-cups (*erbei* 耳杯), is set at the back. A rectangular object with a rounded top, with carrying poles attached to it, is placed in the middle. On each side of this object, there are three people bowing toward it, with their arms raised to the chest. A person in a white robe is standing aloof on the left side. (He is most likely the ritual specialist (*zhu* 祝) in charge of the ceremony.) Above the sacrificial scene is a huge jade disc with ribbons hanging below it. On top of the jade disc and under a canopy is the portrait of an old lady in profile. Standing

on a platform supported by a tilted tablet, the lady leans on a cane and is accompanied by several attendants on both sides.

Humans at the center of the vertical part are framed by animal forces. On the two sides two giant dragons rise out of the watery sphere. Beside the dragons' tails are two turtles with owls on their backs. The dragon's bodies are entwined and passing through the jade disc.¹¹¹ Their necks and heads extend upward all the way to the canopy above the lady. Birds also appear at several key places: two human-headed birds are squatting on the ribbon above the sacrificial scene; two birds are perching on the canopy above the lady; below the canopy there is another human-headed bird.

The horizontal part clearly represents the Heavenly scene, which consists of two levels. The lower level features two reversed Ts, probably representing the gates of Heaven guarded by two human figures and two leopards. Above the gate is a bell with beads and a tassel on top. Two hybrid figures mounted on horses are holding ropes as if to ring the bell. Above the bell are two birds in flight with necks facing downward toward the tassel. Flanking these images are two dragons: the left one is flying above clouds with a female figure resting on its wings, the right one is coiled on tree branches with several small suns beside it. The upper level has a human-bodied serpent-tailed figure at the center, with the raven in the sun on its right, and the toad in the moon on its left. Above this figure, there are five birds, their necks upward and beaks open, as if breathing heavily.

Previous Interpretations of the Painting

¹¹¹ The image of animals (most often dragons and phoenixes) going through jade discs is a recurrent motif in Han tomb art. It is commonly seen as a symbol of ascension to Heaven. For more on such images and the jade disc, see the discussion on pages 60 and 95-96, ns. 163 and 281-285.

The silk painting has been a subject of intense study ever since its excavation. Most early studies of the painting espouse the theory of spiritual ascension, holding that the painting serves to guide and escort the deceased's soul to her final destination of the Heavenly sphere.¹¹² The lady portrayed at the center has been interpreted as Lady Dai, the tomb occupant, in her afterlife journey.¹¹³ The rectangular object toward which people are bowing has been associated with Lady Dai as well, though there has been controversy over whether this is her coffin, her body in shrouds or her garment box. Following Wu Hung, I argue that this represents the body of Lady Dai lying in bed, covered in shrouds, and carried to the ritual hall to receive sacrifice.¹¹⁴ It is worth noting that the swirling cloud pattern on the shroud is the same as that on the coat of the old lady above, suggesting a link between the dead body and the revived tomb occupant.

Different theories have been put forward concerning the routes in Lady Dai's afterlife journey. In early Han, the myths of the islands in the Eastern Sea and Mount Kunlun in the west as the ideal places of immortality were well established. Loewe draws on such myths and proposes that the two ascending dragons form a vase shape, which

¹¹² See Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, 33-34.

¹¹³ An Zhimin 安志敏, "Changsha xin faxian de xihan bohua shitan" 长沙新发现的西汉帛画试探, *Kaogu* 考古 1973.1: 48.

¹¹⁴ Waston and Loewe regard it as the coffin of Lady Dai. See Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, 45-46. Eugene Y. Wang regards it as a garment box of the Lady, which is used in the soul-summoning ritual. See Eugene Y. Wang, "Ascend to Heaven or Stay in the Tomb? Paintings in Mawangdui Tomb1 and the Virtual Ritual of Revival in Second-Century B.C.E. China," in *Mortality in Traditional Chinese Thought*, eds. Amy Olberding and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 56. Wu Hung proposes that it is the representation of Lady Dai's corpse covered in shrouds. See Wu Hung, "Art in Ritual Context: Rethinking Mawangdui," *Early China* 17 (1992): 111-144. The stipulations of mourning ritual recorded in *Yili* give credence to Wu Hung's proposition. The object is not garment box for the following reason: The soul-summoning ritual occurs before death is confirmed. At this point, sacrifices have not started yet. Therefore the garment box should not be put together with the sacrificial vessels, as is described in the painting. It is not a coffin for the following reason: During the funerary ritual the coffin containing the corpse is buried in a shallow pit on the west side of the hall, and therefore should not occur above ground.

represents the island of Penglai 蓬萊 drifting on the sea.¹¹⁵ He Xilin 賀西林 considers Mount Kunlun 崑崙 to be the path taken by the deceased Lady on her way to Heaven.¹¹⁶ The tilted tablet supporting the platform on which stands Lady Dai, according to He Xilin, represents “qinggong” 傾宮 (tilted palace) or “xuanpu” 懸圃 (hanging gardens)¹¹⁷ above Mount Kunlun.

However, whether the painting depicts the spiritual ascension to Heaven has been a subject of intense scholarly debate recently.¹¹⁸ The spiritual ascension theory started to be questioned in the 1990s. Several scholars have proposed that the painting functions to summon the soul back and to locate it inside the tomb.¹¹⁹ Two noteworthy studies that challenge the ascension theory are by Wu Hung and his student Eugene Y. Wang.

In his recent study, Eugene Y. Wang associates the visual presentations in the painting and on Lady Dai’s lacquered coffins with the medical manuscripts excavated from Mawangdui Tomb 3 and interprets them in light of the macrobiotic cultivation tradition prevalent in early Han.¹²⁰ According to him, every element in the painting functions to

¹¹⁵ Loewe, *ibid.*. Similarly, Peng Jingyuan 彭景元 holds that the upper part of the painting depicts the deceased Lady Dai being received on the mythical island of immortals 仙島. see Peng Jingyuan, “Mawangdui yihao Hanmu bohua xinshi” 馬王堆一號漢墓帛畫新釋, *Jiangnan kaogu* 江漢考古 1987.1: 70-73.

¹¹⁶ He Xilin, “Cong Changsha Chumu bohua dao Mawangdui yihao Hanmu qiguanhua yu bohua” 從長沙楚墓帛畫到馬王堆一號漢墓漆棺畫與帛畫, *Zhongguo hanhua xuehui di jiu jie nianhui lunwenji (shang)* 中國漢畫學會第九屆年會論文集 (上) 2004, 465.

¹¹⁷ According to the “Dixing” 墜形 chapter of *Huainanzi*, these are the mythical peaks above Kunlun mountain, the ascension of which will grant one a deathless state and eventually lead one to Heaven. See He Ning 何寧, *Huainanzi jishi* 淮南子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1989), 328.

¹¹⁸ For a summary of the dispute, see You Zhenqun 游振群, “Mawangdui Hanmu bohua yanjiu zongshu” 馬王堆漢墓帛畫研究綜述, *Hunansheng bowuguan guankan* 湖南省博物館館刊 00 (2010): 57-70.

¹¹⁹ Yan Xinyuan 顏新元, “Changsha Mawangdui T xing bohua zhuti sixiang bianzheng” 長沙馬王堆 T 形帛畫主題思想辯證, *Chu wenyi lunji* 楚文藝論集 (Wuhan: Hubei meishu, 1991), 130-149; Li Jianmao 李建毛, “Ye tan Mawangdui Hanmu T xing bohua de zhuti sixiang” 也談馬王堆 T 形帛畫的主題思想, *Meishu shi lun* 美術史論 3 (1992): 96-100.

¹²⁰ Eugene Y. Wang, “Ascend to Heaven or Stay in the Tomb?,” 37-84.

symbolically restore the balance between yin and yang, helping the deceased to regenerate and take on a new form. But eventually Lady Dai would shed her bodily form, lose her individual identity and merge with the nebulous origin of the cosmos. Eugene Y. Wang agrees that the theme of ascension is clearly represented in the painting, but he sees such images as the ascending dragons and the Kunlun mountain as metaphors for the state of inner sublimation, and the sun and moon in Heaven as symbols of spiritual illumination, both of which come as a result of sexual or breathing cultivation prescribed in the medical manuscripts found in Tomb 3.¹²¹ Wang's study adds a new dimension to this already intensely studied painting and offers an excellent elaboration on how the widespread trend of pursuing longevity/immortality through physical-spiritual cultivation in early Han transformed people's understanding of the afterlife and brought about great changes in burial practices.

However, as original as his study is, Wang fails to give human ritual its due credit in the process of spiritual regeneration. Putting too much emphasis on the macrobiotic cultivation tradition, he neglects the practice of ancestor worship, which was dominant in early Han, and is clearly revealed in the painting as well.

In "Art in a Ritual Context: Rethinking Mawangdui," Wu Hung rejects the theory that the painting serves as the garment in soul-recalling ritual.¹²² Following Ma Yong 馬

¹²¹ It should be noted, though, that the medical manuscripts were excavated not from Lady Dai's tomb, but from Mawangdui Tomb 3, the tomb of her son.

¹²² Wu Hung, "Art in Ritual Context," 113-15. For proponents of this theory, see Liu Dunyuan, "Mawangdui Xi-Han bohua zhong de ruogan shenhua wenti" 馬王堆西漢帛畫中的若干神話問題, *Wenshizhe* 文史哲, 1978.4: 63-72; Yü Ying-Shih, "'O Soul, Come Back!' A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.2 (1987): 363-95.

雍,¹²³ he suggests that it functions as *mingjing* 銘旌 (a banner bearing the name or portrait of the deceased), which was used in the funerary ritual to represent the lady and later buried in her tomb.¹²⁴ He further argues that the compositional principle of the painting is not “narrative” but “correlative.” Thus the binary opposition of the cosmic elements serves to symbolically bring Lady Dai back to life, instead of sending her soul upward to Heaven. He concludes that the revived Lady Dai would resume an afterlife existence and remain in the “happy home” (i.e., the tomb) forever. Wu Hung’s pioneering study offers a good example of how the painting can be studied in ritual and tomb context. However, he fails to consider the ritual procedures that took place after burial. Based on this incomplete picture of the mourning and ancestral worship ritual, he concludes that the spirit of the deceased would be eternally locked inside the underground “happy home.”¹²⁵

As A. Gutkind Bulling noticed much earlier, the painting features two types of representation: people in action, which are shown in the center of the picture, and legendary figures and strange animals, which frame the human action.¹²⁶ The two types of representation Bulling describes, I shall argue here, embody two equally important means to bring about Lady Dai’s afterlife transformation: human ritual procedures and cosmic-spiritual forces. In the following section, drawing on the method of analysis proposed by Wu Hung, but considering ritual procedures both before and after the burial, I will argue

¹²³ Ma Yong, “Lun Changsha Mawangdui yihao Hanmu chutu bohua de mingcheng he zuoyong” 論長沙馬王堆一號漢墓出土帛畫的名稱和作用, *Kaogu* 考古 1973.2: 118-125. However, the first one to suggest that the painting may serve as a *mingjing* is An Zhimin. See An Zhimin, “Changsha xin faxian de xihan bohua shitan,” 49-51. See also *Yili Zhengyi* 儀禮正義, annotated by Hu Peihui 胡培翬 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji, 1993), 1770.

¹²⁴ Wu Hung, “Art in Ritual Context,” 116-17, 121.

¹²⁵ Wu Hung, “Art in Ritual Context,” 127.

¹²⁶ A. Gutkind Bulling, “The Guide of the Souls Picture in the Western Han Tomb in Ma-Wang-Tui near Ch’ang Sha,” *Oriental Art* 20.2 (1974): 162-63.

that the painting served as a banner in Lady Dai's funerary ritual and was buried thereafter, epitomizing both ritual processes and cosmic-spiritual forces indispensable for the revival of her spirit and her journey to Heaven.

Analysis of Ritual Elements in the Painting in light of Textual Records

Analyzing the picture in light of the whole process of mourning ritual recorded in the ritual texts¹²⁷ might help us better understand the themes reflected in the painting. The first step in funerary ritual is the soul-summoning, after which, death would be confirmed, and the body would be transferred from the northern, yin side to the southern, yang side of the bedchamber.¹²⁸ This relocation of the body signifies the starting point of a process of symbolic transformation from death to spiritual revival.¹²⁹ Positioned under the southern window of the bedchamber, the corpse would be washed, dressed, fed and decorated. An offering of vine and meat would be made in the bedchamber. This is the “offering made immediately upon death” (*shisi zhidian* 始死之奠).¹³⁰

Afterwards, the Lesser Dressing Rite would be held, during which more layers of clothes and shrouds were put on the body. After the Lesser Dressing, the body would be carried to the ritual hall, wherein it received the “lesser dressing offering” (*xiaolian dian*

¹²⁷ They include the “Shisangli” 士喪禮, “Jixili” 既夕禮 and “shiyuli” 士虞禮 chapters of *Yili* and the “Sangdaji” 喪大祭 and “Tangong” 檀弓 chapters of *Liji* 禮記. Recently excavated scripts of early Han burial laws (*Zanglu* 葬律) confirm that the stipulations in the ritual classics correlate roughly with the Han state laws. See Gao Chongwen 高崇文, “Lun Han jian zanglü zhong de jidian zhi li” 論漢簡葬律中的祭奠之禮, *Wenwu* 文物 2011.5: 80-84, 93. It should be noted that there was no single set of rituals and ritual principles observed by all Han elites in all regions, and that some of the above-cited ritual texts might be later than the Mawangdui tombs. Unfortunately, however, we are left only with these textual references to consult, till more related excavated manuscripts are available.

¹²⁸ *Yili Zhengyi*, 1640-48.

¹²⁹ Wu Hung, “Art in Ritual Context,” 116.

¹³⁰ *Yili Zhengyi*, 1649; *Liji jijie* 禮記集解, annotated by Sun Xidan 孫希旦 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1989), 187.

小斂奠), during which *ding* tripods and a *zu* table would be carried to the hall and set beside the body. The offering was presided over by the ritual specialist, with family members participating.¹³¹ Comparing such ritual procedures with the scene of offering in the painting, we conclude that what the painting depicts might be the *xiaolian dian*.

Following the Lesser Dressing, the Greater Dressing and its ensuing offerings would be held on the steps outside the ritual hall. Then the body would be coffined and buried in a shallow pit outside the mourning hall. While the body remained at home, several other types of *dian*-offerings would be made, including “morning and evening weeping offerings” (*zhaoxiku dian* 朝夕哭奠) and the “new moon offering” (*shuoyue dian* 朔月奠).¹³² In the transitional period, these consecutive offerings symbolically sustained the newly-revived spirit and caused it to linger in the familiar environment of its home. When the coffin was about to be raised from its temporary location outside the ritual hall (this is referred to as *qibin* 啓殯) and transferred to the ancestral temple and eventually to the burial sites, the ritual specialist would cry out loud so as to call the attention of the spirit, informing him of the upcoming movement of its body.¹³³

This ritual procedure suggests that the spirit was supposed to follow its body all the way to the tomb. Thereafter, it would no longer be confined at the site of the body, but would fly back home to receive sacrifices, for on the same day of the burial, the first welcoming sacrifice (*yuji* 虞祭) would be made at the ritual hall of the deceased’s home to

¹³¹ *Yili Zhengyi*, 1719-52.

¹³² For detailed discussion of these offerings and other mourning rituals, see Chen Gongrou 陳公柔, “Shisanli, jixili zhong suo jizai de sangzang zhidu” 士喪禮、既夕禮中所記載的喪葬制度, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 1956.4: 67-84.

¹³³ *Yili zhengyi*, 1831-32.

welcome back and becalm the spirit.¹³⁴ During the sacrifice, the ritual specialist would address the spirit, saying: “Go, Noble Spirit, to join thy ancestor so-and-so” 適爾皇祖某甫,¹³⁵ indicating that home was only an abode where the spirit was expected to rest temporarily.

The welcoming sacrifices were marked by the presence of the spiritual impersonator (*shi* 尸), usually the grandson of the deceased, who would partake in the offerings on behalf of the spirit as in the ancestor worship sacrifices. Therefore *yu*-sacrifices belong to the category of *ji* 祭 offering,¹³⁶ in contrast with the *dian* 奠 offering, which was made beside the body. Nonetheless, the *yu* sacrifice is stipulated as a funerary ritual instead of an ancestor worship ritual.¹³⁷

After a series of *yu* sacrifices, the *fu*-ritual 祔 would be held at the ancestral temple, in which the ritual specialist would address the spirits of both the deceased and his/her grandfather/grandmother to whom the new spiritual tablet would be attached. To the spirit of the newly deceased the following words would be addressed: “The filial son So-and-so and all the filial family members attending the sacrifice have early left their night abode, and with care and awe, without sluggishness or want of thought, make this offering of the

¹³⁴ *Yili zhengyi*, 1973.

¹³⁵ *Yili zhengyi*, 2042. Translation by John Steele, *The I-Li Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial Vol II* (Taipei: Cheng-wen Publishing Company, 1996), 121.

¹³⁶ According to Hu Peihui’s commentary, “*Yu* is the sacrifice made after the interment to welcome back the spirit” 虞祭為葬畢迎精之祭. See *Yili zhengyi*, 1973-74.

¹³⁷ Zheng Xuan’s 鄭玄 commentary says “After an ordinary officer buries his father or mother, he welcomes back his/her spirit at noon on the same day and makes offerings to him/her at the ritual hall so as to repose the spirit. Of the five types of ritual, *yu* is the inauspicious one.” 士既葬其父母，迎精而返，日中而祭之于殯宮以安之之禮。虞于五禮屬凶禮。Hu Peihui’s sub-commentary further clarifies that *yu* is a mourning/funerary sacrifice (*sangji* 喪祭), which differs from the sacrifices to ancestors (*jiji* 吉祭). See *Yili zhengyi*, 1973-74.

slabs... We place you with your noble grandsire, styled Such-and-such” 孝子某，孝顯相，夙興夜處，小心畏忌。不惰其身，不寧...，適爾皇祖某甫。¹³⁸ And to the spirit of the grandfather: “...We place the tablet of your grandson, styled Such-and-such, near your own. Please partake of some food” 以濟祔爾孫某甫。尚饗。¹³⁹

The liturgical wording here signifies a change in the nature of the ritual as well as the status of the newly-deceased. Throughout the funerary ritual, the mourners were referred to as “the sorrowful son” (*aizi mou* 哀子某) and “the sorrowful participating family members” (*ai xianxiang* 哀顯相), but in the *fu*-ritual, they were referred to as “filial son” (*xiaozhi mou* 孝子某) and “filial participating members” (*xiao xianxiang* 孝顯相). Since the appellation of *xiao* 孝 refers above all to the filial piety exhibited toward one’s ancestor, the adoption of it in this context indicates that the transitional period was over and the deceased was finally made a powerful ancestor, who would join the rank of all his ancestors in Heaven and be venerated by his descendants thereafter. The long and fastidious process of funerary ritual came to an end and sacrifices thereafter would belong to the auspicious rite of ancestor worship.

Thus by notifying the ancestors of the coming of the newly deceased, the *fu*-ritual signifies the turning of the newly deceased into a living ancestor. This further proves that gaining acceptance of previous ancestors is essential to the process of transformation from a deceased to a living ancestor.

¹³⁸ *Yili zhengyi*, 2068-70. Translation by John Steele, with minor moderation. See John Steele, *The I-Li*, 125.

¹³⁹ *Yili zhengyi*, 2070. Translation by John Steele, *ibid.*

I'd like to argue here that the Mawangdui painting reflects the transformation that the deceased would undergo throughout the funerary ritual and the ensuing ancestor worship ritual. The offering scene represents the first stage, during which the body was located at home, and the spirit, revived and sustained by the continuous *dian* offerings, stayed nearby. The figure of Lady Dai on the platform above represents her spirit in the period after the burial and before the *fu*-ritual. At this stage, the spirit of Lady Dai would fly out of the underground coffin, return home, bid farewell to her family members and be ready to move on to the next stage of her afterlife transformation/trip, that is, union with her ancestors.

A scene that is worth noticing and whose significance has been underestimated is the *yongzhong* bell in the Heavenly sphere and the *qing* (chime stone) above the ritual hall.¹⁴⁰ *Yongzhong* and *qing* are instruments commonly used in music performed in funerary and sacrificial rituals. Their resounding sounds are believed to be able to facilitate the communication between ancestral spirits and their descendants. According to von Falkenhausen, the sound of the bell might serve to communicate what is inscribed on it to the ancestors in Heaven.¹⁴¹ As the Wangsun Yizhe Bell (王孫遺者鐘) inscription indicates, a salient character of the bell sound is its ability to soar upward, and thus to reach the spirits above easily. The bell is also described as a vessel used to show reverence to one's ancestors and to pray for blessings from them, as well as an instrument to be

¹⁴⁰ An Zhimin, who first identifies the two objects as bell and *qing*, suggests that the bell might be used to send out warnings. He further comments that the *qing* often serves as decoration in funeral and burial context. See An Zhimin, "Changsha xin faxian de xihan bohua shitan," 45, 48. The significance of the two musical instruments in the context of ancestral worship has been barely noticed or discussed by scholars since then.

¹⁴¹ Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Ritual Music in Bronze Age China: An Archaeological Perspective*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, Cambridge, M.A., 1988: 640-41.

cherished by one's descendants for thousands of generations.¹⁴² According to this inscription, the bell is a perfect medium of communication between the deceased ancestors and the descendants along the vertical line within the same lineage.

In the painting, the image of *yongzhong* and *qing* probably represents the music played at sacrifices, which soared up to Heaven and reached the ears of Lady Dai's ancestors. The serpent-tailed figure above the *yongzhong* in Heaven can thus be interpreted as the collective representation of all the ancestors to whom the spirit of Lady Dai is returning.¹⁴³ Hearing such music, these ancestors would most likely descend to the lineage temple on the occasion of *fu* ritual. The presence of the bell as an emblem of human ritual element in Heaven may also suggest that Lady Dai had successfully joined the ranks of the ancestors there. Thereafter, when the music of ancestor worship reached her ears, she would come down to the ancestral temple to enjoy sacrifices and to bring blessings to her descendants. Therefore, the notion of gaining eternal existence through immersion with the primordial cosmic origin, as Eugene Y. Wang suggests, is hardly what the painting conveys.

The above analysis is focused on ritual elements, which has not been adequately dealt with in previous studies. But this does not rule out the fact that cosmic and spiritual

¹⁴² Constance A. Cook, *Auspicious Metals and Southern Spirits*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1990: 411-19; "Ancestor Worship during the Eastern Zhou," in *Early Chinese Religion: Shang through Han (1250BC-220AD)*, eds. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 259. For a translation of this bell inscription, see also Gilbert L. Mattos, "Eastern Zhou Bronze Inscriptions," 88-90. Von Falkenhausen suggests that most surviving inscriptions on bells feature celebration of the donor's piety and prayers for blessings from the ancestors. According to von Falkenhausen, bells are "associated almost exclusively with the ritual music played in connection with the ancestral cult of the old aristocracy." See Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Suspended Music: Chime-Bells in the Culture of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, c1993), 40, 55.

¹⁴³ Scholarly opinions on the identity of this figure vary to a great extent, including Nüwa 女媧, Fuxi 伏羲, etc. A proposition similar to ours is put forward by Loewe, that this figure represents Lady Dai at the final stage of her destination, "sloughing off her mortal coil as easily as a snake sheds the skins that he discards." See Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, 57-59; Anna Seidel, "Tokens of Immortality in Han Graves," *Numen* 29.1 (1982): 86.

elements as well as themes of immortality seeking can also be found in the painting. The legendary islands or Mount Kunlun as the routes to Heaven, as Loewe and several others suggest, are known in the Han as dwelling places for immortals, the access to which may grant one an immortal status. The figures playing the bell in Heaven are possibly immortals. These images, together with the *yuren* painted on the coffin, as will be discussed below, convey the wish that the deceased may enjoy an eternal blissful life after going through her afterlife transformation.

Cosmic-Spiritual Elements in Ritual and Tomb Context

The watery sphere below has generally been interpreted as the underworld, which, I further argue here, is portrayed as the starting point of regeneration/spiritual revival. Turtles and owls are thought to imply night, darkness and possibly death as well.¹⁴⁴ Like snake images in the Warring States burials, the snake here, being repressed under the leg of the human figure, suggests that death has been conquered. The image of copulating fish indicates reproduction and the beginning of life. The human figure has been identified as the mythic Gun 鯀.¹⁴⁵ According to the “Tianwen” 天問 section of *Chuci* 楚辭, Gun’s

¹⁴⁴ According to Wang Kunwu 王昆吾, the owl symbolizes the sun and the turtle is the carrier of the sun when it travels below the horizon. The sun travelling underground in darkness is the period of night. See Wang Kunwu, “Chu Zongmiao bihua chigui yexian tu” 楚宗廟壁畫鳴龜曳銜圖, in *Zhongguo zaoqi yishu yu zongjiao* 中國早期藝術與宗教 (Beijing: Dongfang, 1998), 41-64.

¹⁴⁵ Following Ma Yong 馬雍 and Bulling, who identify this figure as Gun. According to them, the mention of turtle and owl in combination with Gun 鯀 in the “Taiwen” 天問 of *Chuci* 楚辭 collaborates the identity of the figure as Gun. See Bulling, “The Guide of the Souls Picture,” 162; Ma Yong “Lun Changsha Mawangdui yihao Hanmu chutu bohua de mingcheng he zuoyong,” 123. Other propositions on the giant include Yuqiang 愚強 held by Shang Zhitan 商志覃; Tubo 土伯 (Earth Lord) held by Yu Weichao 俞偉超. See Shang Zhitan, “Changsha Mawangdui yihao Hanmu feiyi shishi” 長沙馬王堆一號漢墓非衣試釋, *Wenwu* 文物 1972.9: 44; Yu Weichao 俞偉超, “Zuotan Mawangdui Hanmu boshu” 座談馬王堆漢墓帛書, *Wenwu* 文物 1974.9: 61. Yuqiang is unlikely, for the depiction of Yuqianag in the “Haiwai Beijing” 海外北經 section of *Shanhaijing* as “having a human face and bird body” 人面鳥身 does not match the figure, which apparently has a human body. See Yuan Ke 袁珂 *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* 山海經校注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1980), 248. Tubo is unlikely, for it is hard to imagine why the Earth Lord occurs in the watery

corpse did not decay upon his death and was kept in the Yu 羽 Mountain for three years till his stomach was cut open and his son Boyu 伯禹 was born.¹⁴⁶ According to an account by Zichan 子產 in *Zuozhuan*, Gun was killed in the Yu Mountain and his spirit was transformed into a Yellow Bear.¹⁴⁷ Thus Gun has also been associated with regeneration since the Warring States period.

Unlike the aquatic animals underground, dragons and birds in the human sphere are portrayed as helpers for the afterlife journey. The two giant dragons may be regarded as escorts for the afterlife flight of the deceased. Birds that occur repeatedly in the human sphere may be interpreted as companions for the deceased in each step of her transformation-ascension or as harbingers for the Lady in her afterlife journey. Dragons and birds in Heaven, on the other hand, are celebrating the revival of life.

What is more, the painting depicts a cosmos in which yin and yang are in constant interaction, forming perfect harmony and balance. Horizontally, the animals and natural elements embodying yin and yang are presented in symmetrical pairs, indicating a balance

sphere and accompanied by aquatic animals. In a recent study made by Eugene Y. Wang, this figure is identified as *Taiyi*, the deity that “presides over cosmic creation and generation.” See Eugene Y. Wang, “Ascend to Heaven or Stay in the Tomb?” 49. This proposition is questionable, because this figure hardly resembles the figure drawn on the “Bibing tu” 避兵圖 (repel-weapon chart) excavated from Mawangdui Tomb 3, which occupies the central place in Heaven and is identified as *Taiyi* in the accompanying text. (It is true that both are squatting figures with parted legs, as Eugene Wang claims. However, there are several crucial differences between them that Wang fails to notice: 1) *Taiyi* in the “Bibing tu” is wearing an eye-catching headdress, whereas the underground figure is not; 2) the animal below *Taiyi* in the “Bibing tu” is a dragon (animal belonging to Heavenly sphere), whereas that below the underground figure is a snake (animal belonging to the underground world); 3) *Taiyi* in the “Bibing tu” has the Heavenly spirits of *Yushi* 雨師 and *Leigong* 雷公 on his left and right sides respectively, whereas the underground figure has two turtles on his left and right sides. What is more, it is very unlikely that *Taiyi*, which represents both an astral body and supreme Heavenly deity, would be depicted in the underground world. For further discussion on *Taiyi*, see Li Ling, “An Archaeological Study of *Taiyi* (Grand One) Worship,” 14-16, 22-24.

¹⁴⁶ Hong Xingzu 洪興祖, *Chuci buzhu* 楚辭補注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981), 89-90.

¹⁴⁷ See *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1290.

between the two. Of the two dragons framing the human sphere, the left one has blue body and the right one red body. Even the cloud pattern¹⁴⁸ beside the necks of the two dragons is depicted as half red and half blue, possibly suggesting *yinqi* and *yangqi* conjoining with each other. In the underworld below, of the pair of copulating fish, the left one has a red (the color of yang) tail and head, and the right one has a blue (the color of yin) tail and head. In Heaven above, the white moon and the female figure (possibly representing Chang'e 嫦娥)¹⁴⁹ on the left are paired with the red sun and eight red dots on the right, most likely representing the suns shot down by Yi 羿, the husband of Chang'e. Given that *yin-yang* interaction brings about the beginning of life, this left-right contrast can be interpreted as the embodiment of the cosmic process of generation.

Vertically, the snake and fish representing death in the dark underworld below are contrasted with birds and dragons representing life in the bright Heavenly sphere above. This bottom-top contrast forms a pictorial representation of the cosmic cycle from night to day, and death to regeneration. It is in such cosmic context that Lady Dai's death and potential spiritual revival take place.

As discussed above, Ma Yong and Wu Hung suggest that the painting serves as the *mingjing*, which was hung near the temporary burial pit outside the ritual hall at the

¹⁴⁸ For cloud pattern as the representation of *qi* in Eastern Zhou and Han art, see Wu Hung, "A Sanpan Shan Chariot Ornament and the Xiangrui Design in Western Han Art," *Archives of Asian Art* 37 (1984): 46-48.

¹⁴⁹ Chang'e (also named Heng'e 姮娥 in pre-Han and Han sources) is the Goddess of the moon. Her husband Yi 羿 is the hero who shot the sun in Chinese myth and folklore. Legends held that Heng'e stole the elixir (*bushiyao* 不死藥) that her husband Yi attained from Xiwangmu 西王母. Upon drinking the elixir, she fled to the moon alone and stayed there thereafter. The story of Chang'e stealing the elixir is recorded in the "Lanming" 覽冥 chapter of *Huainanzi*. The story of Yi shooting the sun can be found in the "Benjing" 本經 chapter of *Huainanzi*. See *Huainanzi jishi*, 501, 574-75.

deceased's home during the funerary ritual and eventually buried in tomb.¹⁵⁰ Michael Loewe also suggests that there might be a link between the painting prescribed in imperial funerals and the Mawangdui painting.¹⁵¹ It should be noted, though, that similar paintings were rarely found in other Han burials. Besides the paintings in Mawangdui tombs 1 and 3, there is only one more reported case of a silk painting depicting similar scenes of the watery underground, human world, and Heaven. This painting was excavated from an early Western Han tomb at Jinqushan 金雀山, near Linyi 臨沂, Shandong.¹⁵² Nonetheless, such silk paintings were seldom excavated, most likely because 1) many Han aristocratic tombs (especially the rock-cliff tombs of vassal rulers) have been robbed; 2) unlike bronze or lacquered materials, silk is not easily preserved, and thus unless the tomb is well-sealed, silk paintings might become rotten beyond recognition upon excavation. As Lai Guolong points out, the scarcity of such silk paintings “speaks to the difficulty of preservation rather than to their historical prevalence.”¹⁵³

However, without more samples and lacking in solid textual evidence, we can only surmise that it might have been a common practice to hang a banner like this beside the temporary burial site during the mourning period. If this supposition was true, the painting would have functioned to symbolically assemble to its location all the cosmic and spiritual

¹⁵⁰ See ns. 123 and 124 above.

¹⁵¹ Michael Loewe, “The Imperial Way of Death in Han China,” in *State and Court Ritual in Ancient China*, ed. Joseph P. McDermott (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 107-108.

¹⁵² Unlike the human sphere of the Mawangdui painting, which depicts scenes of sacrifice and spiritual ascension, the middle part of the Jinqushan silk painting depicts scenes of everyday life, probably taking place during the life time of the deceased. See Linyi Jinqushan Hanmu fajue zu 臨沂金雀山漢墓發掘組, “Shandong Linyi Jinqushan jiu hao Hanmu fajue jianbao” 山東臨沂金雀山 9 號漢墓發掘簡報, *Wenwu* 文物 1977.11: 25-26.

¹⁵³ See Lai Guolong, *Excavating the Afterlife: The Archaeology of Early Chinese Religion* (University of Washington Press, 2015), 116.

forces of regeneration that were presented in it. Facilitated by these forces, and sustained by the food offerings, the spirit that might have otherwise dispersed or turned into haunting ghost would revive, linger around its body, and become increasingly empowered, until it attained complete mobility when the burial ritual was completed.

The symbolic meaning of the painting in the tomb context is less hypothetical. Positioned on top of the innermost coffin upon burial, the painting works together with the paintings on the coffins to provide Lady Dai's spirit with symbolic facilities for her ensuing spiritual journey.¹⁵⁴ The route mapped out in the painting is also reiterated in the series of coffin paintings.

Lady Dai had four coffins. The innermost coffin is decorated with feathers on its surface. The second coffin, directly encasing the innermost coffin, features images of ascension: Mount Kunlun with two deer climbing on it is painted on the head panel; a jade disc with two dragons going through it is painted on the foot panel. The other outer coffin is painted with cloud pattern as metaphors of *qi*. In the clouds are over a hundred immortals and real or hybrid animals engaged in various kinds of activities. There are birds breathing bubbles, birds chasing and catching snakes, hybrids holding and devouring snakes, and hybrids taming birds and leopards, hybrids dancing or playing musical instruments, hybrids shooting arrows or fighting other animals. Many of the hybrid creatures have deer antlers¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Unlike Shang and western Zhou people, who constructed a vertical axis up and down from Earth to Heaven for the ancestral spirits, people of Warring States and Qin-Han periods, with greater geological and cosmological awareness, imagined the spirit to have to traverse vast distances across the uncivilized wild sphere before reaching its final destiny in Heaven. This is attested by the large amounts of road maps, travel tools and manuals, cosmic models and objects of exorcism buried in Warring States and Qin-Han tombs. See Lai Guolong, "Death and the Otherworldly Journey in Early China as Seen through Tomb Texts, Travel Paraphernalia, and Road Rituals," *Asia Major* 18.1 (2005): 2-44; *Excavating the Afterlife*, 161-87.

¹⁵⁵ For discussion of deer antlers as the symbol of revival and the tomb objects with deer antlers in Warring States Chu tombs, see pages 34-36.

on their head and/or feather (or long fur) at their elbows. They are sometimes considered the first images of *yuren* 羽人 (immortals with feathers at their elbows, knees or other body parts), which are abundant in Han tomb settings. On the left panel of this coffin, there is a little female figure in profile. Only upper part of her body is shown, suggesting that she has just appeared.¹⁵⁶ The outermost coffin is painted black, with no visual image on it.

Lillian Lan-ying Tseng¹⁵⁷ reads the visual program from the innermost portion outwards. According to her, feathers in the innermost coffin provide the Lady with the means to fly. Deer on the second coffin help her to climb up Mount Kunlun and dragons assist her to ascend further up to Heaven. The third coffin represents the realm of Heaven, where all the auspicious animals and immortals dwell. The female figure represents Lady Dai, who has finally arrived at Heaven.¹⁵⁸

Wu Hung and Eugene Y. Wang read the visual presentations in the opposite order. Wu Hung sees the dark outmost coffin as representing death and separation from the living world. The second coffin from outside in represents the underworld, where Lady Dai, protected by the auspicious animals, has just conquered death and come back to life. The third coffin from outside in represents the immortal land dominated by the force of life.¹⁵⁹

Eugene Y. Wang sees the animals painted on the second coffin as representing yin and yang, whose interplay sets in motion the regeneration of Lady Dai. The third coffin, with its red background, and the image of mount Kunlun and the jade disc, symbolizes the

¹⁵⁶ Following the interpretation of Sun Zuoyun 孫作雲. See Sun Zuoyun, “Mawangdui yihao Hanmu qiguanhua kaoshi” 馬王堆一號漢墓漆棺畫考釋, *Kaogu* 考古 1973.4: 247-254.

¹⁵⁷ Note that Tseng is another student of Wu Hung.

¹⁵⁸ Lillian Lan-ying Tseng, *Picturing Heaven in Early China* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 201.

¹⁵⁹ Wu Hung, “Art in Ritual Context,” 127-34.

concentration of “vapor” or “essence.” Feathers in the innermost coffin signify the *yang* gaining the upper hand, and the deceased Lady attaining “a transcendent ethereal state”.¹⁶⁰

In spite of the different methods of interpretation, these scholars agree that the coffin paintings embody a sequence of revival, route to Heaven/immortality and arrival at Heaven/attainment of immortality. Based on the above ritual analysis, I conclude here that the burial of the painting, coffin, and other grave goods is a turning point in the afterlife of the deceased. It signifies separation between the spirit and its body, and the full autonomy of the spirit. Inside the dark underground tomb, the deceased would symbolically meet his or her ancestors. Having gained the approval of the ancestors and attained all the burial provisions, the revived spirit would acquire the power to travel along the route described in the painting and the coffin paintings in a cosmos filled with all kinds of naturalistic and spiritual forces, until it achieves the status of a living ancestor when the *fu*-ritual completes.

Themes of the Mawangdui Painting Attested Elsewhere in Eastern Zhou and Han Tomb Art

The same motifs as reflected in the Mawangdui silk painting and coffin paintings recur in Eastern Zhou and Han tomb art. First, the silk painting is one of many samples bearing witness to the efforts to combine human ritual elements and cosmic, spiritual forces to bring about post-mortem regeneration. Paintings of music instruments and animals in combination have been found in several Warring States and Western Han tombs.

¹⁶⁰ Eugene Y. Wang, “Ascend to Heaven or Stay in the Tomb?,” 63-74.

The painting on a duck-shaped lacquer box from Zeng Hou Yi's tomb, for example, depicts two bells suspended on a rack and two birds holding the rack in their beaks. Between the legs of the birds is a thin rod from which two *qing*-chime stones dangle.¹⁶¹ These two bells resemble the bell depicted in the upper part of the Mawangdui painting. They all have long handles and belong to the type of bronze *yongzhong* bells, as those excavated from the central chamber of Zeng Hou Yi's tomb.¹⁶²

Another example of animals in combination with musical instruments comes from the Western Han tomb at Shazitang 砂子塘, Changsha 長沙. The painting on the head panel of its outer coffin features two phoenixes whose necks go through a huge jade disc. Each bird is holding two *qing*-chime stones in its beak. The painting on the foot panel of this coffin features a huge *qing* in the middle, with strings of beads and tassels attached to it. Below the *qing* there is a small bell. On top of the *qing*, there are two leopards, each with a winged immortal riding on it.¹⁶³

On the one hand, these images reflect how animal forces are harnessed for ritual purposes. The “Kaogongji” 考工記 chapter of *Zhouli* 周禮 divides animals into five categories, each one being suitable for a specific ritual purpose. Birds whose chirps resemble the sound of the *qing* and beasts (such as tigers and leopards) whose howls resemble the sound of the bell are said to be suitable to be used as racks for musical

¹⁶¹ *Zeng Hou Yi Mu*, 184. For detailed depiction of the duck-shaped box, see Jessica Rawson, *Mysteries of Ancient China, New Discoveries from the Early Dynasties* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), 139-40.

¹⁶² For the possible association of these bells on the painting with the *yongzhong* bells excavated from Zeng Hou Yi's tomb, see Tseng, *Picturing Heaven*, 184.

¹⁶³ Hunan sheng bowu guan 湖南省博物館, “Changsha Shazitang xihan mu fajue jianbao” 長沙砂子塘西漢墓發掘簡報, *Wenwu* 文物 1963.2: 15.

instruments.¹⁶⁴ The large number of wooden sculptures of birds-on-felines functioning as racks for musical instruments from Warring States tombs in today's Hubei and Hunan Provinces to a certain extent verifies the "Kaogongji" records. Symbolically, drawing on the animal power would help to spread the music afar, making it easier to reach the spirits in Heaven. On the other hand, these images reflect the increasingly important role that cosmic and spiritual forces play in the afterlife. Their abundance in tomb settings suggest that these spiritual helpers were considered essential for the revival of the deceased and their final arrival at Heaven.

Second, the afterlife journey depicted in Lady Dai's tomb is a common theme in Warring States and Han tomb art. The journey of the tomb occupant can be found in several Warring States silk paintings. The silk painting from Zidanku 子彈庫, for example, depicts the tomb occupant riding a boat-shaped dragon. The canopy above the head of the man and the clothes in motion all suggest that the tomb occupant is on a journey.¹⁶⁵

With brick and stone tombs becoming dominant after Mid-Western Han, tomb murals or carvings became a common type of tomb decoration. These murals or carvings often depict the tomb occupant's afterlife journey. The painting on the ceiling of Western Han tomb of Bu Qianqiu 卜千秋 at Luoyang (around 50 B.C.E.) is a typical presentation of such journey.¹⁶⁶ It depicts a parade of a group of animals and humans, all of whom are

¹⁶⁴ *Zhouli Zhushu* 周禮注疏 (Shisanjing zhushu zhengli ben 十三經注疏整理本), annotated by Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2000), 1329-32.

¹⁶⁵ Hunan sheng bowu guan 湖南省博物館, "Xin faxian de Changsha Zhanguo Chumu bohua" 新發現的長沙戰國楚墓帛畫, *Wenwu* 文物 1973.7: 3-4.

¹⁶⁶ Similar themes can be found in the ceiling painting at Qianjingtou 淺井頭 tomb and Shaogou 燒溝 Tomb 61 at Luoyang 洛陽, see Lü Jinsong 呂勁松, "Luoyang Qianjingtou Xihan bihuamu fajue jianbao" 洛陽淺井頭西漢壁畫墓發掘簡報, *Wenwu* 文物 1993.5: 12-14; Jonathan Chaves, "A Han painted tomb at Luoyang," *Artibus Asiae* 30.1 (1968): 5-27.

portrayed in profile, flying or running toward the east. At the west end of the painting, there is a snake, a sun and a half-man half-serpent figure, who is commonly agreed to be Fuxi.¹⁶⁷ The snake, the setting sun, and Fuxi turning his back toward the couple all signify death as the starting point of afterlife revival.¹⁶⁸

The parade is led by a *yuren*, followed by two dragons, two winged hybrid animals, a bird, and a tiger. At the end of the parade are the couple of tomb occupants. The husband is riding a snake and holding a bow. The wife is riding a three-headed bird and holding a three-legged bird in her arms. They are accompanied by a running fox, dancing toad and a rabbit holding *he*-grass 禾.

Between the tiger and the deceased couple, there is a female figure wearing a *sheng*-hairpiece 勝. She is in the clouds, facing the couple. The three companions of the couple, as well as the headgear of the figure reveal her as Xiwangmu 西王母 (Spirit Mother of the West).¹⁶⁹ Xiwangmu's presence in the middle of the parade indicates that her realm is a transitional stage in the deceased couple's journey. After meeting Xiwangmu, who would

¹⁶⁷ Sun Zuoyun, "Luoyang Xihan Bu Qianqiu mu bihua kaoshi" 洛陽西漢卜千秋墓壁畫考釋, *Wenwu* 文物 1977.6: 18-19.

¹⁶⁸ The snake, which is identified by He Xilin 賀西林 as Yufu 魚婦, is an image of the underground world. See He Xilin, *Gumu danqing: Handai mushi bihua de faxian yu yanjiu* 古墓丹青: 漢代墓室壁畫的發現與研究 (Xi'an: Shanxi renmin meishu, 2001), 28; According to Jean James, Fuxi turning his back toward the deceased couple signifies "the separation between the land of the living and the land of the dead". See Jean James, *A guide to the tomb and shrine art of the Han dynasty, 206B.C.-A.D.220.*, (Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 1996), 31.

¹⁶⁹ It should be noted that in pre-Han sources, Xiwangmu 西王母 was a mythical monster dwelling in caves. For a summary of her evolution from a leopard-tailed and tiger-teethed figure to a benign goddess of immortals widely culted in the Han, see Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, 88-101. Xiwangmu has been traditionally translated into Queen Mother of the West. But as Paul R. Goldin points out, the stock translation of xiwangmu as Queen Mother of the West reflects a misunderstanding of *wang* 王, which, in this context, has nothing to do with a ruler. In early Chinese texts, *wangmu* 王母 often denotes one's deceased grandmother, who should have been elevated to a grand spirit in the culture of ancestor worship. *Wang* can also be used to denote spirits in general. Thus I will adopt the Spirit Mother of the West as the translation of Xiwangmu, as Goldin suggests. See Goldin, *After Confucius*, 11-14.

probably grant them her drugs of immortality (*busiyao*), the couple, aided by the immortal and all the animals, would continue their journey to the Heavenly sphere.¹⁷⁰

It should be noted that *busiyao* apparently does not fit in the afterlife, for *busiyao* is supposed to help one avoid death, but the very burial attests that the attempt to live an endless life apparently failed. Anna Seidel has offered a highly convincing explanation for this and some other similar phenomena. According to her, a possible explanation for the occurrence of Xiwangmu's paradise, the Heavenly sphere, and the "tokens of immortality" in the Han tomb setting is the "belief that these celestial regions can be reached after passing through the disintegration of physical death."¹⁷¹ Elsewhere, Seidel confirms that the richly furnished tombs "contain clear indications of a transition to a heaven or paradise through the tomb," and that they attest to a belief in the attainment of "what one can only define with the contradictory phrase of *post-mortem* immortality."¹⁷²

In addition to a parade of animals, the afterlife journey can be represented by images of a procession of chariots, which are abundant in Han tomb art. According to Wu Hung, carriages in Han tomb settings may perform a dual function by presenting both the actual ritual events of funeral processions and imaginary tours taken by the soul from the tomb to Heaven.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ In her study of the celestial journey depicted in Han tomb carvings, Lillian Lan-ying Tseng concludes that the deceased is supposed to go to the land of immortals governed by Xiwangmu before his/her final arrival at Heaven. See Tseng, *Picturing Heaven*, 225.

¹⁷¹ See Seidel, "Tokens of Immortality," 110.

¹⁷² See Anna Seidel, "Post-mortem Immortality or: The Taoist Resurrection of the Body," in *Gilgul: Essays on Transformation, Revolution and Permanence in the History of Religions*, eds. S. Shaked, D. Shulman and G. G. Stroumsa (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987), 227. For more on "post-mortem immortality", see the discussion on pages 66-70 below.

¹⁷³ Wu Hung, "Where are They Going? Where Did They Come From? — Hearse and 'Soul-Carriage' in Han Dynasty Tomb Art," *Orientalia* 29.6 (1998): 22-31.

Third, many details depicted in the Mawangdui painting can find resonance in later Han tomb art. The “gate of Heaven,” represented by the two vertical Ts with two guarding officials, is a prevalent theme in Han art. Later images of the gate of Heaven are often represented by real gates flanked by dragons or phoenix, or by twin *que* 闕 (pillar towers or watch towers), sometimes with the characters *tianmen* 天門 inscribed between them.¹⁷⁴ The image of *tianmen* often occurs in combination with jade discs, as well as Xiwangmu and her land of immortality.¹⁷⁵

By studying the Han tomb carvings of *tianmen* in the Sichuan area in the broader tomb context, Zhao Dianzeng 趙殿增 concludes that *tianmen* is a transition between the human world and world of immortals depicted in different sections of the tombs, and the chariot processions prevalently found in these tombs function to lead the deceased to the Heavenly world through the gate of Heaven.¹⁷⁶ Lillian Lanying Tseng’s comprehensive study of various images of *tianmen* in three major areas of Han tomb carving production further confirms that the images of chariot processions (or processions of animals and immortals) and horses at the gate are intended to carry the deceased in his/her journey to Heaven.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ See Cong Dexin 叢德新 and Luo Zhihong 羅志宏, “Chongqing wushan xian dong han liujin tong paishi de faxian yu yanjiu” 重慶巫山縣東漢鑲金銅飾牌的發現與研究, *Kaogu* 考古 1998.12: 77-86; Neijiang shi wenguansuo 內江市文管所 and Jianyang xian wenhuaguan 簡陽縣文化館, “Sichuan Jianyang Guitoushan donghan yamu” 四川簡陽鬼頭山東漢崖墓, *Wenwu* 文物 1991.3: 20-25.

¹⁷⁵ See Tseng, *Picturing Heaven*, 205-33.

¹⁷⁶ Zhao Dianzeng 趙殿增 and Yuan Shuguang 袁曙光, “‘Tianmen’ kao—jianlun Sichuan Han huaxiang zhuan(shi) de zuhe yu zhuti” ‘天門’考—兼論四川漢畫像磚(石)的組合與主題, *Sichuan wenwu* 1990.6: 8-11.

¹⁷⁷ Tseng, *Picturing Heaven*, 212-13, 224-25.

The image of *yuren* 羽人, which appeared in the Mawangdui coffin painting, was also widely found in Han tomb murals, carvings and as decorations on tomb objects. These immortals, as Leslie Wallace states, were “spiritually empowered figures who provided the important function of aiding the soul of the deceased in its transcendent journey to paradise.”¹⁷⁸ Occurring often in mountainous terrain, among swirling clouds or the domain of Xiwangmu, the hybrid immortals are intended to be spiritual helpers aiding the deceased to travel across the wild uncivilized terrain. Carrying elixirs of immortality, leading the afterlife parade, driving the soul carriage, or welcoming the deceased to paradise, these immortals are apparently depicted as a friendly force to facilitate the afterlife revival and transformation.

The *yuren* image is a typical pictorial representation of *xian* 僊/仙.¹⁷⁹ Its occurrence in the tomb setting has a lot to do with the widespread belief in what Joseph Needham calls

¹⁷⁸ Leslie Wallace, “Betwixt and Between: Depictions of Immortals (*Xian*) in Eastern Han Tomb Reliefs,” *Ars Orientalis* 41 (2011): 73.

¹⁷⁹ Etymologically, *xian* 仙 means a person who lives in the mountains. *Xian* 僊 means a person with a transformed body. *Shiming* 釋名 glosses 仙 as one who does not die upon aging and further explains that *xian* is one who moves to dwell in the mountains. 老而不死曰仙。仙，遷也，遷入山也。 *Shuo wen jie zi* 說文解字 (Explaining Graphs and Explicating their Combinations) glosses 僊 as one who lives an eternal life and departs from the world 長生僊去。 See *Shuo wen jie zi zhu* 說文解字注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1963), 167; *Shiming shuzeng bu* 釋名疏證補 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1984), 96. *Xian* has been translated into either immortal or transcendent, with the former emphasizing the undying status and the latter emphasizing the transformed/indestructible body one attains. The following statement in the “Wuxing” 無形 chapter of *Lunheng* 論衡 explains why *yuren* is adopted to represent *xian*-immortals: “In representing the bodies of *xian*-immortals one gives them a plumage, and their arms are changed into wings with which they poise in the clouds. This means an extension of their lifetime. They are believed not to die for a thousand years.” 圖仙人之形，體生毛，臂變為翼，行於雲，則年增矣，千歲不死。 See Huang Hui 黃暉, *Luheng jiaoshi* 論衡較釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1990), 66. Translation (with minor moderations) see Alfred Forke, trans, *Lun-Heng Part I Philosophical Essays of Wang Ch'ung* (New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1962), 330. See also Sun Zuoyun, “Shuo yuren” 說羽人, *Shenyang bowuguan choubei weiyuanhui huikan* 瀋陽博物館籌備委員會會刊 1 (1947): 29-75.

“material immortality.”¹⁸⁰ Prayers for longevity (*shou* 壽) abound in Zhou bronze inscriptions. And the occurrence of such terms as *nanlao* 難老, to repel old age and *wusi* 毋死, not to die in bronze inscriptions from early Eastern Zhou onward attests to the beginning of the idea of physical immortality.¹⁸¹ In the Warring States period, legends held that there were drugs of immortality which could turn one into a *xian*, one who has magically transformed the human body into a refined, imperishable one.¹⁸² It was also believed that physical immortality could be achieved through macrobiotic practices such

¹⁸⁰ I.e., an endless prolongation of life with a physical form. As is distinguished from the Christian belief of an eternal life, in which the soul survives the physical death and goes to the realm of Heaven, and the body will eventually be resurrected on the judgement day, material/physical immortality indicates that the adepts attain an eternal life with a physical form. Those who have attained the *xian* status may either go through death or not (those who went through death belong to the category of *shijie xian* 尸解仙), either ascend to Heaven or dwell on earth, though often in mountainous areas far away from the civilized world. For an excellent summary of the pursuit of material immortality, see Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China, Vol. V Part II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 93-106.

¹⁸¹ See Yü Ying-Shih, “Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25 (1964-1965): 87; Du Zhengsheng 杜正勝, “Cong meishou dao changsheng: Zhongguo gudai shengming guannian de zhuanbian” 從眉壽到長生: 中國古代生命觀念的轉變 *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 66.2 (1995): 383-487.

¹⁸² The anecdote of a visitor offering the drug of immortality to the King of Chu is recorded in *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策, “You xian busi zhiyao yu Jingwang zhe” 有獻不死之藥於荆王者, and in “Shuilin, shang” 說林上 of *Han Feizi* 韓非子. In the anecdote, one of the court attendants grabbed the drug and took it. The king was infuriated and ordered to kill him. The court attendant persuaded the king by saying that if he was killed, it would prove that the drug could only bring about death, instead of immortality. By putting the king in the dilemma, the attendant helped the king to realize that the so-called drug of immortality was fake. Yet on the other hand, the story indirectly proves that the belief in drugs of immortality was popular in Warring States period. See *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 (Shanghai: Guji, 2015), 310.

as breathing meditation, gymnastics (*daoyin* 導引), sexual techniques, dietary regimens,¹⁸³ or through appealing to spiritual forces.¹⁸⁴

However, the ideal state of immortality, which bypasses death, is out of reach for the majority of people who died and were buried in tombs. Anna Seidel's study of archaeological finds indicates that Han tomb furnishings convey a longing for an afterlife in paradise through the transition of tomb, which Seidel defines as the pursuit of "*post-mortem* immortality."¹⁸⁵ The earliest textual evidence for "*post-mortem* immortality" is an anecdote concerning Emperor Wu's favorite courtier, Li Shaojun 李少君, which is recorded in the "Wudi benji" 武帝本紀 and "Fengshan shu" 封禪書 chapters of *Shiji* 史記. "Li Shaojun died of illness. The Son of Heaven thought that he was transformed into an immortal and departed thereupon" 李少君病死, 天子以為化去不死.¹⁸⁶ Significantly, Sima Qian 司馬遷 uses the seemingly contradictory phrase of *bingsi* (died of illness) and

¹⁸³ These methods are covered mainly in the medical manuscripts/texts "Quegu shiqi" 卻穀食氣, "Daoyin tu" 導引圖, "Yangsheng fang" 養生方, "Shiwen" 十問, "He Yinyang" 合陰陽, and "Tianxia zhidao tan" 天下至道談 from Mawangdui, as well as "Yinshu" 引書 from Zhangjiashan 張家山, see Donald Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature: The Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1997), 305-362, 381-422, 425-438; Zhangjiashan Hanjian zhenglizu 張家山漢簡整理組, "Zhangjiashan hanjian yinshu shiwen" 張家山漢簡《引書》釋文, *Wenwu* 1990.10: 82-86. For an early article that was not able to cover the excavated texts but may offer some helpful general information, see Meng Wentong 蒙文通, "Wan Zhou xiandao fen sanpai kao" 晚周僊道分三派考, *Guxue zhenwei* 古學甄微 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1987), 335-342.

¹⁸⁴ The way to attain material immortality through appealing to spiritual forces gained prominence during the reign of the First Thearch of Qin 秦始皇帝 and Emperor Wu of Han 漢武帝. Both had dispatched expeditions in search of *xian*-immortals and the drugs of immortality. Both had performed *feng-shan* sacrifices in the hope of attaining immortality through this means. The two emperors' craze for immortality can also be demonstrated by the large numbers of *fangshi* 方士 specialists in their court. See *Shiji* 史記 Ch.12 & Ch. 28 Wenyuange Siku quanshu 文淵閣四庫全書 V. 243 (Taipei: Shangwu, 1986), 267-68, 635-37, 642-53. See also Mark Edward Lewis, "The *Feng* and *Shan* sacrifices of Emperor Wu of the Han," in *State and Court Ritual in Ancient China*, ed. Joseph P. McDermott (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 59-65; Yü Ying-Shih, "'O Soul, Come Back!'," 388.

¹⁸⁵ See note 172 above.

¹⁸⁶ *Shiji* Ch. 12 & Ch. 28, 267, 643.

busi (did not die) in his account of what happens to Li Shaojun, lending much credence to Seidel's proposition.

Two terms that denote the attainment of post-mortem immortality are *xingjie* 形解 and *shijie* 尸解. Both are vague enough to accommodate different concepts of immortality. In the context of *Shiji*, *xingjie* denotes a means to become a *xian*-immortal, but the text offers no further clues.¹⁸⁷ In the Mawangdui medical texts, *xingjie* has been interpreted as either the liberation of spirit from the body or the refined body extricated from mortal constraints.¹⁸⁸ The term *shijie*¹⁸⁹ (traditionally translated as “corpse deliverance”) is equally confusing. The earliest textual record of *shijie* occurs in the “Daoxu” 道虛

¹⁸⁷ In the “Fengshan shu” 封禪書, the *fangshi* from Yan 燕 and Zhao 趙, who served the first Thearch of Qin, was said to “be devoted to the recipes of immortality, and able to attain “form deliverance” through dissolvment and transformation” 為方僊道, 形解銷化. Little is known as to the exact nature of *xingjie* in this context. A commentary made in the second century C.E. equals *xingjie* to *shijie*. But according to Harper, this only “reflects an opinion from a later time after *shijie* had become a major concept.” See *Shiji* ch. 28, 636; Donald Harper, “Resurrection in Warring States Popular Religion,” *Taoist Resources* 5.2 (1994): 24.

¹⁸⁸ *Xingjie* occurs in the Mawangdui medical text of “Shiwen” 十問 (Ten Questions). See *Mawangdui Han mu boshu* V. IV 馬王堆漢墓帛書 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1985), 148. Michael Puett interprets *xingjie* in the “Shiwen” as the spirit being liberated from the physical form. See Puett, *To Become a God*, 211. Harper interprets *xingjie* in the same passage as the end result of the practice of macrobiotic hygiene. He translates it as “release of the form,” suggesting that it means the perfection/refinement of the body, i.e., “the refined body is freed from constraints.” See Donald Harper, “Resurrection,” 27; *Early Chinese Medical Literature*, 398.

¹⁸⁹ There have been different hypotheses on the origin of *shijie*. Seidel thinks that the term “might have originated as the name of an exorcistic rite intended to safeguard the corpse from demon attack.” (*jiechu* 解除). See Anna Seidel, “Traces of Han Religion in Funeral Texts Found in Tombs,” in *Dōkyō to shūkyō bunka* 道教と宗教文化, ed. Akizuki Kan'ei 秋月觀英 (Tokyo: Hirakawa, 1987), 45. Donald Harper holds that the idea of physical resurrection, which already existed in the Warring States period, might have somehow inspired the concept of *shijie* current in the first century A. D. See Donald Harper, “Resurrection,” 23-24. For a comprehensive study of *shijie*, see Ursula-Angelika Cedzich, “Corpse Deliverance, Substitute Bodies, Name Change, and Feigned Death: Aspects of Metamorphosis and Immortality in Early Medieval China,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 29 (2001): 1-68. See also Robert Ford Campany, “Living off the Books: Fifty Ways to Dodge Ming in Early Medieval China,” in *The Magnitude of Ming: Command, Allotment, and Fate in Chinese Culture*, ed. Christopher Lupke (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), esp. 129-38. For a Chinese article useful for understanding the origin of *shijie*, see Han Jishao 韓吉紹 and Zhang Lujun 張魯君, “Shilun Han dai shijie xinyang de sixiang yuanqi” 試論漢代尸解信仰的思想緣起, *Zongjiao xue yanjiu* 宗教學研究 2012.2: 276-81.

chapter of *Lunheng* 論衡:¹⁹⁰ “What is this thing called *shijie*? Does it mean that the body dies and the essence and spirit depart? Or does it mean that the body does not die and is able to extricate itself from the hide and skin?” 所謂“尸解”者，何等也？謂身死精神去乎？謂身不死得免去皮膚也？¹⁹¹ This account suggests that, like *xingjie*, *shijie* could also be understood in two possible ways, as either the spirit departing from the body or a renewed body being extricated from the aged mortal form.

The two available interpretations point to a significant fact, i.e., there may exist two diametrically opposing perceptions of immortality in early China. One type is the physical immortality, as Joseph Needham and others observed. The other type, namely spiritual immortality, has been largely overlooked or even discredited as a possible concept in early China. Yet the belief in the possibility that the liberated spirit could attain an eternal existence is widely attested in texts such as *Zhuangzi* and *Huainanzi*, as Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation will demonstrate. For now, suffice it to say that the ambiguities of *xingjie* and *shijie* may reflect different perceptions of immortality in early China. It should be noted that the concept of immortality discussed in this chapter (i.e. as reflected in tomb furnishings) refers exclusively to physical immortality.

Wang Chong’s comment on the death of Li Shaojun elsewhere in “*Daoxu*” indicates that, in the first century A.D., a common standard for *shijie* is the disappearance of the corpse, as a sign of physical resurrection.¹⁹² Later, when *shijie* became a prominent

¹⁹⁰ Aimed at rejecting the possibility of becoming a *xian* through *shijie*, the “*Daoxu*” chapter of *Lunheng* provides very useful sources for understanding the concept of *shijie* in the first century A.D.. See *Lunheng jiaoshi*, 313-38, esp. 331-32.

¹⁹¹ See *Lunheng jiaoshi*, 331. Translation by Donald Harper, “Resurrection,” 25.

¹⁹² “Those who now-a-days are credited with the possession of Dao are men like Li Shao Jun. He died amongst men. His body was seen, and one knew, therefore, that his nature had been longevous. Had he dwelt

theme in the institutionalized Daoist religion, there appeared various *shijie* motifs, but the core of *shijie* still seemed to be physical resurrection. Two essential features of *shijie* phenomena are 1) the adepts went through death, be it feigned or real; 2) they eventually became *xian*-immortals, whether through ritual, legal or magical means, or self-cultivation.¹⁹³ Thus *shijie* was primarily regarded as a means to attain physical resurrection after death.

The notion of *post-mortem* physical immortality should be distinguished from the notion of afterlife in the mainstream ancestor worship culture (i.e., an afterlife in the form of disembodied spirits with consciousness, mobility, and power), which was widely attested from the Shang through the Han in oracle-bone and bronze inscriptions as well as in the classical texts.¹⁹⁴ The following comment by Wang Chong may attest to the far-reaching influence of such mainstream beliefs: “If [*shijie*] means the body dies and the Quintessential Spirit departs, then it is not different from death and every person can be called a *xian*-immortal” 如謂身死精神去乎？是與死無異，人亦仙人也。¹⁹⁵ Wang Chong, who is commonly regarded as a critic of post-mortem consciousness/existence, seems to take it for granted that death entails the spirit departing from the body. Admittedly,

in mountain-forests or gone into deserts, leaving no trace behind him, he would have died a solitary death of sickness amidst high rocks. His corpse would have been food for tigers, wolves, and foxes, but the world would again have believed him to have disappeared as a real immortal.” 今世所謂得道之人，李少君之類也。少君死於人中，人見其尸，故知少君性壽之人也。如少君處山林之中，入絕跡之野，獨病死於巖石之間，尸為虎狼狐狸之食，則世復以為真仙去矣。See *Luheng jiaoshi*, 331. Translation by Alfred Forke, *Lun-Heng Part I*, 344.

¹⁹³ For an excellent study of the variants of *shijie* motifs, See Ursula-Angelika Cedzich, “Corpse Deliverance, Substitute Bodies, Name Change, and Feigned Death,” 1-69.

¹⁹⁴ See Paul R. Goldin, “The Consciousness of the Dead as a Philosophical Problem in Ancient China,” in *The Good Life and Conceptions of Life in Early China and Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, Chinese-Western Discourse Series 3, ed. R. A. H. King (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2015), 59-92.

¹⁹⁵ See *Lunheng jiaoshi*, 331. Translation my own.

this might be Wang Chong's strategy to argue against the belief in immortality and he may not take the notion of disembodied spirit seriously. Yet his appeal to the concept of a disembodied spirit shows that this is exactly what his audience (people in the first century A.D.) generally accepted.

Another point in this argument deserves special attention. Wang Chong's logic seems to be: if all dead possess post-mortem consciousness (i.e., death does not entail the total destruction of one's person), why would one take pains to become a *xian* through *shijie*? *Xian* adepts would certainly have rejected Wang Chong's view, most likely on the following basis: being transformed into a *xian* has many advantages over becoming a disembodied spirit /ghost upon death. First, unlike the *xian*-immortal, a ghost/spirit lacks a concrete physical form and full autonomy, though it is generally believed to be able to wreak vengeance on the living through certain supernatural means, as seen in many stories in *Zuozhuan* and *Mozi*; or they could possess the living (usually mediums and impersonators) to communicate their will.¹⁹⁶ Second, ghosts and spirits depend on the living for their existence. The practice of ancestor worship indicates a reciprocal relationship: ancestors confer blessings and protection upon the descendants, yet at the same time they are fed and commemorated by their filial descendants. The series of mourning and sacrificial rituals discussed above serve precisely to revive and sustain the deceased ancestors. In contrast, the immortals are able to sustain themselves and stay outside the mainstream agricultural

¹⁹⁶ For discussion of spirit possession recorded in the *Mozi* 墨子 and the phenomenon of impersonator (*shi* 尸) speaking and consuming food on behalf of the ancestral spirits in sacrificial rituals reflected in the "Jizui" 既醉 (Mao 247) of the *Odes*, see Goldin, "The Consciousness of the Dead," 78-80; 84-85. For more on the *shi*-impersonator in the *Odes*, see, Martin Kern, "Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shijing* and the *Shangshu*," 154, 176.

and sacrificial circles. The *xian* adepts are often reclusive mountain dwellers known for their avoidance of cereals.¹⁹⁷ Above all, unlike immortals, ghosts and spirits are not guaranteed an eternal existence. Ritual specialists could perform exorcisms to kill them. Even the grand royal and aristocratic ancestors would be annihilated in due time: according to the royal ancestral commemoration system institutionalized from the Shang up through the Han, spirits would eventually dissipate as they gradually fell out of mind, until all sacrifices and commemoration of them came to an end.¹⁹⁸

The trend of immortality-seeking is an ideological and institutional reaction to mainstream ancestral worship. It interrupts the reciprocal relationship between the living and the dead. Instead of seeking blessings from ancestors, the adepts practice macrobiotic cultivation or seek esoteric regimens to acquire an undying spirit-like status. As Robert F. Campany states, “the [immortality-seeking] adepts are repeatedly portrayed as uniquely having the prerogative to command spirits and gods and to ignore their demands for sacrifice.”¹⁹⁹ What is more, according to Campany, a large number of successful *xian* adepts would potentially deprive the lineage of its dead ancestors and living descendants, and thus seriously undermine lineage solidarity and continuity.²⁰⁰ Thus it is no wonder

¹⁹⁷ Early accounts of the reclusive immortality seekers can be found in the “Biji” 必己 chapter of *Lüshi Chunqiu*, “Renjian” 人間 chapter of *Huainanzi* and “Shenwei” 慎微 chapter of *Xinyu* 新語. See *Lüshi Chunqiu xin jiaoshi*, 836-37; *Huainanzi jishi*, 1298; *Xinyu jiaozhu* 新語校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986), 93. According to these accounts, the immortality seekers dwell in mountains, forests or caves, away from the civilized world, avoiding five grains and regular clothes. Many of the immortals described in the popular hagiographies of six dynasties (some of them may contain Han sources) are mountain dwellers. See Wang Shumin 王叔岷, *Liexianzhuàn jiao jian* 列仙傳較箋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2007).

¹⁹⁸ For the institution of ancestral commemoration system in the Shang, see David Keightley, “The Making of Ancestors,” 3-63. For the history of remembering and forgetting the royal ancestors of Han, see Brashier, *Ancestral Memory in Early China*, 102-83.

¹⁹⁹ Robert F. Campany, “The Meanings of Cuisines of Transcendence in Late Classical and Early Medieval China,” *T’oung Pao* 91.1-3 (2005): 52.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

that Lu Jia 陸賈, an adamant Confucianist of early Western Han, condemned seekers of immortality for “straining their bodies and exhausting their forms, ... abandoning their parents and families ... casting aside the *Odes* and *Documents*, forsaking the treasures of Heaven and Earth” 苦身勞形...棄二親，捐骨肉...廢《詩》、《書》，背天地之寶。²⁰¹

Despite these contradictions, elements of ancestor worship and immortality seeking are seamlessly combined in Han burial practices. Or, in Wu Hung’s words, there is an “impulse to synthesize divergent beliefs into a single mortuary setting,”²⁰² an impulse that is driven by the hope that the deceased could attain the best form of afterlife through all the burial provisions. The contradiction in the concepts underlying these material elements, however, did not seem to bother people.

The Mawangdui painting is a good example of such blurred vision of afterlife, with sacrificial elements and “tokens of immortality” seamlessly combined in it. In the Heavenly sphere of the painting, there is a scene of two hybrid-immortals playing a bronze bell.²⁰³ The depiction of the bell in Heaven signifies that the deceased has turned into a living ancestor,²⁰⁴ whereas the image of immortals conveys a hope that the deceased may enjoy an endless life upon being revived.

The mural on the north wall of an Eastern Han tomb at Yingchengzi 營城子, Liaoning 遼寧, also offers a snapshot of how the tradition of ancestor worship and the trend

²⁰¹ *Xinyu jiaozhu*, 93.

²⁰² Wu Hung, “Art in Ritual Context,” 140.

²⁰³ See the discussion on pages 41 and 51.

²⁰⁴ See the discussion on pages 51-52.

of immortality seeking is combined in shaping visions of the afterlife.²⁰⁵ This mural includes two levels. The lower level is a scene of the mourning ritual. A sacrificing table with some ear-cups and a *zun* vessel is laid on the left. In the middle, two white-robed men are kneeling or bowing toward the table. They are apparently the chief mourners. A black-robed man standing beside them is most likely the ritual specialist. To the right of the three men are four *zu* 俎 (the board on which meat sacrifices are laid). The upper level depicts the tomb occupant's spiritual ascension. In the middle there is the profile of a tall man in a long robe, wearing a cap and holding a sword, and followed by his attendant. This represents the tomb occupant in his afterlife journey. To the right of this man there is a dragon. To his left, a short old man wearing a robe and hat is facing the tomb occupant, as if welcoming him to the Heavenly sphere. Behind the old man, there is a feathered immortal stepping on the clouds and a bird flying above the clouds. The old man is very likely to be a visual presentation of the ancestor welcoming his descendant. The fact that the ancestor is depicted as much smaller than the tomb occupant is consistent with the popular belief in early China that the spirit of the newly deceased is larger than that of those who died a long time ago.²⁰⁶

Like the Mawangdui painting, this mural illustrates how ritual elements and cosmic spiritual forces converged to sustain the afterlife of the deceased. Sacrifices sustained the spirit during the funeral and brought about the union between the newly deceased and his

²⁰⁵ For the depiction and discussion of this mural, see Song Yanqiu 宋艷秋, "Dalian shi yingchengzi Hanmu bei bihua 'daoyin shengtian tu' shishuo" 大連市營城子漢墓北壁畫'導引升天圖'釋說, *Liaoning shifan daxue xuebao* 36.2 (2013): 296-299.

²⁰⁶ It is recorded in the *Zuozhuan*, the second year of Duke Wen 文公二年, that ghosts of the newly deceased are larger than those who died earlier (*xingui da, gugui xiao* 新鬼大, 故鬼小). See Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 524. See also Yü Ying-Shih, "'O Soul, Come Back!'," 380.

ancestors. Dragons, birds, and the immortals represent naturalistic and spiritual forces that help to bring about post-mortem regeneration and facilitate the afterlife journey. The most noteworthy scene here, however, is the human ancestor and a *yuren* immortal staying together in the Heavenly sphere to welcome the tomb occupant. This sends a very confusing message about the fate of newly-deceased: is he going to become a powerful ancestor, an undying immortal, or both?

In spite of the huge geographic distance (the former in the south and the latter in the northeast frontier area) and time gap (the former from early Western Han and the latter dated to the mid to late Eastern Han) between the two artifacts, the Mawangdui painting and Yingchengzi mural present a noticeably similar picture of an idyllic afterlife, as well as of all the possible means to help bring about such an afterlife, indicating a roughly consistent ideology throughout the vast Han empire.²⁰⁷ The combination of sacrificial elements and “tokens of immortality,” as reflected in these two artifacts, can be supported by large amounts of archaeological evidence, which will be discussed in parts v and vi of this chapter.

Part IV Evidence that Contradicts the Notion of Afterlife as a Journey to Heaven—A Concession

Admittedly, the ideal picture of an eternal afterlife with one’s ancestors in Heaven is far from being the only notion of afterlife in the Han. As many have noticed, the two Han

²⁰⁷ The consistency between Western Han tombs of people in different regions and from different levels of social hierarchy has been discussed by Jessica Rawson, “The Eternal Palaces of the Western Han: a New View of the Universe,” *Artibus Asiae* 59.1-2 (1999): 7.

dynasties are a transitional period²⁰⁸ in which multiple, and often inconsistent, views of death and afterlife coexist. Several scholars have argued against the model of an afterlife as a journey to Heaven (or the paradise of the Spirit Mother of the West), with the underground burial as the starting point.

The prevalence of multiple-chambered tombs, with various types of daily objects, luxurious items, figurines of servants and entertainers, models of buildings, granaries, fields, stoves and wells buried in them, leads Poo Mu-chou to conclude that tombs in the Han were intended to resemble the living environment where the deceased would continue the lifestyle he enjoyed during his lifetime.²⁰⁹ Wu Hung is sometimes even more adamant in insisting that the souls are permanently locked inside the underground happy home.²¹⁰ The so-called “document informing the underground” (*gaodice* 告地策²¹¹) found in Mawangdui Tomb 3²¹² and similar texts found in several other Qin and Han tombs also seem to prove that the underground world is the destination of the deceased. These texts,

²⁰⁸ Some conceptions concerning death and the abode of the dead, such as physical resurrection and bureaucratization of the netherworld, could be traced to the Zhou, were developed, not fully, in the Han, and became predominant in sources of the Six Dynasties. For example, Seidel writes, “Such objects [coffers filled with clay replicas of gold coins found in Han tombs, which, according to sources from the sixth century AD, may serve as spirit money paid to the administrators in the netherworld] might clarify the stages of the transition from the Chou period’s “Yellow Springs” [a shadowy subterranean abode not too far beneath the earth] to the later [Six Dynasties] administration of the shades in Mount T’ai.” See Seidel, “Tokens of Immortality,” 106-111, esp. 110-11. See also Guo Jue, “Concepts of Death and the Afterlife Reflected in Newly Discovered Tomb Objects and Texts from Han China,” in *Mortality in Traditional Chinese Thought*, eds. Amy Olberding and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Albany: State University of New York Press, c2011), 95, 104-05;

²⁰⁹ Poo Mu-chou 蒲慕州, *Muzang yu sisheng* 墓葬與死生 (Taipei: Lianjing, 1993), 201.

²¹⁰ Wu Hung, “Art in Ritual Context,” 111-44.

²¹¹ Following Huang Shengzhang 黃盛璋, who names similar texts found in modern day Hubei, Hunan and Jiangsu *gaodice* 告地策. They are alternatively called *gaodishu* 告地書 by other modern archaeologists. See Huang Shengzhang, “Fawang dixia de wenshu: Gaodice” 發往地下的文書—告地策, *Wenwu tiandi* 文物天地 1993.6: 19-21; Lai Guolong, *Excavating the Afterlife*, 146.

²¹² See Hunansheng bowuguan 湖南省博物館, Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國科學院考古研究所 “Changsha Mawangdui er san hao mu fajue jianbao” 長沙馬王堆二三號漢墓發掘簡報, *Wenwu* 文物 1974.7: 43.

written in the format of legal or administrative documents, serve to notify the underground officials of the entry of the deceased, with a list of burial objects brought to the underworld together with him or her.²¹³

It might seem that the inconsistency between the “journey model” and the “home model” can be partially explained by drawing on the bifurcated soul, with the *hun* soul ascending to Heaven and the *po* soul bound in the underground.²¹⁴ However, the scenario of Han people’s conception of afterlife might be much more complicated than this. As K. E. Brashier’s study of Han thanatology shows, such a binary notion might only be scholastic construction that is even not widely attested at the elite level, and thus far from being the general belief on death.²¹⁵

There are both excavated funerary documents and received textual sources supporting the notion that a spiritual entity should be bound in the underground netherworld,²¹⁶ be it

²¹³ For studies of these texts, see Chen Zhi 陳直, “Guanyu ‘Jiangling Cheng’ gao ‘Dixia Cheng’” 關於江陵丞告地下丞, *Wenwu* 文物 1977.12: 76; Huang Shengzhang 黃盛璋, “Jiekai gaodice zhumi: Cong Yunmeng Longgang Qinmu, Hanjiang Huchang Hanmu mudu shuoqi” 揭開告地策諸迷: 從雲夢龍崗秦墓、邗江胡場漢墓木牘說起, *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 故宮文物月刊 1996.8: 124-34; Guo Jue, “Concepts of Death,” 98-103, 111-13; Yü Ying-Shih, “‘O Soul, Come Back!’,” 384-85. For an excellent summary of the nature and division of these documents, see Lai Guolong, *Excavating the Afterlife*, 146-54.

²¹⁴ Yü Ying-Shih appeals to the dualistic conception of souls, with the *hun*-soul going to Heaven and *po*-soul descending to earth, to account for the juxtaposition of evidence for the dead staying in tombs and evidence for the spirit ascending to Heaven in the Mawangdui tombs. See Yü Ying-Shih, “‘O Soul, Come Back!’,” 369-86. In a recent study, Guo Jue reviews Yü’s article and points out the inadequacy of this theory. Guo Jue also points out that any single theory or model would be inadequate to explain the composite nature of Han burial practices. See Guo Jue, “Concepts of Death,” 85-105.

²¹⁵ K. E. Brashier, “Han Thanatology and the Division of Souls,” *Early China* 21 (1996): 127-135.

²¹⁶ Brashier, “Han Thanatology,” 136-38.

the tomb, the Yellow Springs,²¹⁷ Dark Palace,²¹⁸ or the Sacred Mountains.²¹⁹ (The fact that this entity can be termed *hun*, *po*, or *hunpo* proves the inadequacy of the Heavenly *hun* and earth-bound *po* dualism.)²²⁰ These abodes of the dead were highly bureaucratized places administered by officials in charge of the dead and their communications with the living world.²²¹

The construction of an underworld where the dead were confined and controlled might be stimulated by an attempt to ward off the evil influences of death and malicious ghosts.²²² In the Warring States period, how to deal with death pollution became an increasing concern because of the many cases of violent unnatural death caused by constant wars and social upheaval. The daybooks (*rishu* 日書) excavated at Shuihudi 睡虎地 record various means of exorcism to eliminate the harm done by haunting ghosts and

²¹⁷ The Yellow Spring (*huangquan* 黃泉) has been considered the whereabouts of the dead since Eastern Zhou. For a comprehensive account of the *locus classicus* of the phrase and its connotation in various Warring States and Han texts, see Guo Jue, “Concepts of Death,” 109-10.

²¹⁸ The Dark Palace (*youdu* 幽都) occurs in “Zhaohun” 招魂 of *Chuci* as an unpleasant underground world for the soul of the dead. See David Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u: The Songs of the South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 105.

²¹⁹ In Eastern Han sources, including several tomb-quelling documents (*zhenmuwen* 鎮墓文, which is a name given by modern archaeologists) and the received text of *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通議, Mount Tai 泰山 or the Five Sacred Mountains (*wuyue* 五嶽) are mentioned as the netherworld where the dead were governed by Lord Mount Tai (*Taishan fujun* 泰山府君) or the Yellow God (*Huangshen* 黃神). For discussion of Mount Tai and its two adjacent small mountains of *Haoli* 蒿裏 and *Liangfu* 梁父 as the abodes of the dead, see Yü Ying-shih, *Donghan Shengsi Guan* 東漢生死觀, trans. Hou Xudong 侯旭東 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2005), 90-91; Poo Mu-chou, *Muzang yu sisheng* 墓葬與死生, 207-12.

²²⁰ In the 1980s, Seidel noticed that in the tomb-quelling documents and other funerary texts, “souls do not separate at death, but *hun* and *po* together descend into the mountain netherworld.” See Seidel, “Traces of Han Religion,” 30.

²²¹ For discussion of the bureaucratization of Han underworld, see Seidel, “Traces of Han Religion,” 28-30, 42-47; Lai Guolong, *Excavating the Afterlife*, 154-56.

²²² In his study on the prayer for war dead excavated from Warring States Chu 楚 tomb of Jiudian 九店, Lai Guolong proposes that the purpose to collect the war dead to the wild mountains in the northwest of the universe and have them governed by a spirit official appointed by the High God (*Di* 帝) is probably to put these potentially malicious ghosts under control. See Lai Guolong, “Death and the Otherworldly Journey,” 13. For an extended discussion of the fear and treatment of violent death in Eastern Zhou period, see Lai Guolong, *Excavating the Afterlife*, 25-54.

demons.²²³ The wish to separate the dead and the living is also constantly revealed in the Han tomb-quelling documents, which urge the dead to enter the sphere where they belong and never come back to interact with the living.²²⁴ All these phenomena form a sharp contrast with the Han official ritual records and sacrificial hymns, in which the spirit (*shen* 神) possesses full mobility to travel down from Heaven to temples and tombs in order to enjoy sacrifices.²²⁵

Considering all the above-mentioned aspects, it seems better to attribute the conflicting beliefs and practices behind the journey-model and tomb-model to the bifurcated attitudes toward death and the afterlife, rather than to the notion of a bifurcated soul. On the one hand, Han people hoped that the dead could ascend to the Heavenly paradise to live a permanent joyful afterlife while sending down blessings to the descendants. Hence there were efforts to revive and sustain the spirit, as reflected in *Yili* and the Mawangdui painting, discussed above. On the other hand, there was uncertainty about the domain of death, of which no one had any empirical experience, anxiety over the fate of the dead, as well as fear of evil influences from them. Hence all the efforts discussed in this part were made to separate the dead from the living and to immure the dead inside the tomb or the underworld.

²²³ For detailed account of the exorcism of ghosts in the daybook, see Poo Mu-chou, *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 79-88.

²²⁴ For discussion on the separation between the living and the dead as reflected in Han land contracts and tomb quelling documents, see Terry Kleeman, "Land Contracts and Related Documents," in *Chūgoku no Shūkyō, Shisō to Kagaku*, eds. Makio Ryōkai Hakase Shōju Kinen Ronshū (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1984), 18, 23; Seidel, "Traces of Han Religion," 31. According to von Falkenhausen, the communality between the dead and the living, as reflected in Shang and Western Zhou ritual and burial practices, was partially replaced by the notion that dead and the living belonged to different sphere and thus should be treated distinctively in Warring States period, when large amounts of *mingqi* 明器 specially made for the dead were buried in tombs. For discussion on the occurrence of *mingqi* in Eastern Zhou and the discontinuity between the living and the dead, see von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 300-306.

²²⁵ Brashier, *Ancestral Memory in Early China*, 155-57.

Nonetheless, the desire to turn the dead into benevolent ancestors interacting with and conferring good fortune upon the living generally outweighed the fear that they would become malevolent ghosts haunting and harming the living, especially among the elite.²²⁶ Expressions by filial sons from Zhou to Han show a consistent desire for the dead ancestors to come back to interact with them and to partake in sacrifices.²²⁷ “Gao Wu Yi” 告武夷, an excavated manuscript from Jiudian 九店 containing a prayer for the war dead, offers a salient example of people’s longing to attract the dead rather than to repel them. In this prayer, even those who died violently and were collected in the northwestern wilderness are urged to come back home to eat sacrifices that their families have prepared for them.²²⁸ Thus the methods to confine the dead or separate them from the living might have been regarded as a last resort if the chances of sustaining them as ancestors were deemed precarious.

Therefore, burial provisions should be regarded primarily as a means to help elevate the spirits to the Heavenly sphere, instead of locking them in the underground world. *Gaodice*, which were traditionally regarded as evidence for the “home model,” can be

²²⁶ Poo Mu-chou has suggested that people from different social strata may have different attitudes toward the afterlife. The upper class tend to be concerned with providing their deceased family members with all the possible pleasures that they could enjoy in the afterlife. While the lower class are more likely to be concerned with the elimination of the tax, corvee labor and culpability the deceased are likely to be subject to in the underground. The elite's tombs often contain large numbers of figurines of servants and entertainers. While the lead man (*qianren* 鉛人) that can take the place of the deceased to serve corvee labor are often found in tombs of the lower class. See Poo Mu-chou, *Muzang yu sisheng*, 218-225.

²²⁷ This desire can be corroborated by the ritual canons and numerous historical records.

²²⁸ For more discussion on the manuscripts, see Hubeisheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 湖北省文物考古研究所 and Beijing daxue zhongwenxi 北京大學中文系, eds. *Jiudian Chujian* 九店楚簡 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2000), 13, 50; Donald Harper 夏德安 “Zhanguo shidai bingsizhe de daoci” 戰國時代兵死者的禱辭, *Jianbo yanjiu yicong* 簡帛研究議叢 ed. Zhongguo shehui kexueyan jianbo yanjiu zhongxin 中國社會科學院簡帛研究中心 2 (1998): 30-42; Chou Feng-Wu 周鳳五, “Jiudian Chujian ‘Gao Wu Yi’ chongtan” 九店楚簡<告武夷>重探, *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 72.4 (2001): 943-45.

reinterpreted as a means to facilitate the transition from the underworld to Heaven. *Gaodice* serve to notify the officials of the underworld bureaucracy that the deceased has been provided with a proper burial. These officials are in turn associated with, and most likely under the reign of celestial deities. In the “Yueyu” 越語 section of *Guoyu* 國語, the August Heavenly God 皇天 and Lord of Earth 後土 are listed in parallel.²²⁹ In Han tomb-quelling documents, it is often a celestial deity (be it Envoy of the Heavenly Thearch 天帝使者, the Yellow Thearch 黃帝 or the Yellow God, Lord of the Northern Dipper 黃神北斗主) who made proclamations to the underworld bureaucracy.²³⁰ The Six Dynasties text *Bowu zhi* 博物誌 asserts that the Lord of Mount Tai, the deity in charge of the netherworld, is the grandson of the Heavenly Thearch.²³¹ Thus it is very likely that underworld officials were considered responsible for examining the burials and reporting to higher-ranking celestial deities, who would decide on the final destiny of the deceased.

Therefore, with the bureaucratization of the underworld, burial took on a new function. In addition to appeasing the ancestral spirits, it served to inform the underworld officials of the post-mortem destiny merited by the deceased. It is hard to imagine how ancestral spirits might cooperate or negotiate with underworld officials to work out the fate of the deceased. But there is little doubt that the dead would travel on bifurcated paths:

²²⁹ “Whoever among the posterity dared to encroach on the land of Fan Li would not be able to live to the end of his life in the state of Yue. The August Heavenly God and Lord of Earth, as well as the Lords of Land of Four Directions shall all testify to this [contract].” 後世子孫，有敢侵蠹之地者，使無終沒于越國，皇天後土、四鄉地主正之。See Xu Yuanhao 徐元誥 *Guoyu jijie* 國語集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2002), 589.

²³⁰ See Kleeman, “Land Contracts and Related Documents,” 5.

²³¹ “Lord Mount Tai is also said to be the Heavenly Grandson, meaning it is the Grandson of the Heavenly Thearch and responsible for calling the souls of the dead.” 泰山 一曰天孫，言為天帝孫也。主召人魂魄。See Zhang Hua 張華, *Bowuzhi* 博物志, *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 v. 1696 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936), 3.

benevolent spirits were to be elevated to the rank of ancestors; *shijie* adepts were to be transformed into immortals, whereas potentially malicious ghosts were to be confined in the underworld.

Part V The Making of Ancestors as Shown in Han Tomb Furnishings

The widespread practice of ancestral sacrifices from royal families down to the local elites and commoners is attested not only in textual records, but also in the burial provisions found in many tombs. Vestiges of ritual offerings have been found in both huge rock-cut tombs and medium to small brick tombs across the vast Han territory.

The Western Han tomb of Liu Sheng 劉勝 at Mancheng 滿城, Hebei, contains references to ritual sacrifices both in the front ritual hall and rear burial chamber. Like many royal tombs, Liu Sheng's tomb was constructed as an underground palace along a horizontal axis, with a long tomb access, storage rooms, a stable, a ritual hall, a burial chamber and a toilet. According to the reconstruction of the ritual hall, two tents with empty chairs were set in the middle, surrounded by rows of bronze and ceramic sacrificing vessels, figurines and lights.²³²

In the mid-section of the burial chamber, right in front of the coffin, there were bronze table decorations, indicating that a lacquered table (the wooden part of which was completely decayed upon excavation) was originally set there. Several bronze *fu* 釜 (cooking vessel), a bronze *ding* and ladle, the remnants of a lacquered *zun* 樽 (wine container) and a lacquered dish (with the skeleton of a piglet in it) were found with the

²³² Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國社會科學院考古研究所, *Mancheng Hanmu fajue baogao* 滿城漢墓發掘報告 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1980), 29.

table decorations. It is very likely that these vessels were originally laid on the table.²³³ This typical scene of sacrifice is the first known case of ritual offering made in the burial chamber, beside the coffin.

The tradition of setting underground offerings probably started in the late Warring States. The east chamber of Baoshan Tomb 2 at Jingmen 荊門, Hubei, for example, was filled with a large number of food and wine containers, including bronze tripods (*ding* 鼎), jars (*fou* 缶), boxes (*he* 盒), drink containers (*hu* 壺), pottery jars (*taoguan* 陶罐) bamboo baskets (*zhusi* 竹筥), etc. Various types of animal bones, grain, vegetables, and fruit were found in many of these containers. Mixed with them were many vessels for food and drink, including wooden sacrificial tables (*an* 案), sacrificial boards (*zu* 俎), ear-cups, ladles, etc.²³⁴ The occurrence of wooden sculptures of servants and musical instruments in the same chamber further supports the idea that an underground banquet was going on.

According to Constance A. Cook, the banquet scene represents a symbolic feast held by the spirit of the tomb occupant to entertain his ancestors.²³⁵ This interpretation is consistent with Hayashi's proposal that bronze ritual vessels were buried in tombs so that the deceased could continue to perform his ritual duties to his ancestors in the afterlife.²³⁶

Alain Thote suggests that the ritual vessels and the vestiges of offerings in them found in Zhou tombs might indicate that family members sacrificed to the deceased at the burial

²³³ Ibid., 30-32

²³⁴ Hubeisheng Jingsha tielu kaogudui 湖北省荊沙鐵路考古隊, *Baoshan Chu mu* 包山楚墓 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1991), 69-74.

²³⁵ Cook, *Death in Ancient China*, 55.

²³⁶ See ns. 46 and 47 above.

site.²³⁷ Huang Xiaofen 黃曉芬 distinguishes the newly-occurring lacquered vessels, such as the sacrificial boards, tables, ear-cups, which she calls “items of offering and sacrifice” (*gongxian jisi pin* 供獻祭祀品), from the traditional bronze ritual vessels.²³⁸ She suggests that the occurrence of *gongxian jisi pin* in late Warring States Chu tombs indicates the beginning of a new trend of making underground sacrifices to the spirit of the tomb occupant.²³⁹ Without corroboration from textual records or further archaeological evidence, the nature of the underground feast in Eastern Zhou period remains hypothetical. However, it seems safe to conclude that the practice of offering food in Chu tombs might be a precursor to the widespread underground sacrifices in the Han.

It is generally agreed that, in Han tombs, offerings were made to the tomb occupants. Lai Guolong identifies the space framed by a painted lacquered screen in the northern compartment of Mawangdui Tomb 1 as the spirit seat.²⁴⁰ The juxtaposition of sacrificial vessels, food offerings and the personal belongings of Lady Dai in this compartment further suggests that an underground sacrifice was made for the tomb occupant. Wu Hung identifies the empty chairs in the central hall of Liu Sheng’s tomb as the spiritual seats of the deceased couple. According to him, these chairs represent the loci for the spirits of Liu

²³⁷ Thote, “Shang and Zhou Funeral Practices,” 124.

²³⁸ Huang Xiaofen divides the burial objects in Zhou and Han tombs into six general types: 1) ritual vessels, 2) daily objects 3) weapons and charioteer gears 4) tomb quelling objects 5) sacrificial vessels and offerings 6) *mingqi* objects made specially for the burial. Ritual vessels are different from the type five sacrificial objects in that the former include traditional bronze food, liquor and water containers, as well as musical instruments, while the latter includes lacquered sacrificial boards, tables, ear-cups, most of which contain animal bones or vestiges of fruits, vegetables or grains. See Huang Xiaofen, *Hanmu de kaoguxue yanjiu* 漢墓的考古學研究 (Changsha: Yuelu, 2003), 203-204.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 241.

²⁴⁰ Lai Guolong, *Excavating the Afterlife*, 84-85.

Sheng and his wife in the underground palace, like the tent-covered seats or the tablets that locate the spirits in the lineage temple.²⁴¹

Unlike the front-hall sacrifice that has caught much attention, offerings at the rear burial chamber are scarcely noticed or discussed. Yet this interesting phenomenon is worthy of attention. If we perceive the interment of the coffin and grave goods as the turning point from funerary ritual to ancestral worship ritual, sacrifices laid out in the rear chamber would naturally be seen as a continuation of the series of *dian* offerings made near the body at *bingong* 殯宮, a temporary site specially set for the body, located where the deceased lived during his life time. Sacrifices in the front hall, on the other hand, are the starting point of the *ji* offerings at the ancestral temple after the burial.²⁴² Therefore, not only is the front hall transformed into an underground temple for the spirit of the deceased, but the burial chamber is also transformed into an underground *bingong*. In this sense, the underground tomb itself materializes the process of ancestor-making and ancestor worship, with a sequence of ritual procedures taking place in different periods and at different locations compressed into one single scene.

Scenes of underground sacrifices are also seen in many medium or small brick tombs. The brick tomb at Zhangwan 張灣, Lingbao 靈寶, Henan 河南 Province, contained sacrificial vessels in both the front chamber and the burial chamber.²⁴³ In many

²⁴¹ See Wu Hung, "A Deity Without Form: The Earliest Representation of Laozi and the Concept of *Wei* in Chinese Ritual Art," *Orientalism* 34.4 (2002): 38-45; Huang Xiaofen, *Hanmu de kaoguxue yanjiu*, 215.

²⁴² It might be tempting to draw on the *hun-po* dualism to account for such a phenomenon, arguing that offerings in the burial chamber cater to the bodily-soul of *po* and offerings in the front hall cater to the Heavenly-soul of *hun*. The weakness of this interpretation is that it cannot explain why the sacrifice to the *hun*-soul, which was supposed to have flied upward to Heaven, should be set in the underground tomb.

²⁴³ Yang Yubin 杨育彬, Zhang Changsen 张长森 and Zhao Qingyun 赵青云, "Lingbao Zhangwan Hanmu" 靈寶張灣漢墓, *Wenwu* 文物 1975.11: 75-93.

other cases, sacrifices were laid out only in a special ritual space separated from the coffin. The Eastern Han tomb at Qilihe 七里河, near Luoyang 洛陽, is a medium-sized one with a typical sacrificial space. An elevated brick platform was built in the western part of its front chamber. On the platform there was a low table with several ear-cups, trays, and a goat's head. Some bowls, chopsticks, and a knife were set beside the table. To the east of the table there were drums, pottery figurines of dancers, acrobats, and musicians. To the west of the table there was an empty space, which was identified as the spirit seat of the tomb occupant.²⁴⁴

A similar raised platform was found in a small brick tomb of the Wang Mang period in Wunüzhong 五女塚, Luoyang. In this tomb, the ritual space was separated from the coffin by a short brick wall. On the platform there was a pottery table, on which fifteen ear-cups with remnants of chicken and fish in them were set in three rows.²⁴⁵

Examples of in-the-tomb sacrifices abound in the central plain. The excavation report of over forty Eastern Han tombs at Shan 陝 County, Henan, indicates that setting sacrificial vessels in the tomb was common practice.²⁴⁶ Of the 225 Han tombs at Shaogou 燒溝, Luoyang,²⁴⁷ thirty-six have yielded pottery sacrificial tables (*an* 案), most of which had animal skeletons and food containers, including pottery ear-cups, ladles (*shao* 勺), or

²⁴⁴ Luoyang bowuguan 洛陽博物館 “Luoyang Jianxi Qilihe Donghan mu fajue jianbao” 洛陽澗西七裏河東漢墓發掘簡報, *Kaogu* 考古 1975.2: 116-123. See also Lukas Nickel, “Some Han Dynasty Paintings in the British Museum,” *Artibus Asiae* 60.1 (2000): 73.

²⁴⁵ Luoyangshi dier wenwu kaogudui 洛陽市第二文物考古隊, “Luoyang Wunüzhong Xinmang mu fajue jianbao” 洛陽五女塚新莽墓發掘簡報, *Wenwu* 文物 1995.11: 4-19.

²⁴⁶ Huanghe shuiku kaogu gongzuodui 黃河水庫考古工作隊, “Henan Shanxian Liujiacqu Hanmu” 河南陝縣劉家渠漢墓, *kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 1965.1: 119.

²⁴⁷ Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國科學院考古研究所, *Luoyang Shaogou Hanmu* 洛陽燒溝漢墓 (Beijing: Kexue, 1959), 45-46.

plates (*pan* 盤), on or beside them.²⁴⁸ The excavation report divides these tombs into five categories according to their structure. In tombs of the fourth category (double vault-roofed tombs), sacrificial vessels become the predominant type of burial objects, suggesting that the practice of in-the-tomb sacrifice was in full bloom.²⁴⁹

In Eastern Han, the practice of underground offerings also spread to the frontier areas inhabited by other ethnic groups. For example, a medium-sized tomb at Zhaotong 昭通, Yunnan 雲南, has yielded many sacrificial vessels, including a bronze table with ear-cups (two of which contained chicken and fish bones), chopsticks, additional chicken bones and chestnuts, as well as a pair of bronze *fu* 釜, one with chicken bones and another with sheep bones inside.²⁵⁰

As a prominent case of in-the-tomb sacrifice, the entire front hall of Shaogou Tomb 1026, was made into a ritual space. A lacquered sacrificial table was set at the center. On or beside the table, there were ear-cups, a chicken skeleton, and remnants of animal bones. Other than some iron tools at the corner, no burial objects were found in the front hall.²⁵¹ To a certain extent, this tomb is reminiscent of typical Western Zhou burials, whose public space between the outer chamber and the coffin contained primarily bronze ritual vessels. Despite the great difference in tomb structure, and in the quality and type of tomb objects between this Eastern Han tomb and its Western Zhou counterparts, ancestor worship remained the primary concern, as seen in the tomb furnishings.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 137-38.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 64.

²⁵⁰ Yunnansheng wenwu gongzuodui 雲南省文物工作隊, “Yunnan Zhaotong Guijiayuanzi Donghan mu fajue” 雲南昭通桂家院子東漢墓發掘, *Kaogu* 考古 1962.8: 396.

²⁵¹ *Luoyang Shaogou Hanmu*, 45-47.

Changes in tomb structure may also attest to the rising trend of in-the-tomb sacrifices. Zhou Ligang's study of Eastern Han Xuecun 薛村 tombs at Yingyang 滎陽 shows that, in the Eastern Han, the construction of an exterior ramp (*xiepo mudao* 斜坡墓道) beside the vertical pit (*shujing mudao* 豎井墓道) became prevalent in Henan area. Zhou Ligang suggests that the exterior ramp was constructed to facilitate making offerings in the grave chambers.²⁵² Among the Xuecun tombs, there are also cases of “a secondary ramp built after the graves had been sealed,” which, according to Zhou, attests to the phenomenon of “reentering the chamber to make offerings after the funeral.”²⁵³ Such actions adopted by the filial sons indicate a blurring between the living and the dead, and fly in the face of the assertion made in some tomb-quelling documents of the same period that the living and the dead belong to different realms and shall be eternally separated.²⁵⁴

As the underground chambers were turned into sacrificial space, a series of transformations also took place in above-ground structures. From the Warring States period onward, huge tumuli with building complexes on top were constructed in the mausoleums of vassal kings. Following the precedent of the Lishan Mausoleum of the First Emperor of Qin, complicated above-ground structures called “bedchambers” (*qin* 寢) and “rest palaces” (*biandian* 便殿) were erected in Western Han royal funeral parks where the costumes and other paraphernalia of the deceased emperor were placed and daily offerings of food were

²⁵² Zhou Ligang 周立剛 and Chu Xiaolong 楚小龍 “Shilun Handai zhongxiaoxing dongshimu de mudao—yi Henan Yingyang Xuecun Hanmu wei li” 試論漢代中小型洞室墓的墓道—以河南滎陽薛村漢墓為例, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 中原文物 2011.5: 40-45, esp. 42.

²⁵³ Zhou Ligang, “Obscuring the Line between the Living and the Dead: Mortuary Activities inside the Grave Chambers of the Eastern Han Dynasty, China” *Asian Perspectives* 54.2 (2015), 245-48, 252; Zhou Ligang and Chu Xiaolong, “Shilun Handai zhongxiaoxing dongshimu de mudao,” 43.

²⁵⁴ See n. 224 above.

provided. In the meantime, temples (*miao* 廟) for individual emperors, wherein their spirit tablets were positioned and sacrificial rituals were periodically held, were constructed near the funeral parks.²⁵⁵ The costumes of the deceased emperor were conveyed along a road from *qin* to *miao* when sacrificial rituals were held in the latter.²⁵⁶ Costumes thus took on a symbolic meaning and became the representation of the spirit in the *qin* hall, assuming a function similar to that of the spirit tablet in the *miao*.

In Eastern Han, the tomb became a new center of ancestor worship. At the imperial level, the founding emperor of Eastern Han initiated the tradition of holding official sacrificial rituals at grave parks (*shangling* 上陵), which was made a norm by his successor, Emperor Ming.²⁵⁷ At the local level, shrines (the Wu Liang 武梁 Shrine and Xiaotangshan 孝堂山 Shrine being the most noted) were built and steles were erected at the gravesites of elite families to commemorate the dead. Tomb visits made by friends and colleagues of the deceased also became commonplace.²⁵⁸ Apparently, the tomb had turned into an important location for commemorating the dead.

The prevalence of tomb sacrifice has prompted Wu Hung to argue for a “shift of the religious center from temple to tomb” from Eastern Zhou to Han.²⁵⁹ But Mark Edward

²⁵⁵ This is recorded in the “Wei Xian zhuan” 韋賢傳 chapter of *Hanshu* 漢書: “In the capital, from Emperor Gaozu down to Emperor Xuan, temples [for individual emperors and their fathers] were erected near the funeral parks. *Qin*-bedchambers and *biandian*-rest palaces were also built in the funeral parks. Daily sacrifices were made at *qin*, monthly sacrifices at the temple and seasonal sacrifices at *biandian*.” 京師自高祖下至宣帝，與太上皇、悼皇考各自居陵旁立廟。...又有寢、便殿。日祭於寢，月祭於廟，時祭於便殿。 See *Hanshu* 漢書 Ch. 73, 621.

²⁵⁶ See Yang Kuan 楊寬, *Zhongguo gudai lingqin zhidu shi* 中國古代陵寢制度史 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2003), 18-25.

²⁵⁷ Yang Kuan, *Zhongguo gudai lingqin zhidu shi*, 213-14; Wu Hung, “From Temple to Tomb,” 102-03.

²⁵⁸ Li Rusen 李如森, *Handai sangzang lisu* 漢代喪葬禮俗 (Shenyang: Shenyang, 2003), 63.

²⁵⁹ Wu Hung, “From Temple to Tomb,” 78.

Lewis points out that in the Han “temple sacrifices continued to be central to imperial ancestor worship, and temple sacrifices also continued to be made by powerful lineages.” Lewis suggests that tomb became an adjunct location of ancestor worship ritual along with the lineage temple.²⁶⁰

Vestiges of underground offerings and evidence for tomb sacrifices indicate that great importance was attached to ancestor worship in the Han. Interestingly, they also indicate a vague and even confusing notion of the nature and location of the spirits: have they ascended to the Heavenly paradise above, or do they dwell in the underground tomb below, in the *qin* hall or the shrine in the graveyard, in the individual’s temple attached to the grave, or in the group lineage temple in the city? Facilities and offerings were made for them everywhere, and they could not be easily located anywhere.

Part VI The Pursuit of “Post-mortem Immortality” as Attested in Liu Sheng’s Tomb and Other Han Tomb Furnishings

Like the Mawangdui painting, which offers a seamless combination of ritual elements and cosmic-spiritual forces, Liu Sheng’s tomb not only acts as a monument of ancestor worship, but also attests to the influence of immortality seeking in shaping Han people’s understanding of afterlife.

As one of the earliest and most remarkable mountain censers,²⁶¹ the incense burner (*boshanlu* 博山爐) excavated from Liu Sheng’s tomb is an iconographical representation

²⁶⁰ Lewis, *The Construction of Space*, 126. For more on the “tomb-temple dualism” in the Han, see Lai Guolong, *Excavating the Afterlife*, 64.

²⁶¹ A large number of bronze and ceramic mountain-shaped incense burners have been excavated from tombs throughout the Han administrative units and in some peripheral areas of the empire such as modern provinces

of the legendary isles of the immortals on the East Sea. Supported by a base and stem composed of three uprising dragons, the bowl of Liu Sheng's burner features a gold inlaid cloud and wave pattern. Encircled by the bowl, its mountain-shaped lid contains peaks and ravines with exotic plants, animals, and human figures. When the incense is burned, smoke emerging from the apertures on the lid produce an effect of the sacred mountain "surrounded by clouds and mist."²⁶²

The mountain image, the most important iconographic feature of the incense burner, is closely related to the trend of immortality-seeking. Mountains are considered as links between the human world and the spiritual sphere, and the intermediate zone between Heaven and Earth. Sacrifices on Mount Tai 泰 are recorded in the *Analects* and several other ritual canons.²⁶³ Confucius' comment, "the wise find joy in water; the benevolent find joy in mountains" 知者樂水，仁者樂山，²⁶⁴ further illustrates the privileged position of mountains. According to the "Dixing" 墜形 chapter of *Huainanzi*, ascending Mount Kunlun and the mythical peaks above it will lead to release from the confinement of the mortal body and an increase in spiritual power.²⁶⁵ Mountains are also believed to be the

of Guangxi 廣西 and Liaoning 遼寧. For a comprehensive study of Boshanlu 博山爐, see Susan N. Erickson, "Boshanlu: Mountain Censers of the Western Han Period: A Typological and Iconological Analysis," *Archives of Asian Art* 45 (1992): 6-28.

²⁶² Erickson, "Boshanlu: Mountain Censers of the Western Han Period," 8.

²⁶³ See Cheng Shude 程樹德, *Lunyu jishi* 論語集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1990), 151. See also Lewis, "The *Feng* and *Shan* sacrifices," 55-56.

²⁶⁴ See *Lunyu jishi*, 408, D. C. Lau, trans. *The Analects* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1983), 53.

²⁶⁵ "If one climbs to a height double that of the Kunlun Mountains, [that peak] is called Cool Wind Mountain. If one climbs it, one will not die. If one climbs to a height that is doubled again, [that peak] is called Hanging Gardens. If one ascends it, one will gain supernatural power and be able to control the wind and the rain. If one climbs to a height that is doubled yet again, it reaches up to Heaven itself. If one mounts to there, one will become a spirit. It is called the abode of the Supreme Thearch." 崑侖之丘，或上倍之，是謂涼風之山，登之而不死。或上倍之，是謂懸圃，登之乃靈，能使風雨。或上倍之，乃維上天，登之乃神，是謂太帝之居。 See *Huainanzi jishi*, 328; John S. Major, Sarah Queen, Andrew Meyer, and Harold Roth, trans.,

dwelling place of deities and *xian*-immortals. In addition, the natural resources of elixirs (herbs and minerals) are supposedly located in sacred mountains.²⁶⁶

The association of the incense burner with immortality-seeking lies not only in its iconographic features but also in its practical function. The burning of incense creates a mystical atmosphere and therefore is considered an effective means to attract the spirits.

Two other types of Han burial objects similar to the mountain censer are the bronze or ceramic money tree (Money tree, which is commonly used by art historians, is the counterpart for *qianshu* 錢樹 or *yaoqianshu* 搖錢樹, a term coined by modern Chinese archaeologists for the sculptures with metal leaves described below.) and multiple-branched tree lamp. Like the mountain image, the tree image is also considered as a bridge between Heaven and Earth. In the “Dixing” 墜形 chapter of *Huainanzi*, the mythical *jian* 建 tree is described as the central cosmic pillar by which the gods ascend to and descend from Heaven.²⁶⁷

Money trees are frequently found in Eastern Han tombs in the southwest.²⁶⁸ A typical money tree contains a ceramic base, a bronze tree trunk, and leaves with various decorations on them. Sculptures of mountains (which resemble the lid of a *boshanlu*) or

The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China, Translations from the Asian Classics (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 157.

²⁶⁶ See Stephen Little and Shawn Eichman eds., *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 148; James Robson, *Power of Place: The Religious Landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue 南嶽) in Medieval China (Harvard East Asian Monographs)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 22.

²⁶⁷ “Located in Duguang, the Jian tree is where the myriad gods ascend [to Heaven] and descend [from Heaven]” 建木在都廣，眾帝所自上下。See *Huainanzi jishi*, 328.

²⁶⁸ For a comprehensive study of money trees, see He Zhiguo 何志國, *Han Wei yaoqianshu chubu yanjiu* 漢魏搖錢樹初步研究 (Beijing: Kexue, 2007).

animals (sometimes with human riders) often serve as the base of money tree.²⁶⁹ Popular patterns of decorations on the leaves include 1) Xiwangmu and her world of immortality 2) a dragon going through a jade disc, with an immortal mounted on the neck of the dragon²⁷⁰ 3) immortals riding deer,²⁷¹ all of which are stock images for spiritual ascension and immortality-seeking.

Lamps started to be part of the common inventory of grave goods from the fourth century B.C.E.²⁷² Animal-shaped lamps or multiple-branched lamps were frequently found in Warring States and Han tombs.²⁷³ Lamps buried in the tomb, which most likely belong to the ritual paraphernalia, could also embody the natural spiritual forces that help to bring about the afterlife revival. As an essential ritual object, lamps played an important role in the mourning-ritual and funerary procession. In “Lighting the Way in the Afterlife,” Lai Guolong discusses the function of lamps in marking the transition of the deceased from the host of the house to a guest coming to enjoy food offerings. He also argues that lights “were placed in tombs with the expectation that the deceased would use them to light his way through the gloomy and dangerous world of the afterlife.”²⁷⁴

The iconographic feature of many lamps renders them an ideal token of immortality in the tomb. The most remarkable of these lamps is a multiple-branched ceramic tree lamp

²⁶⁹ For discussion of the animal or rider-on-animal motif, see Susan N. Erickson, “Money Trees of the Eastern Han Dynasty,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (Östasiatiska Museet)* 66 (1994): 9-15.

²⁷⁰ He Zhiguo, *Han Wei yaoqianshu chubu yanjiu*, 133.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁷² Lai Guolong, “Lighting the Way in the Afterlife: Bronze Lamps in Warring States Tombs,” *Orientalia* 33.4 (2002): 24.

²⁷³ Ye Xiaoyan 葉小燕, “Zhanguo Qin-Han de deng ji youguan wenti” 戰國秦漢的燈及有關問題, *Wenwu* 文物 1983.7: 78-86.

²⁷⁴ Lai Guolong, “Lighting the Way in the Afterlife,” 21.

excavated from the aforementioned Eastern Han tomb at Qilihe. This lamp bears many images of spiritual flight, including winged immortals and birds resting on the branches, winged dragons (with immortal riders on them) rising from the edge of the lamp basin, and a large flying bird on the top of the trunk. The image of the cicada, a symbol of transformation and rebirth, is presented at multiple places. On the mountain-shaped lamp base, there are sculptures of cicadas perching on sprouts. There are also cicadas resting on the trunk and branches.²⁷⁵ As previously discussed, this tomb features a special ritual space where food offerings were laid.²⁷⁶ Thus, with sacrifices and the token of immortality positioned side by side, this tomb, like Liu Sheng's tomb, offers an excellent example of how ancestor worship and immortality-seeking work together to shape the Han burial practices.

Liu Sheng's burial also witnesses the attempt to help the deceased achieve "*post-mortem* immortality" by placing jade objects around the body and using jade decorations in the tomb. Liu Sheng's body was covered with several jade products: jade stoppers plugged the nine orifices; eighteen jade discs were piled above and below the torso; the body, thus protected, was then wrapped in a jade suit²⁷⁷ at the outermost layer. On the basis of the configuration of Liu Sheng's jade suit, especially the facial features and the genital sheath it possesses, Wu Hung suggests that, in spite of its name, the jade suit is

²⁷⁵ For detailed description of the lamp, see Rawson, *Mysteries of Ancient China*, 191.

²⁷⁶ See n. 244 above.

²⁷⁷ The jade suit found in Liu Sheng's tomb is the most complete and well-preserved one among over thirty similar suits found in Han royal and aristocratic tombs. See Jeffery Kao and Yang Zuosheng, "Jade Suits and Han Archaeology," *Archaeology*, 1986.6: 30-37; Lu Zhaoyin 盧兆蔭, "Shilun lianghan de yuyi" 試論兩漢的玉衣, *Kaogu* 考古 1981.1: 51-58. Jessica Rawson holds that the occurrence of jade suits and terracotta warriors in tombs signifies a fundamental transformation in early Chinese burial practices from Zhou to Qin and Han. See Rawson, "The Eternal Palaces of the Western Han," 5.

actually intended to be a “jade body.” This “jade body,” together with the sculpture of a jade figure positioned between the inner and outer coffin, serves to symbolically replace the transient corporeal form of life with an incorruptible body of eternal existence.²⁷⁸

The occurrence of burial jades can be traced at least to the Neolithic period.²⁷⁹ From the Liangzhu 良渚 and Longshan 龍山 Cultures through the Shang and Western Zhou, jade ornaments and ritual objects buried in tombs served as markers of wealth and social status, symbols of political power, or as a medium of communication between humans and the spiritual world.²⁸⁰ Jade facial and body coverings first occurred in Western Zhou elite burials and were commonly found in Eastern Zhou tombs. Jade mouth pieces and other jade plugs in the openings of the body were not unusual in Zhou tombs either. Jade discs (*bi* 璧) were also hung at the headboard of the inner coffin or positioned between the headboards of the inner and outer coffins in some Warring States Chu tombs.²⁸¹ Jade discs served as an essential ritual vessel in sacrifices to Heaven and the spirits from Western Zhou onward.²⁸² Commonly associated with Heaven, probably because of their circular

²⁷⁸ Wu Hung, “The Prince of Jade Revisited: The Material Symbolism of Jade as Observed in the Mancheng Tombs,” in *Chinese Jades, Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia no. 18*, ed. Rosemary E. Scott (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 1997), 162-65.

²⁷⁹ See Wang Zunguo 汪遵國, “Liangzhu wenhua yu lianzang shulue” 良渚文化玉殮葬述略, *Wenwu* 文物 1984.2: 23-36.

²⁸⁰ For jade as a medium for controlling the spiritual world, See Jessica Rawson, “Commanding the Spirits: Control through Bronze and Jade,” *Orientalia* 29. 2 (1998): 3-45.

²⁸¹ For a list of Chu tombs with jade discs at the headboards of the coffin, see Huang Fengchun 黃鳳春 “Shilun Baoshan 2-hao Chumu shiguan lianbi zhidu” 試論包山 2 號楚墓飾棺連璧制度, *Kaogu* 考古 2001.11: 60-62.

²⁸² In the “Jinteng” 金滕 chapter of *Shangshu* 尚書, the Duke of Zhou 周公 holds a *bi*-disc to communicate with his ancestors’ spirits. See *Shangshu Zhengyi* (Shisanjing zhushu Beida zhengliben) 尚書正義 (十三經注疏北大整理本) (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2000), 393-95.

shape,²⁸³ the jade discs positioned in the tomb possibly serve to help the soul travel outside the coffin as well as to facilitate the deceased's afterlife ascension to Heaven.²⁸⁴ The association between jade disc and Heaven can also be attested by the image of jade discs occurring frequently at the gate of Heaven in Han pictorial arts.²⁸⁵

In the Han dynasty, the use of burial jades reached its peak, and the association between jade burial objects and immortality-seeking can be clearly established. In addition to the occurrence of jade suits in aristocratic burials, other trends that developed in the Han include: 1) The use of jade orifice plugs became common and complete sets of jade plugs for the nine orifices started to appear. 2) The shape of jade mouth amulets was somewhat fixed: cicada-shaped mouthpieces became predominant²⁸⁶ 3) jade *bi* discs were placed around the body or between the inner and outer coffins. Images of jade discs, especially those with animals going through them, were also frequently found in Han tomb paintings.²⁸⁷

²⁸³ According to the “Ruizhi” 瑞贄 chapter of *Baihutong* 白虎通, “the *bi* disc is circular outside, with a square hole inside. The circle models Heaven and the square models Earth.” 璧者，方中圓外...內方象地，外圓象天也。See Chen Li 陳立, *Baihutong shu zheng* 白虎通疏證 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1994), 351.

²⁸⁴ Based on his observation that jade discs hanging on the coffin boards at Baoshan Tomb 2 were in the similar position as windows were painted on Zeng Hou Yi's coffin boards, Huang Fengchun suggests that that jade discs decorated on the coffin boards in Warring States Chu burials may also symbolize passage for souls, like windows and doors on Zeng Hou Yi's coffin boards. However, no one knows for sure what the exact function of such jade discs is and Huang's proposition remains highly hypothetical. See Huang Fengchun “Shilun Baoshan 2-hao Chumu,” 63.

²⁸⁵ See Chen Jiangfeng 陳江風 “Han huaxiang zhong de yubi yu sangzang guannian” 漢畫像中的玉璧與喪葬觀念, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 中原文物 1994.4: 67-70.

²⁸⁶ Zheng Jianming 鄭建國 and He Yuanqing 何元慶, “Zhongguo gudai de yuchan” 中國古代的玉禪, *Jiangnan kaogu* 江漢考古 98.1 (2006): 44-50.

²⁸⁷ E.g., dragons going through jade disc in the Mawangdui silk painting and coffin painting, birds going through jade disc in the Shazitang coffin painting, see ns. 111 and 163.

As Wu Hung and K. E. Brashier suggest, the quality of endurance makes jade an ideal symbol of longevity and immortality.²⁸⁸ Long regarded as the concentration of cosmic vital essence and food of the immortals,²⁸⁹ jade was seen as an effective means not only of prolonging one's life²⁹⁰ but also of preserving the body. According to the “Benghong” 崩薨 chapter of *Baihutong*, when the Son of Heaven dies, jade should be put in his mouth so as to protect his body.²⁹¹ The following description of the atrocities of the Red Eyebrows in the first century C.E. further demonstrates people's belief in the function of jade to preserve the body: “Among the bodies dug out by the bandits, those wearing jade suits all looked fresh as if alive” 凡賊所發，有玉匣殮者率皆如生。²⁹² Ge Hong's 葛洪 remark in the fourth century that gold and jade inserted into the nine orifices prevent the

²⁸⁸ K. E. Brashier, “Longevity like Metal and Stone: the Role of the Mirror in Han Burials,” *T'oung Pao* 81 (1995): 217-221; Wu Hung, “The Prince of Jade Revisited,” 159.

²⁸⁹ The following inscriptions on Han bronze mirrors are two examples of jade being the ideal food for immortals: “Above there are immortals who never know the old age. They drink from the jade spring when thirsty and eat the jujube when hungry” 上有仙人不知老，渴飲玉泉飢食棗。See Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu kao (xiuding ben)*, 318; “You will eat jade flowers and drink from sweet springs. As extravagant pleasures become laid out, you will encounter divine immortals. You will nurture long life and cause your longevity to reach ten-thousand years. Reverting, you will return to the origin. May [the mirror] be passed down to your children and grandchildren.” 食玉英兮飲醴泉，倡樂陳兮見神仙，葆長命兮壽萬年，周復始兮傳子孫。See Brashier, “Longevity like Metal and Stone,” 224.

²⁹⁰ Alchemic intake of pulverized jade was popular among the practitioners of the macrobiotic cultivation. See Elizabeth Childs-Johnson “Jade as Confucian Ideal, Immortal Cloak, and Medium for the Metamorphic Fetal Pose,” in *Enduring Art of Jade Age China Volume II* (NY: Throckmorton Fine Art, 2002), 15-24.

²⁹¹ “Why are things stuffed in the mouth of the [dead] body? Because when the person lives, he takes in food. Now that one is dead, the living would not like to leave his mouth empty. Therefore the mouth [of the dead] is stuffed with things. Why jewels are used as mouth pieces? Because they can help [to protect] the body. Therefore, when the Son of Heaven died, jade was used as the mouth piece.” 所以有飯含何？緣生食今死不欲虛其口，故含。用珠寶物何也？有益死者形體，故天子飯以玉。See *Baihutong shu zheng*, 548.

²⁹² *Hou han shu Vol.II* 後漢書卷二 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1965), 483-84. See also Timoteus Pokora, “‘Living Corpses’ in Early Mediaeval China—Sources and Opinions,” in *Religion und Philosophie in Ostasien: Festschrift für Hans Steininger zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Gert Naundorf et al. (Würzburg: Königshausen + Neumann, 1985), 343-57.

body from decay 金玉在九竅，則死人為之不朽²⁹³ also attests to the widespread practice of putting jade plugs in the bodily orifices in the previous Han dynasty.

Another case in point is Yang Wangsun's 楊王孫 (140-90 B.C.E.) objection to the burial traditions of his time. In favor of quick decay of the body (*suxiu* 速朽), Yang Wangsun rejected the burial pattern popular among the Han elites in this way: "With jade and stone in the mouth, one is not able to join [the cycle of] transformation as one wishes. Shriveled into a dried corpse, the body cannot return to earth and stay in its true house, until the nested coffins decay a thousand years later" 口含玉石，欲化不得，鬱為枯腊，千載之後，棺槨朽腐，乃得歸土，就其真宅。²⁹⁴ For Yang Wangsun, the use of burial jades artificially slows down the process of decomposition and prevents the dead body from rejoining the natural cycle of life and death in a timely manner, which he believes to be the proper destiny of man. Yang's argument obliquely indicates his belief in the preservative quality of jade.

Inserting jade plugs into the nine orifices is also regarded as a means of maintaining vitality inside the body. The "Jingshen" 精神 chapter of *Huainanzi* depicts the orifices as "the doors and windows for the spiritual essence"²⁹⁵ to go in and out of the body. In life, the leaking of vital essence harms one's health and intellectual powers. Upon death, the vital essence leaves the body. Therefore, it is believed that blocking the "doors" of vital essence with the immortal stone of jade can help to maintain the vital essence, or at least some sparks of life inside the body.

²⁹³ Wang Ming 王明, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱朴子內篇校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986), 51.

²⁹⁴ *Hanshu* Ch. 67, 522.

²⁹⁵ *Huainanzi jishi*, 512.

What motivated Han elites' efforts to preserve the body is probably the vague hope that the dead, with a well-preserved body, could be resurrected and upon resurrection, even being able to attain immortal existence. Joseph Needham sees physical preservation as the precondition of immortality in China. Pointing out that the bodies of those who were thought to have been restored through *shijie* were described as being fresh as if alive, Needham sees corpse deliverance as directly linked to the attempts to preserve the corpse from decay.²⁹⁶ Bodily preservation is certainly relevant to *shijie* accounts in which the corpse disappeared and a personal item, such as a staff or sword, remained in the coffin. In some *shijie* stories in which the protagonist regained life despite the fact that the body has decayed,²⁹⁷ the use of jade burial objects was still relevant. In such cases, the key to resurrection is seen as keeping vitality intact inside the body, which jade orifice plugs were believed to be able to help to achieve.

In "Did the Early Chinese Preserve Corpses," Miranda Brown challenged the idea that corpse preservation was widely practiced in early China. She argues that preserving the body could not be a primary concern among the Han elites, for the method of treating the dead body in accordance with the standard mourning ritual would cause the body to decay quickly.²⁹⁸ Nevertheless, I think many Han elites did make an attempt to preserve the body, or at least to keep the vitality inside the body, though in most cases their methods were not as effective as they believed. However, Brown's observation that following the

²⁹⁶ Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization* Vol.5 Part 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 294-304. For more on *shijie*, see the discussion on pages 67-69.

²⁹⁷ For this type of *shijie* account, see Ursula-Angelika Cedzich, "Corpse Deliverance, Substitute Bodies, Name Change, and Feigned Death," 22.

²⁹⁸ See Miranda Brown "Did the Early Chinese Preserve Corpses: A Reconsideration of Elite Conceptions of Death," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4 (2002): 201-23.

standard funerary ritual may expedite the decay of the corpse is significant in that it indirectly attests to the tension between ancestor-making and immortality-seeking in shaping the Han funeral and burial practices. To preserve the body so as to increase the chance of attaining post-mortem immortality, it is better to bury the corpse as quickly as possible; yet to transform the deceased into a living ancestor, it is better to follow the standard mourning ritual.²⁹⁹ Unfortunately, little is known about how such tension was reconciled in each individual burial. Yet we do know that not all funerals and burials strictly followed standard rituals, and not all people desired physical immortality. The most famous case in point is the aforementioned Yang Wangsun, a maverick who rejected both traditions by leaving a will requiring a “naked burial” *luozang* 羸葬.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ Admitted there was not a single set of mourning ritual throughout the Han empire. But the official ritual stipulations generally demand a very long period of lapse between the death and burial of high-ranking elites, leading to a quick decay of the body.

³⁰⁰ See n. 294 above. According to his biography in the *Hanshu*, Yang Wangsun left a will to his son, saying, “I wish to be buried nakedly so as to be able to return to the Genuine. You shall not disobey my will. Upon my death, [you shall] wrap my body with a cloth sack, dig a seven-*chi*-deep [hole] and put it in. When the body is buried in the hole, take off the sack from the side of my feet so that my body can stay close to the earth.” 吾欲羸葬，以反吾真，必亡易吾意。死則為布囊盛尸，入地七尺，既下，從足引脫其囊，以身親土。 What underlies Yang Wangsun’s request for a “naked burial” is a notion of life and death distinct from the ancestor-making or immortality-seeking discussed above. According to this ideology, the spirit would separate from the body upon death, with each returning to “the Genuine” 精神離形，各歸其真。 From the context we can tell what Yang Wangsun means by the body returning to the Genuine refers to the quick decay of the body and its joining the recycling at the material level. I speculate that the spirit returning to the Genuine possibly suggests its returning to the cosmic origin. This ideology will be discussed in great detail in chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2 MIND-BODY UNION AND TWO STRANDS OF SELF-CULTIVATION

This chapter discusses the textual issue of “Neiye” 內業 and compares the “Neiye” self-cultivation with the moral cultivation in *Mencius*. We hypothesize that “Neiye” has layers of material. The earliest layer is a self-cultivation manual which has many commonalities with the doctrines of Gaozi as reflected in *Mencius*. Although “Neiye” and *Mencius* have similar outlooks on the mind-body relationship, both supporting a mind-body union, their methods of self-cultivation vary to a great extent. In “Neiye,” apophatic meditation is adopted to empty one’s *xin* 心, heart/mind, of its normal contents so as to leave space for the cosmic vital essence to be in charge. In contrast, Mencian self-cultivation involves persistent conduct of moral acts out of proper motivations rooted in the *xin*, which leads to a gradual increase in moral stamina (*qi*), enabling one to hold fast to virtue in increasingly challenging situations, till one can exhibit virtue in any situation. Unlike “Neiye,” which holds that one’s *xin* needs to be corrected (*zheng* 正) and stabilized (*ding* 定), *Mencius* portrays the *xin* as being equipped with all the potentials necessary for one to do good and thus Mencian self-cultivation is aimed primarily at preserving the *xin* (*cun qi xin* 存其心) and tapping its resources to the full extent (*jin xin* 盡心). Finally, this chapter offers an alternative explanation of Gaozi’s theory that “Benevolence is internal and Righteousness external,” in the light of Mencius’ criticism of the Gaozi-“Neiye” practices of *zhengxin* 正心 and *waiyi* 外義.

Part I The Textual Issue of “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia” Reexamined

“Neiye” 內業, Inner Cultivation and “Xinshu xia” 心術下, Techniques of the Mind II, which has a lot in parallel with “Neiye,” have been traditionally regarded as early “Daoist”³⁰¹ texts. Chinese Scholars generally label them as texts produced by the “Daoists” at the Jixia Academy 稷下道家.³⁰² W. Allyn Rickett and Harold D. Roth have offered detailed descriptions of the two texts, especially “Neiye.” W. Allyn Rickett holds that it belongs to a sect of Daoism distinct from *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, a sect that does not reject the Confucian virtues of *ren* 仁, *yi* 義 and *li* 禮.³⁰³ Roth holds it to be one of the foundational texts of Daoism³⁰⁴ and “the earliest extant statement of the one common

³⁰¹ In spite of Nathan Sivin’s warning against the perplexities and ambiguities caused by the careless use of this term, and in spite of the fact that there was probably not “a self-conscious ‘school’ of philosophy” that called itself “Daoism” in the Warring States period, the term Daoism (*daojia* 道家) is still widely used to refer to some Warring States and Han texts. Scholars generally admit that “Daoism” is a term given retrospectively to a group of writings sharing common themes and adopting similar terminologies. These texts generally agree on the *dao* as the origin of the world and a universally applicable principle, and *de* 德, power attained through union with the *dao*, and the principle of *wuwei* 無為, non-action as the single-most important guide for human actions. Also frequently covered in the so-called “Daoist” texts is the practice of breathing meditation aimed at union with the *dao*. The term *daojia* 道家 was first mentioned by Sima Tan 司馬談 of early Western Han. Yet it should be noted that what Sima Tan describes as the characteristics of *daojia* are similar to what scholars currently call the syncretist Daoism, but vary greatly from the ideologies in *Zhuangzi* and *Daodejing*, which are conventionally regarded as the foundational texts of Daoism. As will be discussed below, given this general agreement, it is still problematic to adopt the term Daoism to refer to this group of texts. See Nathan Sivin, “On the Word ‘Taoist’ as a Source of Perplexity: With Special Reference to the Relations of Science and Religion in Traditional China,” *History of Religions* 17 (1978): 303-330. This article is reprinted in Nathan Sivin, *Medicine, philosophy and religion in ancient China* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), 303-330; Harold D. Roth, “Redaction Criticism and the Early History of Taoism” *Early China* 19 (1994): 9-10. For more discussion on the problems that might be caused by the term, see the discussion on pages 120-121 below.

³⁰² See Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Guanzi Sipian Quanshi: Jixia Daojia daibiaozuo jixi* 管子四篇詮釋: 稷下道家代表作解析 (Beijing, Shangwu, 2006), 17; Hu Jiacong 胡家聰, *Guanzi Xiantan* 管子新探 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 1995), 2, 20-23.

³⁰³ W. Allyn Rickett, trans. *Guanzi: Political, Economic and Philosophical Essays from Early China: a Study and Translation V.2* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 21.

³⁰⁴ Harold D. Roth, “The Laozi in the Context of Early Daoist Mystical Praxis” in *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of Laozi*, eds. Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Philip J. Evanhoe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 61-64.

mystic practice that ties together the three phases of early Taoism.”³⁰⁵ A. C. Graham, however, held that “Neiye” may belong to “an early phase before the breach between Confucianism and Taoism is opened.”³⁰⁶

Building on Graham’s observation, we propose that “Neiye” consists of layers of material; its earliest layer, much of which in parallel with parts of “Xinshu, xia,” is a self-cultivation manual having commonalities with several Confucian classics. In order to prove this hypothesis, we will first offer a close examination of how “Neiye” overlaps with “Xinshu, xia.”

The parallelism between the two texts has been widely noticed. As Roth points out, about sixty-five percent of “Xinshu, xia” is virtually identical with the middle part of “Neiye.”³⁰⁷ Listed below are the common themes reflected in the parallel statements in “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia.”

1) On the importance of adjusting (*zheng* 正) the body and stilling (*jing* 靜) [or refining (*jing* 精)] the mind as a means to attain power and virtue.

“Xinshu, xia”

形不正者德不來，中不精者心不治。正形飾德，萬物畢得。

When your body is not rectified,

The inner power will not come.

When you are not refined within,

Your mind will not be well ordered.

Rectify your body, cultivate the inner power,

Then you will attain the myriad things.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Harold D. Roth, *Original Tao: Inward Training and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 8.

³⁰⁶ Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 100.

³⁰⁷ Harold D. Roth, “Psychology and Self-Cultivation in Early Taoist Thought,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 51. 2 (1991), 625.

³⁰⁸ Li Xiangfeng 黎翔鳳, *Guanzi jiaozhu* 管子校注 (Beijing, Zhonghua, 2004), 37.778. Translation based on Roth, *Original Tao*, 66-67.

“Neiye”

形不正，德不來。中不靜，心不治。正形攝德，天仁地義，則淫然而自至。

When your body is not rectified,

The inner power will not come.

When you are not tranquil within,

Your mind will not be well ordered.

Rectify your body, assist the inner power,

Then the benevolence of Heaven and righteousness of Earth,

Will gradually come on its own.³⁰⁹

2) Not letting sense organs be disturbed by external objects, and not letting the mind be disturbed by sense organs.

“Xinshu, xia”

無以物亂官，毋以官亂心，此之謂內德。

Do not disrupt your senses with external things,

Do not disrupt your mind with your senses.

This is called “Inner Power.”³¹⁰

“Neiye”

不以物亂官，不以官亂心，是謂中得。

To not disrupt your senses with external things,

To not disrupt your mind with your senses:

This is called “grasping it within you.”³¹¹

3) On the importance of moderating sense perceptions and unifying and concentrating the mind.

“Xinshu, xia”

專於意，一於心，耳目端，知遠之證。

Concentrate your powers of awareness and focus your mind,

Correctly use your ears and eyes,

And you may come to know the far as if it were near.³¹²

“Neiye”

一意搏心，耳目不淫，雖遠若近。

Unify your awareness,

Concentrate your mind,

³⁰⁹ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 937, Roth, *Original Tao*, 66-67. Translation with moderations.

³¹⁰ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37.778. Translation by Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 30.

³¹¹ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 937-38, Roth, *Original Tao*, 68-69.

³¹² *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37.780, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 60. Translation with moderation.

Do not overstimulate your eyes and ears,
Then even the far-off will seem close at hand. ³¹³

4) On the function of music and ritual [and the *Odes*] in moderating emotions and the importance of maintaining inner tranquility and exhibiting reverence in one's countenance and demeanor.

“Xinshu, xia”

凡民之生也，必以正平，所以失之者，必以喜樂哀怒。節怒莫若樂，節樂莫若禮，守禮莫若敬。外敬而內靜者，必反其性。

It is ever so that the life of people is certain to depend on good judgment and equanimity. Its loss is certain to be because of joy and happiness, sadness and anger. For moderating anger, nothing is better than music. For moderating music, nothing is better than rules of propriety. For preserving rules of propriety, nothing is better than respect. Those who are outwardly respectful and inwardly quiescent are certain to revert to their true natures.³¹⁴

“Neiye”

凡人之生也，必以平正；所以失之，必以喜怒哀憂，是故止怒莫若詩，去憂莫若樂，節樂莫若禮，守禮莫若敬，守敬莫若靜，內靜外敬，能反其性，性將大定。

It is ever so that man's life

Is certain to depend on equanimity and good judgment,

Its loss is certain to be because of joy and anger, sorrow and suffering.

Thus, for arresting anger, nothing is better than poetry.

For getting rid of sorrow, nothing is better than music.

For moderating music, nothing is better than rules of propriety.

For preserving rules of propriety, nothing is better than respect.

For preserving respect, nothing is better than quiescence.

Inwardly quiescent and outwardly respectful,

You may revert to your true nature,

And it will become completely stable. ³¹⁵

In sum, the above statements delineate methods of self-cultivation, prescribing the maintenance of the correct posture [very likely both in quietude and in motion], and a tranquil and concentrated state of mind, not letting sensual perception disturb one's inner tranquility. The key concepts in this practice include *zheng* 正, to adjust/rectify, *jing* 靜, to

³¹³ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.943, Roth, *Original Tao*, 82-83. Translation with moderation.

³¹⁴ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37.786, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 63.

³¹⁵ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.947, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 52-53. Translation with moderations.

maintain tranquility, *jing* 敬, to exhibit reverence, *zhuan* 專/*yi* 一, to unify and concentrate, and *zhi* 治, to order.

The results of these practices are also described in both “*Neiye*” and “*Xinshu, xia*.” Through the above methods of cultivation, the adept can gain a holistic benefit, including a strong body, sharp senses, an in-depth perception of cosmic secrets, and daily renewed *de*-power.

“*Xinshu, xia*”

人能正靜者，筋肋而骨強。能戴大圓者體乎大方。鏡大清者視乎大明。正靜不失，日新其德，昭知天下，通於四極。

When a man is capable of remaining correct and quiescent,
His muscles become firm and his bones sturdy.
Being able to wear on his head the Great Circle, he rests his body on the Great Square.
Finding his reflection in the Great Purity, he is comparable to the great luminaries.
Since good judgment and quiescence are never lost, he daily renews his Power.
He is brilliant in knowing the entire world and penetrates its four extremities. ³¹⁶

“*Neiye*”

人能正靜，皮膚裕寬，耳目聰明，筋信而骨強，乃能戴大圓，而履大方。鑒於大清，視於大明。敬慎無忒，日新其德；徧知天下，窮於四極

If people can be adjusted and tranquil,
Their skin will be ample and smooth,
Their ears and eyes will be acute and clear,
Their muscles will be supple and their bones will be strong.
They will then be able to hold up the Great Circle [of the heavens],
And tread firmly over the Great Square [of the earth].
They will mirror things with great purity.
And will perceive things with great clarity.
Be reverent, cautious and do not waver,
And you will daily renew your inner power.
Thoroughly understand all under the heavens,
And exhaust everything within the Four Directions. ³¹⁷

³¹⁶ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37.783, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 62.

³¹⁷ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.939, Roth, *Original Tao*, 76. Translation with moderations.

In addition, both texts posit that intensive concentration of the mind can lead to the attainment of divine knowledge, which was traditionally reserved for religious experts through divination.

“Xinshu, xia”

能專乎？能一乎？能毋卜筮而知凶吉乎？能止乎？能已乎？能毋問於人，而自得之於己乎？故曰，思之，思之不得，鬼神教之。非鬼神之力也，其精氣之極也。

Can you concentrate? Can you be unified? Without resorting to tortoise shell and milfoil, can you foretell bad fortune from good? Can you stop? Can you cease? Rather than asking others, can you find it within yourself? Therefore it is said, “Think about it.” If you think about it, but you still can’t comprehend it, ghosts and spirits will provide you with instruction. It is not due to the power of the ghosts and spirits, but to the utmost refinement of your essential vital breath.³¹⁸

“Neiye”

能搏乎？能一乎？能無卜筮而知吉凶乎？能止乎？能已乎？能勿求諸人而得之己乎？思之思之，又重思之。思之而不通，鬼神將通之，非鬼神之力也，精氣之極也。

Can you concentrate? Can you be unified?

Can you not resort to divining by tortoise or milfoil,

Yet know bad and good fortune?

Can you stop? Can you cease?

Can you not seek it in others,

Yet attain it within yourself?

You think and think about it

And think still further about it.

You think, yet still cannot penetrate it.

While the ghostly and numinous will penetrate it,

It is not due to the power of the ghostly and numinous,

But to the utmost refinement of your essential vital breath. ³¹⁹

Two other important themes reflected in the parallel material are:

1) One’s external demeanor and countenance are determined by and indicative of one’s internal spiritual state.

“Xinshu, xia”

金心在中不可匿。外見於形容，可知於顏色。善氣迎人，親如弟兄。惡氣迎人，害於戈兵。不言之言，聞於雷鼓。金心之形，明於日月，察於父母。

³¹⁸ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37.780, Rickett, *Guanzi* V.2, 60. Translation with moderations.

³¹⁹ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.943, Roth, *Original Tao*, 82-83.

Since a complete mind lies within, it cannot be concealed. Outwardly it can be observed from his bearing and ascertained from his complexion.

If you greet men with good will, they will become dearer than brothers.

If you greet them with ill will, they will become more harmful than weapons.

The unspoken word may be more easily heard than a thunder clap.

The manifestations of a complete mind are more illuminating than the sun and moon, more discerning than a father or mother.³²⁰

“Neiye”

全心在中，不可蔽匿。和於形容，見於膚色。善氣迎人，親於弟兄。惡氣迎人，害於戎兵。不言之聲，疾於雷鼓。心氣之形，明於日月，察於父母。

When there is a mind that is unimpaired within you,
It cannot be hidden.

It will be known in your countenance,
And seen in your skin color.

If with this good flow of *qi* you encounter others,
They will be kinder to you than your own brethren.

But if with a bad flow of *qi* you encounter others,
They will harm you with their weapons.

[This is because] the wordless pronouncement
Is more rapid than the drumming of thunder.

The perceptible form of the mind and its *qi*,
Is brighter than the sun and moon,

And more apparent than the concern of parents.³²¹

2) The importance of *yan* 言, “word.”³²² The word is seen to possess a magic power. If one can grasp the one word which unravels the cosmic secrets, one will then attain the power to vanquish the entire world.

³²⁰ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37.783, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 62.

³²¹ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.943, Roth, *Original Tao*, 80-81. Translation with moderations.

³²² *Yan* is alternatively translated into maxim. In the *Analects*, *yan* means a terse saying that either epitomizes the fundamental truth or offers essential guidance for one’s life or governing affairs. E.g., *Analects* 2.2 says, “The Odes are three hundred in number. They can be summed up in one phrase, Swerving not from the right path.” 詩三百，一言以蔽之，曰：思無邪。 In *Analects* 15.24, the golden rule is said to be a *yan* that can guide the conduct throughout one’s life. Zigong asked, “Is there a single word which can be a guide to conduct throughout one’s life?” The Master said, “It is perhaps the word ‘*shu*’. Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire.” 子貢問曰：“有一言而可以終身行之者乎？”子曰：“其恕乎！己所不欲，勿施於人。” See *Lunyu jishi*, 65, 1106, Lau, *The Analects*, 11, 155. Both Mencius and Mozi criticize the *yan* (basic doctrine) of others and claim that only their own *yan* is fundamentally correct or contain solutions to all the world’s problems. In the context of “Neiye” and “Xinahu, xia,” *yan* conveys the cryptic word/maxim about the fundamental truth of the cosmos, the attainment of which grants one mastery over the world. Many of the terse sayings in “Neiye,” and in *Laozi* as well, were very likely to be regarded as such magic words by its authors. For more on *yan* in the *Analects*, *Mencius*, *Zuozhuan* and *Mozi*, see David S. Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism: Investigations in Chinese Philosophy* (Chicago: Open Court, 1996), 127-28.

“Xinshu, xia”

是故聖人一言解之。上察於天，下察於地。

Hence the sage, in taking the one word to understand [the Way], may explore Heaven above and Earth below.³²³

“Neiye”

一言之解，上察於天，下極於地，蟠滿九州。

With the one word understood, Above, one may explore Heaven; Below, reach the extremities of Earth.³²⁴

一言得而天下服，一言定而天下聽。

With one word comprehended, The world submits; With one word firmly established, The world obeys.³²⁵

Overall, the above statements make up a self-cultivation manual, describing both the methods and results of meditative practices using cryptic aphorisms. Let us suppose that this manual is the “root material” upon which both “Neiye” and “Xinshu xia” are built. This hypothesis is consistent with Guo Moro’s 郭沫若 assertion that the two texts were recorded by two students of the same master (兩家弟子記錄一先生之言)³²⁶ and partially consistent with Rickett’s proposition that “Neiye” is “but one version of a body of material that most likely existed in an oral tradition for some time before it was put together and written down. Even then the nature of the text was such that it would have been easy to add material as time went along.”³²⁷ Rickett also believes that “Xinshu xia” is “a much later

³²³ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37.786, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 64.

³²⁴ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.938, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 46.

³²⁵ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.937, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 44.

³²⁶ Although Guo’s hypothesis that “Neiye” and the two “Xinshu” chapters should be attributed to Song Xing 宋鏞, one of the Jixia 稷下 scholars, has been proved to be unfounded by Graham, Rickett and several other scholars, I believe that his hypothesis on the relationship between “Neiye” and “Xinshu xia” is quite insightful and might be basically correct. See Guo Morou 郭沫若, *Zhongguo gudai shehui yanjiu: Qingtong shidai* 中國古代社會研究:青銅時代 (Beijing: Renmin, 1982), 557; Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 95-100; Kanaya Osamu 金谷治, *Kanshi no kenkyu* 管子的研究, 260-266, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 32-36.

³²⁷ See Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 32, 37. We disagree with Rickett, however, on which section was later added. Rickett thinks that the verse containing “the Confucian message,” i.e., the verse on the function of the odes, rite and music, is a later interpolation.

explication or rewriting of an entirely different version of the ‘Neiye.’”³²⁸ This hypothesis is also partially consistent with Kanaya Osamu’s proposition that “Neiye” is derived from the statement section³²⁹ of “Xinshu, shang,” and an early version of “Xinshu, xia,” which is now lost.³³⁰ What Rickett refers to as the “entirely different version of ‘Neiye,’” or what Osamu refers to as the “early version of ‘Xinshu, xia’” is very likely an orally transmitted self-cultivation manual, which is the “root material” for both “Neiye” and “Xinshu xia.”

The only hypothesis that is crucially different from ours is so far the most influential one raised by Harold D. Roth. Roth holds that the second century B.C.E. text of “Xinshu xia” is a redaction of the third century B.C.E. text of “Neiye,”³³¹ and that the author of “Xinshu xia” “deliberately extracted and re-arranged the verses from ‘Neiye’ for the purpose of advocating the techniques and philosophy of inner cultivation as part of the arcana of rulership,” and “it thus complements “Xinshu, shang.”³³² In “Redaction Criticism and the Early History of Taoism,” Roth thoroughly studies the parallel material in the two texts and cites various kinds of evidence to prove that “Xinshu, xia” is a later redaction of “Neiye.”

Before providing some counter-arguments to Roth’s theory, let us continue with our hypothesis and illustrate how “Xinshu xia” and “Neiye” build upon the “root material”

³²⁸ However, we disagree with Rickett that “the ‘Xinshu, xia’ discusses concepts...that represent relatively late developments in Warring States philosophy, such as the relationship between names and realities.” See Rickett, *Guanzi V.2,57*. For more on the possibly early occurrence of the application of this self-cultivation practice in governing affairs, see the discussion below on pages 116-18.

³²⁹ “Xinshu, shang” is divided into two sections: the first section consists of short statements and the second section, lengthy explanations for the statements in the first section. They are commonly called the statement section and the explanatory section. For more on the format of “Xinshu, shang,” see Rickett, *Guanzi V.2, 65*.

³³⁰ Kanaya Osamu, *Kanshi no Kenkyu*, 260-66, 334-46.

³³¹ Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 1-46.

³³² Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 14; *Original Tao*, 26.

respectively. “Xinshu xia” is a relatively short text. What is in parallel with “Neiye” constitutes about sixty-five percent of the text. The rest of the thirty-five percent is all about the art of governing. Thus “Xinshu, xia” adds to the self-cultivation manual a section concerned primarily with the application of the self-cultivation techniques to political affairs.

“Neiye” expands the self-cultivation manual by adding some material on breath control³³³ and physical cultivation, including diet and exercise.³³⁴ What is more, the extant “Neiye” adds to its original layer an opening section (verses I to VI),³³⁵ which consists primarily of theoretical contemplations on two key concepts: *jing* 精, vital essence and *dao*. The opening section thus lays out the philosophical foundations for the self-cultivation manual, as Roth points out.³³⁶

The structures of “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia” also vary to a great extent. “Xinshu, xia” is loosely organized, with theories on how to govern the world and statements on self-cultivation mixed together, whereas “Neiye” is coherently organized, “almost exclusively devoted to the practice and philosophy of inner cultivation,”³³⁷ with a single thread (i.e., the vital essence) weaving together the methods and results of self-cultivation.

Having examined the structural differences between “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia,” let us restate our hypothesis: “Neiye” and “Xinshu” are derived from the same source material,

³³³ Breathing meditation is covered in verses XVII and XXIV, by Roth’s division. See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.942, 948, Roth, *Original Tao*, 78-79, 92-93.

³³⁴ Physical cultivation is covered in Verse XXIII, by Roth’s division. See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.947-48, Roth, *Original Tao*, 90-91.

³³⁵ Following the division made by Roth. These verses belong to parts I-VI.1, according to the division by Rickett. See Roth, *Original Tao*, 46-57; Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 39-42.

³³⁶ Roth, *Original Tao*, 100.

³³⁷ Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 12.

very likely a self-cultivation manual orally transmitted from masters to disciples. Two different authors (or sets of authors) built upon the same source material and wrote them down for different audiences and with distinct purposes. “Neiye” was composed for practitioners of self-cultivation. The author[s] of “Neiye” reorganized the material into a coherent and systematic text, giving it a cosmological and philosophical framework. On the other hand, “Xinshu, xia” was very likely composed by a court official or political advisor for an audience of territorial rulers interested in self-cultivation and its application to rulership.

Admittedly, without further textual and historical evidence, it is hard to prove the validity of our hypothesis. But at least, a close examination of the alternative hypotheses will show that they are less likely.

First let us consider Roth’s assumption that “Xinshu, xia” was written to complement “Xinshu, shang.”³³⁸ To counter Roth’s observation, we can find some textual evidence suggesting that “Xinshu, shang” is later than both “Xinshu xia” and “Neiye.” The concept of *xu* 虛, to empty or emptiness, which is absent in the latter two, is highlighted in the statement section of “Xinshu, shang.”

Xu is also one of the most eye-catching notions recurring in *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi*. Sometimes it connotes the apophatic practice of emptying one’s mind; sometimes it is granted an ontological significance, being described as one of the key characteristics of *qi*

³³⁸ See Roth, “Psychology and Self-cultivation,” 626; “Redaction criticism,” 14, 18.

and the *dao*,³³⁹ and the primal cause of cosmic transformation.³⁴⁰ Although the word *xu* does not appear in “*Neiye*,” we can find practices very similar to apophatic cultivation: “casting off sorrow, happiness, joy, anger, desire, and profit-seeking” 去憂樂喜怒欲利。³⁴¹ Therefore, if the authors of “*Neiye*” and “*Xinshu xia*” were aware of this popular term, there would have been no reason for them not to include it in their texts. Thus it seems that *xu* had not yet become a popular notion by the time these two texts were written down.

Second, let us examine the evidence of emendation in the two texts. In “Redaction Criticism,” Roth identifies several redaction strategies on the part of the author of “*Xinshu, xia*,” including ideological emendation, rhetorical emendation, semantic recontextualization, etc. He cites many pieces of evidence to prove that “*Xinshu, xia*” is an emendation of “*Neiye*.” But some of his arguments are not persuasive. For example, Roth takes the following statements from “*Xinshu, xia*” as a rhetorical emendation of parallel statements in “*Neiye*.”

“*Xinshu, xia*”

專於意，一於心，耳目端，知遠之證。

Concentrate your powers of awareness and focus your mind,

Correctly use your ears and eyes,

And you may come to know the far as if it were near.³⁴²

³³⁹ E.g. In the “*Renjian shi*” 人間世 of *Zhuangzi*, it is stated, “*Qi*, however, awaits things emptily. The Way gathers in emptiness, and emptiness is the fasting of the mind” 氣也者，虛而待物者也。唯道集虛。See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 4.130, Victor Mair, trans. *Wandering on the Way: Early Taoist Tales and Parables of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994), 32.

³⁴⁰ E.g. in *Laozi* chapter 5, it is stated, “The space between Heaven and Earth—is it not like a bellows? It is empty and yet not depleted; Move it and more [always] comes out” 天地之間，其猶橐籥乎？虛而不屈，動而愈出。See Gao Ming 高明, *Boshu Laozi Jiaozhu* 帛書老子校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1996), 244, Robert G. Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Ma-wang-tui Texts* (New York: Random House, 1989), 196.

³⁴¹ Roth, *Original Tao*, 50-51.

³⁴² See n. 312 above.

“Neiye”
一意搏心，耳目不淫，雖遠若近
Unify your awareness,
Concentrate your mind,
Do not overstimulate your eyes and ears,
Then even the far-off will seem close at hand.³⁴³

Roth thinks that “to correctly use your ears and eyes” 耳目端 is a stronger formulation than “not to overstimulate your eyes and ears” 耳目不淫. But reasonable minds can disagree.

As another piece of evidence for rhetorical emendation, Roth cites this pair of parallel statements: the phrase “reverently be aware without being excessive” 敬慎無忒 in “Neiye” is replaced by “be regular and tranquil and do not lose it” 正靜不失 in “Xinshu, xia.” Roth holds that the “Xinshu, xia” version helps to eliminate the vagueness of the “Neiye.”³⁴⁴ Truly, the two phrases emphasize different qualities, but it is hard to tell which version is more precise.

More crucially, using Roth’s own methodology, we can find evidence that “Neiye” rhetorically emends “Xinshu, xia,” and not *vice versa*:

“Xinshu, xia”
是故內聚以為泉原，泉之不竭，表裡遂通。泉之不涸，四支堅固。能令用之，被服四固。
Now, what is accumulated within acts as a fountainhead. So long as the fountain is not exhausted,
passage between what lies outside and what lies within will remain clear.
So long as the fountain does not dry up,
The four limbs will remain strong and firm,
And it will be possible to use it to overcome everything within the four confines of the world.³⁴⁵

“Neiye”

³⁴³ See n. 313 above.

³⁴⁴ Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 24.

³⁴⁵ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37.786, Rickett, *Guanzi* V.2, 63-64.

精存自生，其外安榮，內藏以為泉原，浩然和平，以為氣淵。淵之不涸，四體乃固，泉之不竭，九竅遂通，乃能窮天地，被四海。

When the vital essence is present, it naturally produces life.

Outwardly it produces a restful glow.

Stored within, it becomes a fountainhead.

Flood-like, harmonious, and smooth, it becomes the wellspring of *qi*.

So long as the wellspring does not run dry,

The four parts of the body will remain firm.

So long as the wellspring is not exhausted,

The passages of the nine apertures will remain clear.

Thus it is possible to explore the limits of Heaven and Earth and cover the four seas.³⁴⁶

Both “Xinshu, xia” and “Neiye” discuss the importance of storing something within the person. But “Xinshu, xia” does not state *what* is to be stored within, whereas “Neiye” states clearly that it is the vital essence, and it is due to the existence of the vital essence that one can attain both physical health and spiritual knowledge of the world.

Admittedly, at least parts of Roth’s evidence for the emendations of “Neiye” in “Xinshu, xia” are tenable. For example, Roth holds that the statement “When his mind is calm, the state is calm. When his mind is controlled, the state is controlled” 心安是國安; 心治是國治也 in “Xinshu, xia” is an ideological emendation of the following verse in “Neiye”: “When my mind is controlled, my senses are thereby controlled” 我心治，官乃治。我心安，官乃安。³⁴⁷ Roth convincingly argues that through the emendation of *guan* 官 (senses) to *guo* 國 (state), the topic shifts from pure methods of individual cultivation to the relationship between the sage’s cultivation and the state order.

Why is there evidence of emendations in both “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia”? Drawing on the hypothesis that “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia” are derived from the same root material,

³⁴⁶ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 938-39, Rickett, *Guanzi* V.2, 47-48. Translation with minor moderation.

³⁴⁷ Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 28.

this baffling phenomenon can be accounted for: if “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia” were both emendations of the same source material, then it is no wonder that evidence for emendations can be found in both texts.

Third, let us consider Roth’s hypothesis on the division of early Daoism. Roth identifies three phrases of early Daoism: Individualist, Primitivist, and Syncretist. According to Roth, all the three aspects share a common vocabulary and concern for the practice of self-cultivation.³⁴⁸ This seems to be a reaction to H. G. Creel’s division of early Daoism into contemplative and purposive Daoism.³⁴⁹ Roth correctly points out the flaw in Creel’s division: the contemplative Daoist texts, such as the Inner Chapters of *Zhuangzi*, contain both philosophical contemplations and descriptions of meditative practices.³⁵⁰

Nonetheless, Roth’s response is not airtight. The problem lies mainly in his classification of “Neiye.” Roth describes the Individualist aspect as being “essentially apolitical and concerned exclusively with individual transformation through inner cultivation placed in the context of a cosmology of the Tao.” According to this standard, “Neiye,” which is focused on self-cultivation, is classified as Individualist Daoism. However, “Neiye” contains some Confucian concepts and endorses some basic Confucian practices. Thus “Neiye” seems to belong to Syncretist Daoism, which according to Roth, “also exhibits a syncretic use of ideas from Confucian, Mohist, and Legalist sources within a Taoist cosmological and political framework.”³⁵¹

³⁴⁸ Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 6-7.

³⁴⁹ H. G. Creel, “What Is Taoism?” in *What Is Taoism And Other Studies in Chinese Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 1-24, esp. 7-11.

³⁵⁰ Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 10.

³⁵¹ Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 6-7.

Finally, let us examine Roth's conclusion that "the ['Neiye'] brand of Individualist Taoism [is] a direct ancestor of Syncretic Taoism."³⁵² On the one hand, this conclusion is based on the assumption that "Xinshu, xia" is a redaction of "Neiye," which is unfounded. On the other hand, the assumption that the "Neiye" brand of Individualist Daoism is earlier than Primitivist and Syncretist Daoism, which contain political application of the self-cultivation theory and practice, is questionable.

One more piece of evidence in favor of the early date of the political application of the self-cultivation theory and practice: we can find some similarities between "Xinshu, xia" and the doctrines of Shen Buhai 申不害 (ca 400 B.C.E.-337 B.C.E.). First, Shen Buhai believes that the ruler should not engage personally in the routine business of administration, but "delegate all conduct of government to officials chosen for their ability."³⁵³ Similarly, "Xinshu, xia" emphasizes the importance of assigning posts and duties to the proper officials. It writes "Inquiry and selection are the ways to establish priorities in affairs" 慕選者，所以等事也。³⁵⁴ It also suggests that the ruler's secret lies in grasping the *dao* and selecting proper officials, and the *dao* [of the ruler] should not involve the specific affairs that should be handled by various officials, as in the passage below.

民人操，百姓治，道其本，至也。至不至無。非所人而亂，凡在有司執制者之利，非道也。
When the people are restrained and the hundred surnames are well regulated, it is because the Way has been followed from beginning to end. The Way extends from the vast to the nonexistent. If

³⁵² Roth, "Redaction Criticism," 35.

³⁵³ Herrlee G. Creel, "Shen tzu 申子 (Shen Pu-hai) 申不害" in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China and The Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1993), 395. For more on the philosophy of Shen Buhai, see Herrlee G. Creel, *Shen Pu-hai, A Chinese Political Philosopher of the Fourth Century B.C.* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1974).

³⁵⁴ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37. 780, Rickett, *Guanzi* V.2, 60.

[posts] were not assigned to the proper people, disorder would arise. The *dao* [of the ruler] does not lie in the regulatory system wherein officials administer and institute regulations.³⁵⁵

Second, *Shenzi* 申子 and “Xinshu, Xia” both emphasize the notion of *wusi* 無私, having no self-interest.

“Xinshu, xia”

是故，聖人若天然，無私覆也；若地然，無私載也。私者，亂天下者也。

For this reason, the sage may be likened to Heaven’s having no self-interest in what it covers and Earth’s having no self-interest in what it supports. Self-interest is what brings confusion to the world.³⁵⁶

“Yiwu”佚文 of *Shenzi* (The Lost Fragments of the *Shenzi* Quoted in other Sources)

天道無私，是以恒正。天道常正，是以清明。地道不作，是以常靜。常靜是以正方。舉事為之乃有恒常之靜者，符信受令必行也。

Heaven’s Way has no private [concern]; therefore it is always correct. Heaven’s Way is constantly correct; therefore it is pure and bright. Earth’s Way is to refrain from taking the initiative; therefore it is always acquiescent. [Being] always acquiescent, it is therefore correctly foursquare. The reason why [a minister who] practices it [may] set affairs in motion, while yet maintaining [his condition of] constant acquiescence, [is that, before he acts, he] receives [the ruler’s] order, [authenticated by the matching of official tallies, [which he] necessarily carries out. ³⁵⁷

Interestingly, these statements from *Shenzi* also emphasize *zheng* 正 and *jing* 靜, two of the key notions in “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia.”

Third, both *Shenzi* and “Xinshu, xia” point out that names should match actualities.

“Xinshu, xia”

凡物載名而來，聖人因而財之，而天下治，實不傷不亂於天下而天下治。

It is ever so that things come bearing names. The sage relies on these to make decisions so the world will be well regulated. If actualities are not misnamed, there will be no confusion in the world and the world will be well regulated. ³⁵⁸

“Dati” 大體 of *Shenzi*

名自正也，事自定也。是以有道者自名而正之，隨事而定之也。

³⁵⁵ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37. 782, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 61.

³⁵⁶ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37. 778, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 59. Translation with moderations.

³⁵⁷ Creel, *Shen Pu-hai*, 358-59.

³⁵⁸ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37. 778-79, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 59.

Names rectify themselves; affairs settle themselves. Therefore, one who has [the right] method [starts] from names in order to rectify things, and acquiesces in affairs in order to settle them.³⁵⁹

Since *Shenzi* was reconstructed based on the alleged fragments quoted in other sources, its authenticity can hardly be ascertained. But as Herrlee G. Creel observes, “most of the alleged quotations from the *Shen tzu* are in general agreement with descriptions of his philosophy in early works, it appears that the *Shen tzu* was at least based, in large part on the ideas of Shen Buhai.” At least, as Creel argues convincingly, the early date of the majority of these fragments should not be questioned.³⁶⁰

The similarities between *Shenzi* and “Xinshu, xia” suggest that such political ideas were commonplace in the fourth century B.C.E. Therefore it is highly possible that the politicization of self-cultivation practices should have started as early as the fourth century B.C.E.

Based on the above arguments, an alternative picture of the composition of “Xinshu, xia” and “Neiye” is presented below: There was originally a self-cultivation manual. The politicization of this self-cultivation manual, as seen in “Xinshu, xia,” occurred around the same time that a cosmological framework was added to it (or perhaps even earlier), as in “Neiye.”

Finally, let us reconsider Nathan Sivin’s warning of the perplexities caused by the term Daoism/Daoist. In spite of Sivin’s warning, Roth insists that the term can be used with circumspection.³⁶¹ Roth correctly points out that the usage of Daoism does not suggest

³⁵⁹ Creel, *Shen Pu-hai*, 349.

³⁶⁰ Creel, “Shen tzu 申子 (Shen Pu-hai) 申不害”, 396. For more on the authenticity of the fragments attributed to Shen Buhai, see Creel, *Shen Pu-hai*, 295-336, esp. 333.

³⁶¹ Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 3.

“there was a self-conscious ‘school’ of philosophy that called itself ‘Taoism’.” Rather, by using the term Daoism, he means “there were a number of related master-disciple lineages who shared common practices of inner cultivation and a sufficiently common philosophical outlook.”³⁶² Roth also contends that Daoism can be applied retrospectively to a group of writings sharing “commonalities of cosmology and inner cultivation.”³⁶³ He identifies “*Neiye*” as the earliest of the foundational Daoist texts, as reflected in the title of his seminal work: *Original Tao*.

But is it true that “a carefully circumscribed use of this term [Daoism] is better than no use at all”?³⁶⁴ Before we give an answer, two questions need to be addressed. First, should the “*Neiye*” brand of self-cultivation be called “Daoist self-cultivation”? As Nathan Sivin has pointed out, such techniques as breathing and physical disciplines can be practiced by anyone, not necessarily Daoists or Confucianists.³⁶⁵ And, as will be discussed below, methods of apophatic meditation as portrayed in “*Neiye*” can be found in a wide range of texts, including those which were later classified into the Confucian classics.

Second, do the “foundational Daoist texts” share common practices of inner cultivation and a sufficiently common philosophical outlook? This question is very complicated and cannot be fully addressed here. But Chapter 3 of this dissertation will demonstrate that the *Zhuangzi* and “*Neiye*” brands of self-cultivation are fundamentally different, as are their underlying cosmological outlooks and perceptions of human life, with “*Neiye*” being monistic and *Zhuangzi* dualistic. What is more, although these so-called

³⁶² Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 9.

³⁶³ Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 10.

³⁶⁴ Roth, “Redaction Criticism,” 3.

³⁶⁵ See Nathan Sivin, “On the Word ‘Taoist’,” 319.

“foundational Daoist texts” all exalt the *dao*, the connotations of the word are different. As will be discussed below, many features of the *dao* in *Zhuangzi* and *Daodejing* cannot be found in “Neiye.”

Thus there seems to be no sufficient reason to use “Daoism” to refer to either the master-disciple lineages of self-cultivation practitioners or a group of Warring States texts with similar philosophical outlooks. Indeed, classifying these texts as “Daoist” may cause scholars to pay undue attention to their similarities and ignore the fundamental differences/distinctions among them, which will lead to an underestimation of the diversity of ideas yielded in the Warring States period and the interactions among them, as my discussions in chapter three will demonstrate. Another drawback of regarding “Neiye” as a “Daoist” text: by doing this, we may overlook the commonalities between “Neiye” and some of its contemporary or later texts (i.e. the *Analects*, *Zuozhuan* and *Liji*, which were later grouped into the Confucian Classics) and as a result, lose sight of how the ideologies and practices as described in “Neiye” and those in the Confucian classics interacted with one another.

In the following section, we will compare “Neiye” with a wide range of Warring States and/or early Han texts. Through comparing different layers of “Neiye” with its contemporary and later texts, we hope to present a comprehensive picture of how these texts interacted with and reacted to one another.

To begin with, the earliest layer of “Neiye” is highly indebted to the mainstream ancestral worship culture as reflected in some Warring States texts. Ritual and music, as

the essential ingredients of ancestral sacrifice,³⁶⁶ are highlighted in the self-cultivation manual which constitutes the earlier layer of both “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia.” In particular, “Xinshu xia” recommends performing music as a means to control anger and following ritual as a means to regulate joy.³⁶⁷ “Neiye” describes the recitation of the *Odes* and the performance of music and ritual as the preliminary steps of self-cultivation, leading in turn to reverence and tranquility.³⁶⁸ It should be noted that in “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia,” the practice of ritual and music is no longer a means to serve the spirits, but a means to moderate emotions and to cultivate the ideal inner state in a person, i.e., a means of self-cultivation.

The notion of *jing* 敬, reverence, as a key quality to be cultivated in the earlier layer of “Neiye,” is described as the proper attitude toward the spirits in several contemporary and later texts. For example, the “Chuyu, xia” 楚語下 chapter of *Guoyu* 國語 states that “those among the people who ... and reverently served the bright sprits, they were held to be *zhu* [ritual specialists]” 民之...而敬恭明神者，以為之祝. Reverence is presented as the single most important attitude in performing sacrifices in the “Jitong” 祭統 chapter of *Liji*: “He whose idea is the clearest, will be most reverent in his sacrifices. When the sacrifices (of a state) are reverent, none of the sons and grandsons within its borders will dare to be irreverent. How can he, who sacrifices without reverence, be the parent of his people?” 其義章者，其祭也敬。祭敬則竟內之子孫莫敢不敬矣。...祭而不敬，何

³⁶⁶ For more on ritual and music as essential elements of ancestral sacrifice, see chapter 1, ns. 39 and 40.

³⁶⁷ See n. 314 above.

³⁶⁸ See n. 315 above.

以為民父母矣？³⁶⁹ Similarly, the “Tangong, xia” 檀弓下 chapter of *Liji* suggests that reverence on the part of those who offer sacrifices is the key to the sacrificial ritual. “In the sacrifices, the principal mourner does his utmost (in the way of ornament). Does he know that the spirit will enjoy (his offerings)? He is guided only by his pure and reverent heart” 唯祭祀之禮，主人自盡焉爾。豈知神之所饗，亦以主人有齊敬之心。³⁷⁰

In the *Analects*, reverence is seen as an essential quality that the gentleman should exhibit in sacrificing to the spirits as well as in serving his parents and superiors.³⁷¹ It is also held to be a guiding principle for handling various businesses and for all kinds of human conduct.³⁷² Cultivation of reverence is thus essential to Confucian self-cultivation. In particular, *Analects* 3.26 suggests that reverence is the kernel of ritual practice. “What can I find worthy of note in a man who is lacking in...reverence when performing the rites...?” 為禮不敬...吾何以觀之哉？³⁷³ This is reminiscent of the assertion that “for holding on to the rites there is nothing better than reverence” 守禮莫若敬, in the above-cited statements from “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia.”³⁷⁴ What is more, along with inner tranquility 內靜, external reverence 外敬³⁷⁵ is seen to be an essential quality to be cultivated in “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia” as well.

³⁶⁹ *Liji jijie*, 1249-50. Translation by James Legg.

³⁷⁰ *Liji jijie*, 256. Translation by James Legge, with slight moderation. Similar belief occurs also in the “Jiao tesheng” 郊特牲 chapter of *Liji*: “The flesh of the victim might be presented raw and as a whole, or cut up in pieces, or sodden, or thoroughly cooked; but how could they know whether the spirit enjoyed it? The sacrificer simply showed his reverence to the utmost of his power” 腥肆爛臄祭，豈知神之所饗也？主人自盡其敬而已矣。 *Liji jijie*, 719. Translation by James Legge.

³⁷¹ See *Analects* 2.7, 4.18, 5.16, and 19.1.

³⁷² See *Analects* 13.19, 14.42, and 15.6.

³⁷³ *Lunyu jishi*, 224, Lau, *The Analects*, 27.

³⁷⁴ See ns. 314 and 315 above.

³⁷⁵ See ns. 314 and 315 above.

Second, methods of self-cultivation as portrayed in “Neiye” are commonly found in several chapters of *Liji*, indicating that they were widely adopted, instead of being practiced only within a limited circle of master-disciple lineages. The passages below, from the “Yueling” 月令 chapter of *Liji*, describe the purification and fasting ritual performed on the months of the summer and winter solstices.

是月也，日長至，... 君子齊戒，處必掩身，毋躁。止聲色，毋或進。薄滋味，毋致和。節嗜欲，定心氣...

In this month the longest day arrives. ... Superior men give themselves to purification and fasting. They keep retired in their houses, guard against restless acts, restrain their indulgence in music and beautiful sights, eschew the society of their wives, make their diet spare, use no piquant condiments, keep their desires under rule, and maintain their spirits free from excitement...³⁷⁶

是月也，日短至。... 君子齊戒，處必掩身。身欲寧，去聲色，禁奢欲。安形性，事欲靜，以待陰陽之所定。

In this month the shortest day arrives. ... Superior men give themselves to purification and fasting. They keep retired in their houses. They wish to be at rest in their persons; put away all indulgence in music and beautiful sights; repress their various desires; give repose to their bodies and all mental excitements. They wish all affairs to be quiet, while they wait for the settlement of those principles of *yin* and *yang*.³⁷⁷

The practices prescribed above are similar to “Neiye” self-cultivation in several aspects. First, both advocate maintaining a state of tranquility (*jing* 靜) and warn against being restless (*zao* 躁). According to “Yueling,” during the purification and fasting ritual, the gentleman should retire to his house and abstain from activities. “Neiye” holds that the means to secure the vital essence is to remain tranquil and the way to lose it is to be restless. “If you are tranquil, then you will attain it; If you are restless, then you will lose it” 靜則

³⁷⁶ *Liji jijie*, 453. Translation by James Legge, with moderations.

³⁷⁷ *Liji jijie*, 497. Translation by James Legge, with moderations.

得之，躁則失之。³⁷⁸ Second, “Yueling” prescribes stabilizing one’s breath and mind 定心氣 during the purification ritual. Similarly, “Neiye” prescribes maintaining a stable mind at the core 定心在中。³⁷⁹ Third, “Yueling” prescribes moderating desires 節嗜欲 and abstaining from music and beautiful sights 止聲色. Similarly, “Neiye” suggests “restricting the five sensual desires” 節其五欲,³⁸⁰ and not overstimulating the senses of sight and hearing 耳目不淫。³⁸¹ Fourth, “Yueling” prescribes that the gentleman should rest his body and be at ease with his nature 安形性 during the purification ritual on the winter solstice. “Neiye” depicts its adepts in a similar way, “Your form will be at ease and not restless” 其形安而不移。³⁸²

In addition, the importance of a unified and concentrated mind is stressed both in “Neiye” and in the pre-sacrificial purification ritual. The passage below from “Jitong” gives a detailed account of the purification ritual as the preparatory stage of ancestral sacrifices.

時將祭，君子乃齊。齊之為言齊也。齊不齊以致齊者也。是以君子非有大事也，非有恭敬也，則不齊。不齊則於物無防也，嗜欲無止也。及其將齊也，防其邪物，訖其嗜欲，耳不聽樂。故記曰：“齊者不樂，”言不敢散其志也。... 是故君子之齊也，專致其精明之德也。

When the time came for offering a sacrifice, the noble man wisely gave himself to the work of purification. That purification meant the production of uniformity (in all the thoughts); -it was the giving uniformity to all that was not uniform, till a uniform direction of the thoughts was realized. Hence a noble man, unless for a great occasion, and unless he were animated by a great reverence, did not attempt this purification. While it was not attained, he did not take precautions against the influence of (outward) things, nor did he cease from all (internal) desires. But when he was about to attempt it, he guarded against all things of an evil nature, and suppressed all his desires, His ears did not listen to music; —as it is said in the Record, ‘People occupied with purification have no music,’ meaning that they did not venture to allow its dissipation of their minds. ...Thus the

³⁷⁸ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.950, Roth, *Original Tao*, 94-95. Translation with moderation.

³⁷⁹ See n. 402 below.

³⁸⁰ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.945, Roth, *Original Tao*, 86-87.

³⁸¹ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.943, Roth, *Original Tao*, 82-83.

³⁸² *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.948, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 54.

superior man, in his purification, devotes himself to carrying to its utmost extent the power of refinement and brightness.³⁸³

During the purification ritual, the gentleman unifies his thoughts 致齊, concentrates his mind, and does not let it be distracted by external objects 防物. Vigilantly on guard against any external distractions 不敢散其志, the ritual performer achieves a state of intense concentration 專, which in turn leads to the state of brightness and refinement 精明. A similar state of attentiveness is echoed in the following statements from “Neiye”: “to unify your awareness, [and] concentrate your mind” 一意搏心,³⁸⁴ and “Can you concentrate? Can you be unified?” 能搏乎? 能一乎?³⁸⁵

It should be noted that some of the aforementioned terms are widely found in Warring States texts, indicating that they were common practices of the time. *Yi* 一 and *jing* 靜 are not only prominent in *Zhuangzi*,³⁸⁶ but also seen as key principles to follow in controlling the mind so that it can objectively reflect the *dao* in *Xunzi*: “How do men come to know the Way? I say it is through the mind. How does the mind know? I say it is through vacuity, concentration and quiescence” 人何以知道? 曰: 心。心何以知? 曰: 虛壹而靜。³⁸⁷

³⁸³ *Liji jijie*, 1239, Translation by James Legge, with moderation.

³⁸⁴ See n. 313 above.

³⁸⁵ See n. 319 above. *Zhuan* and *yi* also occur in *Laozi*. But in the context of *Laozi*, *yi* refers to the One (i.e., the *dao*) and *zhuan* suggests the concentration of the breath. “In nourishing the soul and embracing the One—can you do it without letting them leave? In concentrating your breath and making it soft—can you [make it like that of] a child?” 載營魄抱一，能無離乎? 專氣致柔，能嬰兒乎? See *Boshu Laozi Jiaozhu*, 262, Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching*, 206-207.

³⁸⁶ E.g., “Maintaining the unity of your will” 若一志; “enfolding the spirit in quietude” 抱神以靜. see *Zhuangzi jiaquan*, 4.130; 11. 385.

³⁸⁷ See Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1988), 395, John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of Complete Works V.III* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press,

Next let us turn to the latter layer of “Neiye,” especially the opening section, including verses I to III, which mainly discuss the vital essence, and verses IV to VI, which are focused on the *dao*. We will first look at the portrayal of *dao*.

The *dao* is presented in “Neiye” as the mystic, intangible and ineffable principle³⁸⁸ that determines human life and death as well as the success and failure of affairs. “Losing it, men die; having it, they live. Losing it, undertakings fail; having it, they succeed” 道也者...人之所失以死, 所得以生也。事之所失以敗, 所得以成也。³⁸⁹ The *dao* is also seen as the guiding principle for the self-cultivation practice. “The *dao*... is that with which we cultivate the mind and rectify the body” 道也者... 所以脩心而正形也。³⁹⁰

This is somewhat similar to the *dao* depicted in *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*.³⁹¹ But it also differs essentially from the *dao* in the latter two texts in several respects. First, it is not yet seen as an absolute, self-sustaining being that generates and sustains the cosmos and the

1988-1994), 104. The passage from *Xunzi* has been conventionally thought as evidence that *Xunzi* is borrowing from the so-called “Daoist meditation.” See Aaron Stalnaker, “Aspects of *Xunzi*’s engagement with early Daoism,” *Philosophy East and West* 53.1 (2003): 87-129. We hold that these methods of self-cultivation were widely practiced in the Warring States period and that their prominence in *Zhuangzi*, *Laozi* and “Neiye” does not necessarily make them “Daoist” techniques of self-cultivation.

³⁸⁸ These qualities are reflected in the following verses, “It is what the mouth cannot speak of, The eyes cannot see, And the ears cannot here.” 道也者, 口之所不能言也, 目之所不能視也, 耳之所不能聽也. “The Way never has a root or trunk, It never has leaves or flowers.” 凡道, 無根無莖, 無葉無榮. See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.935, 937. Roth, *Original Tao*, 56-57.

³⁸⁹ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 935, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 42.

³⁹⁰ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 935, Roth, *Original Tao*, 56-57.

³⁹¹ *Dao* is presented in *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi* as the formless, intangible being, which cannot be perceived by the senses or grasped by language, e.g., in the “Dazong shi” chapter of *Zhuangzi*, it is described as “The Way ...is without action or form. You can hand it down but you cannot receive it; you can get it but you cannot see it.” 無為無形; 可傳而不可受, 可得而不可見. See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.228, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 81. In *Laozi* chapter 14, it is stated, “We look at it but do not see it; We name this ‘the minute.’ We listen to it but do not hear it; We name this ‘the rarified.’ We touch it but do not hold it; We name this ‘the level and smooth.’” 視之而弗見名之曰微; 聽之而弗聞名之曰希; 昏之而弗得名之曰夷. See *Boshu Laozi Jiaozhu*, 282, Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching*, 214-15.

various formed beings in it, as it is presented in the latter two.³⁹² The *dao* in “*Neiye*” is seen to be omnipresent,³⁹³ and to be the fundamental principle by which the myriad things grow and flourish, but it is not yet the origin and source of the universe. It is that “by which the myriad things are generated and the myriad things are completed” 萬物以生，萬物以成，命之曰道，³⁹⁴ but not yet that which “existed prior to and gave rise to all other things,”³⁹⁵ like the *dao* in *Laozi*, which “generates the one, the two, the three and the myriad things” 道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物， or the *dao* in *Zhuangzi*, which “begets Heaven and Earth” 生天生地. Second, the *dao* in “*Neiye*” is sometimes portrayed as a concrete existence, closely related to the physical form, as seen in the statement “the Way is that which infuses the body” 夫道者所以充形也.³⁹⁶ The *dao* in *Laozi* and

³⁹² The *dao* is described in “*Da zongshi*” as “...is its own source, its own root. Before Heaven and earth existed it was there, firm from ancient times. It gave spirituality to the spirits and to God; it gave birth to Heaven and to earth.” 自本自根，未有天地，自古以固存；神鬼神帝，生天生地. See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.228, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 81. It is described in *Laozi* chapter 4 as “Like an abyss! It seems to be the ancestor of the ten thousand things” 淵呵似萬物之宗, and in *Laozi* chapter 25 as “There was something formed out of chaos, That was born before Heaven and Earth. Quiet and still! Pure and deep! It stands on its own and doesn’t change. It can be regarded as the mother of Heaven and Earth” 有物昆成，先天地生。蕭呵漻呵，獨立而不改，可以為天地母. See *Boshu Laozi Jiaozhu*, 239, 348, Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching*, 194-95, 236-37. For more on the characteristics of the *dao* in *Laozi*, see Isabelle Robinet, “The Diverse Interpretations of the Laozi,” in *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of Laozi*, eds. Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Philip J. Evanhoe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 127-159.

³⁹³ “The Way fills the entire world. It is everywhere that people are, But people are unable to understand this” 道滿天下，普在民所，民不能知也. See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 938, Roth, *Original Tao*, 72-73.

³⁹⁴ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.937, Roth, *Original Tao*, 56-57.

³⁹⁵ Robert G. Henricks, “Re-exploring the Analogy of the Dao and the Field,” in *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of Laozi*, eds. Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Philip J. Evanhoe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 161.

³⁹⁶ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 932, Roth, *Original Tao*, 52-53. This feature has been noted by Russell Kirkland. He points out that the *dao* in “*Neiye*” is sometimes used to “refer to the healthful energies that the practitioner is working to cultivate,” and this sets it apart from the *dao* in *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, which is always portrayed as a universal reality. See Russell Kirkland, *Taoism: the Enduring Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 48-49. It should be also noted that in several Warring States texts, such as *Mencius* and “*Xinshu, xia*,” that which fills the physical form is said to be *qi*. For this reason, Ma Feibai 馬非百 suggests that the *dao* here can be interchangeable with *qi*. See Ma Feibai 馬非百, “*Guanzi Neiye Pian Jizhu*” 管子內業篇集注, *Guanzi Xuekan* 1990.1: 9.

Zhuangzi, however, is consistently presented as an abstract principle that humans may grasp and follow.

Jing 精, vital essence, is portrayed in a unique way in “*Neiye*,” distinct from that both in *Zuozhuan*, as will be illustrated below, and *Zhuangzi*, as will be shown in chapter 3.³⁹⁷ The nature and function of *jing* is presented in Verse I:

凡物之精，
此則為生。
下生五穀，
上為列星。
流於天地之間，
謂之鬼神，
藏於胸中，
謂之聖人。

The vital essence of all things:
It is this that brings them to life.
It generates the five grains below
And becomes the constellated stars above.
When flowing amid the heavens and the earth
We call it ghostly and numinous.
When stored within the chests of human beings,
We call them sages.³⁹⁸

Here the vital essence is portrayed as the fundamental substance constituting all kinds of formed beings. It is the primal stuff that makes up the Heavenly bodies and generates the living things on earth. It is the common material shared by spirits and human sages. Doubtlessly, the depiction of vital essence here makes it a key philosophical concept with great cosmological and ontological significance.

³⁹⁷ For more on the distinction between *jing* in “*Neiye*” and *jing/jingshen* in *Zhuangzi*, see my discussions in chapter 3.

³⁹⁸ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 931, Roth, *Original Tao*, 46-47.

After the opening verse, the remaining thirty percent of the middle part of “Neiye” (that which does not overlap with “Xinshu, xia”) is also centered on the vital essence, except for a verse that describes the breath control³⁹⁹ and a verse that prescribes the moderation of thinking and emotion.⁴⁰⁰ The vital essence is further defined as the concentrated and purified *qi*, the primal stuff of the cosmos 精也者，氣之精者也。⁴⁰¹

The ultimate purpose of self-cultivation is to make the body an ideal lodging place for the vital essence.

能正能靜，然後能定。定心在中，耳目聰明，四枝堅固，可以為精舍。
If you can be well-adjusted and be tranquil,
Only then can you be stable.
With a stable mind at your core,
With the eyes and ears acute and clear,
And with the four limbs firm and fixed,
You can thereby make a lodging place for the vital essence.⁴⁰²

As illustrated in the passage above, following the practice of self-cultivation step by step, the adept can attain a stable state of rectitude, tranquility and concentration. As a result, one’s body will be strengthened and thus becomes an ideal house for the vital essence to dwell in. And, according to the passage below, reverence is seen as one of the key qualities to be cultivated precisely because it can help to secure the vital essence within the adept.

敬除其舍，精將自來。精想思之，寧念治之。嚴容畏敬，精將至定，得之而勿捨，耳目不淫，心無他圖。
Respectfully keep clean its abode, and its vital essence will naturally come.

³⁹⁹ Verse XVII, according to the division by Roth. See Roth, *Original Tao*, 78-79.

⁴⁰⁰ Verse XX, according to the division by Roth. See Roth, *Original Tao*, 84-85.

⁴⁰¹ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 937, Roth, *Original Tao*, 60-61.

⁴⁰² *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 937, Roth, *Original Tao*, 60-61. Translation with moderation.

Quiet your thoughts in order to contemplate it.
Rest your mind in order to keep control of it.
Maintain a dignified appearance and respectful attitude,
Then its vital essence will of itself become stable.
Obtain it and never let it go.
Your ears and eyes will never go astray, nor your mind become occupied with irrelevant concerns.⁴⁰³

So far we can see that the key qualities to be cultivated in the self-cultivation manual [including *zheng* 正, *jing* 靜, *ding* 定, *jing* 敬] are all related to the retention of the vital essence. Only if these qualities are cultivated in the adept can the vital essence be securely lodged within. In addition, thanks to the presence of the vital essence, one not only flourishes physically, but also is mentally acute, able to have profound knowledge to explore the cosmic secrets.⁴⁰⁴ The vital essence thus functions as the single thread in “*Neiye*,” weaving together various self-cultivation practices and the supposed benefits of these practices, providing a theoretical framework for the self-cultivation manual.

Unlike *jing* that is portrayed in “*Neiye*” as the cosmic generative material and what constitutes human spiritual existence, *jing* in many contemporary texts refers generally to any refined material, such as the refined food⁴⁰⁵ and refined cloth, as opposed to *cu* 粗, the coarse. The phrase *jingshuang* 精爽 (the refined and bright), on the other hand, is often associated with human spiritual essence, which turns into ghost or spirit upon death. The following speech in *Zuozhuan* 左傳, the twenty-fifth year of Lord Zhao 昭公二十五年,

⁴⁰³ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 938, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 45-46.

⁴⁰⁴ For the verse that elaborates on this theme, see n. 346 above.

⁴⁰⁵ E.g., “He did not dislike to have his rice finely cleaned” 食不厭精 in “*Xiangdang*” 鄉黨 of *Analects*, and “arranged according to the character of their mourning-dress in the fineness or coarseness of the material” 則以其喪服之精粗為序 in the “*Wen Wang Shi Zi*” 文王世子 chapter of *Liji*. See *Lunyu jishi*, 689; *Liji jijie*, 570.

states explicitly that the refined and bright part of *xin* is called *hun-po* 魂魄 (the *hun* and *po* souls).

吾聞之，哀樂而樂哀，皆喪心也，心之精爽，是謂魂魄，魂魄去之，何以能久。
I have heard that joy in the midst of grief and grief in the midst of joy are signs of a loss of mind. The essential vigour and brightness of the mind is what we call the *hun* and the *po*. When these leave it, how can the man continue long? ⁴⁰⁶

The famous speech by Zichan 子產 in *Zuozhuan*, the seventh year of Duke Zhao 昭公七年 is revealing of mainstream beliefs about *jing* 精.

人生始化曰魄，既生魄，陽曰魂，用物精多，則魂魄強，是以有精爽，至於神明，匹夫匹婦強死，其魂魄猶能馮依於人，以為淫厲，況良霄。我先君穆公之胄，子良之孫，子耳之子，敝邑之卿，從政三世矣，鄭雖無腆，抑諺曰，蕞爾國，而三世執其政柄，其用物也弘矣，其取精也多矣，其族又大，所馮厚矣，而強死，能為鬼，不亦宜乎。
When a man was born and the first transformation takes place, it is called *po*. When *po* is produced, its *yang* is called *hun*. Through employing more materials and essences, one's *hun-po* becomes strong. Therefore one's [spirit] becomes refined and bright and even reaches the state of being spiritually luminous. Even the *hunpo* of an ordinary man or woman, having encountered violent death, can attach themselves to other people to cause extraordinary troubles. [How much more so would be the *hunpo* of] Liangxiao (the courtesy name of Boyou), who is the descendant of the diseased Lord Mu of our state, the grandson of Ziliang and son of Zi'er? Boyou's lineage has been the minister's family for three generations. Although state of Zheng is not prosperous and is commonly called a petty state, Boyou's family, having grasped the handle of the government for three generations, have still employed bountiful materials and taken plentiful essential resources. His clan is large and he is richly supported. Isn't it natural for him to become a ghost upon the violent death?⁴⁰⁷

Zichan's speech here provides a theoretical basis for mainstream religious beliefs and practices: the status of one's spirit [either when alive or upon death] is correlated to the material one consumes. The more refined material a person and his lineage consume, the more luminous his spirit will be, and the more powerful he will become upon death as an

⁴⁰⁶ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu*, 1456. Translation by James Legge, *The Chinese Classics Vol 5 The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen Part II*, 708.

⁴⁰⁷ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu*, 1292-93. Translation by James Legge.

ancestral spirit or ghost. Therefore, the ancestral spirits from higher-ranking lineages are supposedly more powerful and long-lasting than those from the lower-ranking lineages. Accordingly, they deserve longer period of sacrifices from their descendants. Zichan's theory thus fits the ancestral sacrificial system instituted from the Shang onward.⁴⁰⁸

Both Zichan's speech and "Neiye" attempt to account for human spiritual existence from a materialistic perspective. What underlies the two types of interpretations, however, are completely different attitudes toward the mainstream practices of ancestor worship. As discussed above, Zichan's speech is an attempt to legitimate the ancestral commemoration system.⁴⁰⁹ In contrast, the method to attract the vital essence prescribed in "Neiye" is a strong reaction to the mainstream religious practices of the time. The adept in "Neiye" attains vital essence through the rigorous practice of self-cultivation.⁴¹⁰ Thus the possibility for increasing one's spiritual potency is opened up irrespective of one's social-political status.

Most important of all, the cosmological visions underlying the mainstream practices and the practices of self-cultivation described in "Neiye" are completely different. What underlies the mainstream sacrificial culture, as Michael Puett points out, is "a highly

⁴⁰⁸ For more on the ancestral sacrificial system, see discussions in chapter 1.

⁴⁰⁹ It is generally agreed that *Zuozhuan* should be dated to the fourth century B.C., around the same period as "Neiye." Thus it seems possible that the interpretation of *jing* in Zichan's speech was produced as a reaction to the challenge posed by the trend of self-cultivation as described in "Neiye." It is also highly possible that such ideology preexisted the "Neiye" practices. Without further evidence, we can hardly tell which one is earlier. But suffice it to say that they are two diametrically opposed means to account for human spirituality, though both from the materialistic perspective. On the dating of the *Zuozhuan*, see Wai-ye Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 253 (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2007), 33-59.

⁴¹⁰ For more on how the trend of self-cultivation as described in "Neiye" represents a reaction to the mainstream religious practices, see Paul R. Goldin, "Qi de hanyi jiqi jiji yiyi" 義氣的含義及其積極意義, *Renwen zhongguo xuebao* 人文中國學報 (2016) 24: 305-339.

theistic vision of the world.”⁴¹¹ Natural phenomena and human affairs are all supposedly governed by natural deities and human ancestral spirits. Through divination humans can get to know the will of the spirits and through sacrifices they can propitiate, influence and even manipulate the spirits for the sake of their benefits. This means that divine knowledge and mastery over the spiritual world are monopolized by religious specialists, who supposedly possess certain special qualities that ordinary people don’t, as in this passage from “Chuyu, xia.”

民之精爽不攜貳者，而又能齊肅衷正，其智能上下比義，其聖能光遠宣朗，其明能光照之，其聰能聽徹之，如是則明神降之，在男曰覲，在女曰巫。...而敬恭明神者，以為之祝。 Those among the people who were refined, bright and not of two minds and who were able to be proper, reverential, correct, and rectified, their wisdom was capable of comparing the propriety of what was above and what was below; their sagacity was able to glorify what was distant and display what was bright; their clear-sightedness was able to glorify and illuminate it; their keen hearing was able to listen and discern it. As such, the illuminated spirits descended to them. As regards males, they were called *xi* [male ritual specialists]; as regards woman, they were called *wu* [female ritual specialists]. ... Those who reverently served the bright spirits, were held to be *zhu* [ritual specialists].⁴¹²

It should be noted again that the earlier layer of “Neiye” is highly indebted to the ideology of ancestral sacrifice. The key qualities it encourages the adepts to cultivate are virtually the same as those supposedly possessed by the ritual specialists as outlined in the passage above, including being rectified 正, reverential 敬, keen of sight 明 and keen of hearing 聰.

The latter layer of “Neiye,” however, strongly reacts to the ideology underlying the sacrificial culture. What underlies its latter layer is a naturalistic and materialist perception of the world. As previously discussed, the depiction of the vital essence suggests that it

⁴¹¹ Puett, *To Become a God*, 96

⁴¹² *Guoyu jijie*, 512-13. Translation by Puett, *To Become a God*, 107. Translation with minor moderations.

endorses a cosmos made up of beings with varying degrees of refinement. Ghosts and spirits are nothing but refined *qi*. Human sages “contain within themselves the same essence found in spirits. Indeed, the only significant difference between humans and spirits is that spirits are pure essence..., whereas humans are a mix of essence and form.”⁴¹³

Vital essence is not only the cosmic generative substance but also the source of human vitality and intelligence. It spans the physical, psychological, mental and spiritual sphere. If securely lodged in the person, the vital essence enables the adept to maintain physical health and gain spiritual knowledge and power. Thus it is no wonder that in “*Neiye*,” the adept gains divine knowledge not through divination 無卜筮而知吉凶, and that he gains mastery over the world not through propitiating the spirits, but through self-cultivation 勿求諸人而得之己.⁴¹⁴ “*Neiye*” thus rejects traditional religious practices through its redefinition of *jing* and through its emphasis on self-cultivation.

Therefore, in spite of the similarities between the methods of self-cultivation in “*Neiye*” and the purification ritual in “*Yueling*” and “*Jitong*,” as discussed above, the purpose and the cosmological visions of the two differ greatly. What underlies the purification and fasting ritual is basically a theistic vision. And the purpose of such ritual is to facilitate the interaction between humans and spirits. According to a passage from the “*Quli*” 曲禮 chapter of *Liji*, those who are about to marry need to perform the fasting and purifying ritual in order to inform the ancestral spirits of the upcoming marriage.⁴¹⁵ Rituals

⁴¹³ Puett, *To Become a God*, 110.

⁴¹⁴ See n. 319 above.

⁴¹⁵ “Male and female, without the intervention of the matchmaker, do not know each other's name. Unless the marriage presents have been received, there should be no communication nor affection between them. Hence the day and month (of the marriage) should be announced to the ruler, and to the spirits (of ancestors)

of purification are also performed before sacrificing to the ancestors, as seen in the above-cited passage from “Jitong”: “When the time came for offering a sacrifice, the noble man wisely gave himself to the work of purification” 時將祭，君子乃齊。⁴¹⁶ Or consider another relevant statement in “Jitong”: “[The purpose of the] purification ritual is to attain the utmost state of refinement and brightness, which can thereupon enable one to communicate with the bright spirits” 齊者精明之至也，然後可以交於神明也。 The following two passages further clarify that intense mental concentration on the recipients of sacrificial offerings can cause the spirits to descend and enjoy the sacrifice.

齊之日：思其居處，思其笑語，思其志意，思其所樂，思其所嗜。齊三日，乃見其所為齊者。 During the days of the purification vigil, the mourner thinks of his departed, how and where they sat, how they smiled and spoke, what were their aims and views, what they delighted in, and what things they desired and enjoyed. On the third day of such exercise he will see those for whom it is employed.⁴¹⁷

齊之玄也，以陰幽思也。故君子三日齊，必見其所祭者。 The dark-colored robes worn during vigil and purification had reference to the occupation of the thoughts with the dark and unseen. Hence after the three days of purification, the superior man was sure (to seem) to see those to whom his sacrifice was to be offered.⁴¹⁸

Although both the passages above and “Neiye” prescribe going through a purging/purification process, eliminating all possible agitations and distractions so as to attain intense mental concentration, the results of such mental concentration are described quite differently. Mental concentration as portrayed in “Jitong” helps bring the spirits into existence [in the sense that they can be perceived by the ritual performer], whereas similar

with purification and fasting” 男女非有行媒，不相知名；非受幣，不交不親。故日月以告君，齊戒以告鬼神。 See *Liji jijie*, 45-46. Translation by James Legge.

⁴¹⁶ See n. 383 above.

⁴¹⁷ *Liji jijie*, 1208. Translation by James Legge.

⁴¹⁸ *Liji jijie*, 723. Translation by James Legge.

practices in “Neiye” help the adept locate the cosmic vital essence in himself. Spirits who are personally related to the ritual performers are absent in “Neiye.” Instead, humans can become more like the spirits if they can secure more vital essence in them through similar procedures.

The difference between the meditative practices in “Neiye” and the ritual texts lies mainly in their purposes and results. The description of the purpose and results of self-cultivation (i.e., to have the vital essence lodged in the person, as well as the transforming effect of the vital essence on one’s physical form and psychological and mental status) occurs primarily in the latter layer of “Neiye.” Its earlier layer, however, constitutes a self-cultivation manual sharing values with the *Analects*, adopting methods similar to those of the purification and fasting ritual recorded in several chapters from *Liji*, and encouraging its adepts to cultivate qualities similar to those possessed by the ritual specialists.

Part II “Neiye,” Gaozi and Mencius

Before moving on to the next stage of discussion, let us recapitulate: “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia” both contain layers of material. The earlier layer of the two texts are derived from the same self-cultivation manual. Here, I argue further that this self-cultivation manual is closely associated with the school of Gaozi 告子, one of the most important interlocutors of Mencius as recorded in *Mencius* 2 A 2 and *Mencius* 6 A 1-5. The commonalities between Gaozi’s doctrines and those in “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia” are summarized below.

First, both Gaozi and “Neiye” and “Xinshu, Xia” stress the importance of *yan* 言, “word.” Gaozi is cited in *Mencius* as holding that “word” matters foremost. “What you do not get from the word, do not seek for in your heart” 不得於言，勿求於心。⁴¹⁹ Similarly, as we have seen, “Neiye” and “Xinshu, xia” state that “the word” possesses the magic power to explore the cosmic secrets and subdue the entire world.⁴²⁰

Second, the perception of *qi* and its relationship with the mind and body in “Xinshu, Xia” is almost identical to Gaozi’s doctrine as described in *Mencius*. Gaozi is quoted in *Mencius 2 A 2* as below.

告子曰：“... 不得於心，勿求於氣。”

Gaozi said, “... What you do not get from your heart, do not seek for in the *qi*.”⁴²¹

In response to Gaozi’s doctrine, Mencius makes the following comments.

不得於心，勿求於氣，可；不得於言，勿求於心，不可。... 氣，體之充也。

‘What you do not get from your heart, do not seek for in the *qi*’ is acceptable. ‘What you do not get from the word, do not seek for in your heart’ is unacceptable. ... *Qi* fills the body. ⁴²²

The passage above indicates that Mencius agrees with Gaozi on the relationship between *xin* and *qi*. Mencius further elaborates on Gaozi’s doctrine by stating that *qi* is what fills the body. Interestingly Mencius’ explanation coincides with the following

⁴¹⁹ Jiao Xun 焦循, *Mengzi Zhengyi* 孟子正義 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1987), 2.194. Translation, with moderation, by Bryan W. Van Norden, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis and Cambridge, Mass.: Hackett, 2008), 37.

⁴²⁰ See ns. 322-325 above.

⁴²¹ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 2.194. Translation by Van Norden, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, 37.

⁴²² *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 2.194. Translation, with moderation, by Van Norden, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, 37-38.

statement in “Xinshu, Xia”: “*Qi* is what fills your body” 氣者，身之充也。⁴²³ Following this statement, “Xinshu, xia” states: “If what fills your body is not good, then you won’t get [it] from your heart” 充不美，則心不得。⁴²⁴ This is very similar to Gaozi’s saying quoted above: “What you do not get from your heart, do not seek for in the *qi*” 不得於心，勿求於氣, suggesting a close linkage between the statements in “Xinshu, Xia” [possibly that which is contained in the self-cultivation manual from which “Xinshu, xia” is derived] and the philosophy of Gaozi.

Third, “Neiye” shares many commonalities with the “Jie” 戒 chapter of *Guanzi*, which is commonly accepted as a surviving document by the school of Gaozi.⁴²⁵ 1) “Jie” and “Neiye” both emphasize guarding oneself against disturbance by external things. “Jie” states “Wearing the Way and its Power on you, you will not be perplexed by [external] things” 道德當身，故不以物惑。⁴²⁶ “Neiye” suggests “not to disrupt your senses with external things, and not to disrupt your mind with your senses” 不以物亂官，不以官亂心。⁴²⁷ 2) Both “Jie” and “Neiye” highlight *jing* (tranquility), and *ding* (stability). “Jie” states, “In tranquility to stabilise one’s nature is to be a sage” 靜然定生(性)，聖也。⁴²⁸ “Neiye” explains this in greater detail in the following verse: “Inwardly tranquil and outwardly respectful, you may revert to your true nature, and it will become completely

⁴²³ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37.778. Translation my own.

⁴²⁴ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 37.778. Translation my own.

⁴²⁵ For an elaboration on the similarities between “Jie” and the doctrine of Gaozi presented in *Mencius*, see A. C. Graham, “The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature,” in *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 22-26.

⁴²⁶ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 26.510. Translation my own.

⁴²⁷ See n. 311 above.

⁴²⁸ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 26.509. Translation by Graham, “The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature,” 25.

stable” 內靜外敬，能反其性，性將大定。⁴²⁹ Crucially, both texts suggest that we need to fix or stabilize our *xing*, indicating that *xing* has the possibility to grow in any direction without any effort to fix it. And this perception of *xing* fits Gaozi’s doctrine very well.⁴³⁰

3) Both “Jie” and “Neiye” hold that emotions need to be guided and monitored. “Jie” states, “Appetizing tastes, exertion and rest, are what nourish our nature. Liking and disliking, being pleased and being angry, sadness and joy, are fluctuations in our nature... Therefore the sage eats temperately and exerts or rests himself at the proper times, guides and corrects the fluctuations of the six *qi* [passions]” 滋味動靜，生之養也。好惡喜怒哀樂，生之變也... 是故聖人齊滋味而時動靜，御正六氣之變。⁴³¹ Like “Jie,” “Neiye” not only prescribes moderating emotions but also offers concrete advice on dieting and exercises.⁴³²

In addition, there is some indirect evidence supporting the hypothesis of a close link between “Neiye” and Gaozi. When asked how his way is superior to that of Gaozi, Mencius mentions that he cultivates his flood-like *qi* (*haoran zhi qi* 浩然之氣).⁴³³ *Haoran* is also used to describe the ideal type of refined *qi* in “Neiye.”⁴³⁴ Why does

⁴²⁹ See n. 315 above.

⁴³⁰ For more on Gaozi’s doctrine of *xing*, see the discussions in Part IV, ns. 558-561.

⁴³¹ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 26.509. Translation by Graham, “The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature,” 25. Translation with minor moderation.

⁴³² For more on the moderation of emotions in “Neiye,” see ns. 525-527 below. For more on diet and exercise in “Neiye,” see *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.947-48, Roth, *Original Tao*, 90-91.

⁴³³ It should also be noted here that although *Mencius* and “Neiye” both use *haoran* to describe the ideal type of *qi*, the connotations of such type of *qi* in the two texts differ to a great extent. Unlike *qi* in “Neiye” and many other contemporary texts, *qi* in *Mencius* is noted primarily for its moral dimension. For more on the moral dimension of *qi*, see ns. 460-462 below.

⁴³⁴ That *Mencius* and “Neiye” adopt the same terminology has been long noticed by several eminent scholars. This, together with other similarities between the two, prompts Graham to conclude that “for ‘Inward Training’ as for Mencius, moral development is the recovery of the course proper to man’s nature.” Van Norden, following Roth, disagrees with Graham’s interpretation. But he admits that “Mengzi’s discussion of cultivating his ‘flood-like *qi*’ does suggest some connection between early meditative practices and his theory of self-cultivation.” However, no one has considered the possible association between Gaozi and “Neiye.” See Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 103-105; Bryan W. Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics and Consequentialism in Early Chinese Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 234. For more on how Mencian

Mencius adopt the same terminology as “*Neiye*”? One possible explanation is that *haoran* was a popular term at the time, like *dao* and *de*, and has different connotations in different contexts. However, as far as we know, this term occurs in no other Warring States text to describe the *qi* (or *jing*, the refined *qi*).⁴³⁵ Another possible explanation is that “*Neiye*” borrowed this term from *Mencius*. This is not very likely either. *Qi* occurs far less frequently in *Mencius* than in “*Neiye*.” *Qi* occurs twenty times in *Mencius*, but sixteen times in 2 A 2 alone, where *Mencius* comments on and rejects Gaozi’s beliefs. Apparently, if not for responding to Gaozi, *Mencius* would rarely refer to the term *qi*, except in one case in which he adopts *ye qi* 夜氣 and *ping dan zhi qi* 平旦之氣 to indicate the roles of environment and consistent moral conduct in the cultivation of morality.⁴³⁶ Why would “*Neiye*,” which is not polemic in nature and not concerned with moral cultivation, borrow a *Mencian* term loaded with moral connotations? Thus it seems more likely that *Mencius* intentionally alludes to the term in “*Neiye*” to show that his self-cultivation is distinct from and superior to the latter. *Mencius*’ allusion to a “*Neiye*” term while refuting Gaozi thus suggests a close linkage between the two.

Mencius 2 A 2 contains one more allusion to “*Neiye*.” After clarifying how he cultivates his flood-like *qi*, *Mencius* states, “You must attend to your heart, instead of

cultivation of *qi* is related to moral practice, see Paul R. Goldin, *Confucianism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 41-42.

⁴³⁵ *Haoran* occurs also in the “*Guanren jie*” 官人解 chapter of *Yi Zhoushu* 逸周書. However, in the “*Guanren jie*,” it is used to describe the facial expression. “[The facial expression that reflects one’s genuine] essence overflows in a peaceful and stable way. The artificial facial expression is entangled, troubled and uneasy. Although one wishes to change the facial expression [in order to cover one’s true intention], one’s central countenance will betray one. This is called how to observe the countenance.” 質浩然固以安，偽蔓然亂以煩，雖欲改之，中色弗聽，此之謂觀色。Interestingly, “*Guanren jie*” reflects a similar idea as *Mencius* and “*Neiye*,” that one’s exterior appearance betrays one’s inner status. See *Yi Zhoushu huijiao jizhu* 逸周書彙校集注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2007), 757-94, esp. 780-81.

⁴³⁶ See n. 510 below.

correcting it. One shall not forget it, yet at the same time, not to help it to grow” 必有事焉而勿正心，勿忘，勿助長也。⁴³⁷ Here Mencius’ admonition not to rectify one’s *xin* (*zhengxin* 正心) occurs right after the elaboration on how his practice is superior to that of Gaozi, and *zhengxin* is precisely one of the key methods prescribed in “Neiye.” This further points to the possible association between “Neiye” and Gaozi.

Another possible allusion to “Neiye” occurs in *Mencius* 7 A 4, where Mencius announces, “The myriad things are all contained in me” 萬物皆備於我矣。⁴³⁸ As noticed by Graham, this announcement has a parallel statement in “Neiye”:⁴³⁹ “By concentrating your vital breath as if numinous, The myriad things will all be contained with you” 搏氣如神，萬物備存。⁴⁴⁰

Based on the above analysis, we conclude that the earlier layer of “Neiye,” like “Jie,” is possibly another surviving document of the school of Gaozi, who is now commonly agreed to be a figure within the Confucian tradition.⁴⁴¹ Paul R. Goldin has

⁴³⁷ In one commentary tradition (*Shi Zhong feng xu* 詩中風序), *zheng* is glossed as *zhi* 止 (suggesting that one should not stop doing good). Accordingly, the text should be changed into 必有事焉而勿止，心勿忘，勿助長也。According to Ni Si 倪思, cited in *Ri zhi lu* 日知錄, *zhengxin* should be replaced by *wang* 忘. Ni Si’s emendation of the text, followed by D. C. Lau in his translation, is as follows: 必有事焉而勿忘，勿忘，勿助長也。See *Mengzi zhengyi*, 203-204, D. C. Lau, trans. *Mencius* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2003), 62, Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, *Ri zhi lu* V 7, 16. I suspect that the reason why these commentators hold that the text is corrupted is that they can hardly accept that *zhengxin*, a key notion endorsed in the orthodox Confucian text of “Zhong yong” 中庸, could be what Mencius rejects here. These commentators may have overlooked the disputations within the Confucian tradition. Like Xunzi, who attacks Mencius’ theory on *xing*, Mencius can criticize the practice of *zhengxin*. For more on the possible association between “Zhong yong” and “Neiye,” see Jeffrey Riegel, “The Four “Tzu Ssu” Chapters of the Li Chi,” Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, Stanford, 1978: 107, 143-48. Riegel holds that the “Zhongyong” is a Han work based on a lost text similar to “Neiye.”

⁴³⁸ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 7.882. Translation my own.

⁴³⁹ See Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 103-104.

⁴⁴⁰ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.943, Roth, *Original Tao*, 82-83.

⁴⁴¹ There has been much debate on Gaozi’s philosophical affiliation. Gaozi has been associated with Mohism by Dai Junren 戴君人, Daoism by Hu Zanyun 胡簪雲 and Confucianism by Robert Eno and several other

convincingly demonstrated that there is a striking similarity between Gaozi's perception of *xing* and that in the Guodian 郭店 manuscripts of "Xing zi ming chu" 性自命出 and "Zun de yi" 尊德義, and *Xunzi*.⁴⁴² That Gaozi is a Confucianist can also be reflected by Mencius' attitude toward him. In spite of his disagreement with Gaozi, Mencius does not attack Gaozi as vehemently as Yang Zhu 楊朱 and Mo Di 墨翟. In 2 A 2, Mencius even praises Gaozi for having attained the unmoved heart before him 告子先我不動心. As an important interlocutor with Mencius on philosophical level, Gaozi must have greatly influenced Mencius: Mencius' theories on *xing* and his perception of morality as being internal are both formed in reaction to the doctrines of Gaozi.⁴⁴³

Identifying the earlier layer of "Neiye" with Gaozi, we can have more useful references for the beliefs of Gaozi than the few terse statements recorded *Mencius* 6 A 1-5, purely from the perspective of Mencius and his disciples. As discussed above, Gaozi and Mencius seem to have similar outlooks on the mind-body relationship.⁴⁴⁴ A reference to

scholars. See Dai Junren, "Mengzi zhiyan yangqi zhang" 孟子知言養氣章 in Yang Huazhi 楊化之 ed. *Mengzi yanjiu ji* 孟子研究集 (Hong Kong: Chisheng, 1963), 200; Hu Zanyun, "Zhiyan chizhi yu yangqi" 知言持志與養氣 in *Mengzi yanjiu ji*, 210; Robert Eno, *Confucian Creation of Heaven: Philosophy and the Defense of Ritual Mastery* (Albany, NY: Suny Press, 1990) n. 54, 259. For more on the debate, see Kwong-Loi Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 119-26. But as Goldin has capably demonstrated, the evidence in the Guodian Manuscripts should "put to rest the long-standing debate over whether Gaozi was a Confucian, a Mohist or a 'Daoist.'" See Goldin, "Xunzi in the Light of the Guodian Manuscripts," in *After Confucius*, n. 139, 183-84.

⁴⁴² Paul R. Goldin, "Xunzi in the Light of the Guodian Manuscripts," 53-57. The similarity between Gaozi and Xunzi's perception of *xing* has also been discussed by Van Norden, See Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, 280. In a more recent article, Li Youguang also proposes that *xing* in the "Xing zi ming chu" is closest to Gaozi's proposition recorded in *Mencius*. See Li Youguang and Huang Deyan, "The True or the Artificial: Theories on Human Nature before Mencius and Xunzi—Based on 'Sheng is from Ming, and Ming is from Tian'," *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 5.1 (2010): 41.

⁴⁴³ David Nivison has proposed that the debate between Mencius and Gaozi is that between a young philosopher and an older, established one. See Nivison, "Philosophical Voluntarism in Fourth-Century China," in *Ways of Confucianism*, 124. Van Norden and Goldin also agree Gaozi is senior to Mencius, primarily based on the record of a debate between Mozi and Gaozi in the "Gongmeng" chapter of *Mozi*. See Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, 279; Goldin, "Xunzi in the Light of the Guodian Manuscripts," n. 139, 183-84.

⁴⁴⁴ See ns. 420 and 421 above.

“Neiye” can help to further clarify how the Gaozian and Mencian views on the mind-body relationship resemble each other.

It is reiterated in “Neiye” that physical conditions can reflect the inner spiritual status.

全心在中，不可蔽匿。和於形容，見於膚色。

When there is a mind that is unimpaired within you, it cannot be hidden. It will be known in your countenance, and seen in your skin color.⁴⁴⁵

得道之人，理丞而屯泄，匈中無敗。

For people who have attained the Way, it permeates their pores and saturates their hair. Within their chest, they remain unvanquished.⁴⁴⁶

At the same time, the inner spiritual status determines the physical condition. If one can maintain a tranquil, stable and concentrated mind, one will naturally possess bright eyes, acute hearing, and strong limbs.

Like “Neiye,” *Mencius* holds that such external factors as facial expressions and tone of voice are reliable indicators of one’s inner status.

困於心，衡於慮，而後作；微於色，發於聲，而後喻。

It is only when a man is frustrated in mind and in his deliberations that he is able to rouse himself. It is only when his intentions become visible on his countenance and audible in his tone of voice that others can understand him.⁴⁴⁷

Mencius admits that *xin* [the emotional, mental and spiritual aspects] and *qi* [the physical aspect] influence each other. But of the two, *xin* is seen as playing a leading role.

夫志，氣之帥也；氣，體之充也。夫志至焉，氣次焉。故曰：“持其志，無暴其氣。”

Your will is the commander of the *qi*. *Qi* fills the body. When your will is fixed somewhere, the *qi* sets up camp there. Hence, it is said, “Maintain your will. Do not injure the *qi*.”⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁵ See n. 321 above.

⁴⁴⁶ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 950, Roth, *Original Tao*, 96.

⁴⁴⁷ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 871, Lau, *Mencius*, 285. Translation with minor moderation.

⁴⁴⁸ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 196-197. Translation by Van Norden, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, 38.

Qi, on the other hand, may affect the *xin*. Their mutual influence is reflected in the following passage.

志壹則動氣，氣壹則動志也。今夫蹶者趨者，是氣也，而反動其心。
When your will is unified, it moves the *qi*. When the *qi* is unified, it moves your will. Now, running and stumbling have to do with the *qi*, but nonetheless they perturb one's heart.⁴⁴⁹

Thus both “*Neiye*” and *Mencius* endorse the mind-body union. As Roger T. Ames notes, according to these texts, the disposition of the body is “determined by and revealing of the conditions of one's intellect.”⁴⁵⁰ Moreover, both “*Neiye*” and *Mencius* recognize the holistic benefits of their respective methods of self-cultivation. *Mencius* 7 A 21 discusses the transforming effect of moral cultivation on the entire person. Just as self-cultivation in “*Neiye*” causes the adept to have smooth skin, sharpened senses and strong limbs, *Mencian* moral cultivation brings about a transformation to the entire body, rendering one to be radiant in countenance and elegant in posture and demeanor.⁴⁵¹

君子所性，仁義禮智根於心。其生色也，睟然見於面，盎於背，施於四體，四體不言而喻。
That which a gentleman follows as his nature, that is to say, benevolence, rightness, the rites and wisdom, is rooted in his heart, and manifests itself in his face, giving it a radiant appearance. It also shows in his back and extends to his limbs, rendering their message intelligible without words.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ Mengzi Zhengyi, 197. Translation by Van Norden, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, 38.

⁴⁵⁰ See Ames, “The Meaning of Body in Classical Chinese Philosophy,” 168. Ames holds that the mind-body union is applicable to virtually all early Chinese texts. This, however, I strongly disagree. For more on the comments to the position of Ames, see my discussions in chapter 3.

⁴⁵¹ That moral cultivation brings about physiological changes is reflected in the Guodian Manuscript of *Wuxing* 五行 as well. For more on the physiological effects of moral cultivation in *Wuxing* and *Mencius*, see Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 77-78, 127.

⁴⁵² Mengzi Zhengyi, 906, Lau, *Mencius*, 295.

Also, Mencian moral cultivation may lead to full exhibition of virtue, as well as perfection of the physical form, as in *Mencius* 7 A 38: “Our body and complexion are given to us by Heaven. Only a sage can give his body complete fulfillment” 形色，天性也；惟聖人，然後可以踐形。⁴⁵³

Part III Moral Cultivation in *Mencius*

In spite of the similar outlooks on mind-body relationship, self-cultivation as described in *Mencius* is fundamentally different from that in “*Neiye*.” In the following two sections, we will first examine moral cultivation in *Mencius* and then look at how *Mencius* reacts to the Gaozi- “*Neiye*” strand of self-cultivation. In order to fully understand Mencian moral cultivation, we need to take a closer look at several interrelated concepts, with the first being *qi*.

Qi in *Mencius* may denote the physical aspect of men.⁴⁵⁴ As discussed above, *Mencius*, like “*Xinshu, xia*,” regards *qi* as the basic element of human physiology, whose condition correlates with the status of the mind. But the Mencian perception of *qi* is also a reaction to the general picture of his time in two respects. First, *Mencius* holds that *qi* should be cultivated internally, instead of being incited externally. In the Warring States, *qi* is often directly associated with courage, especially the kind that encourages soldiers to

⁴⁵³ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 937-38, Lau, *Mencius*, 305.

⁴⁵⁴ For more discussion on the physical aspect of *qi*, see Hu Zanyun, “*Zhiyan chizhi yu yangqi*,” 209; Manyul IM, “Moral Knowledge and Self Control in Mengzi: Rectitude, Courage, and *qi*,” *Asian Philosophy* 14.1 (2004): 67, 73.

march forward irrespective of possible injury or death, as in the following anecdote from *Zuozhuan*.⁴⁵⁵

莊公十年，春，齊師伐我，公將戰，曹劌請見...公與之乘，戰于長勺，公將鼓之，劌曰，未可，齊人三鼓，劌曰，可矣，齊師敗績...公問其故。對曰：夫戰，勇氣也。一鼓作氣，再而衰，三而竭，彼竭我盈，故克之。

In his [Duke Zhuang] tenth year (684 B.C.E.), in spring, the army of Qi invaded our State, and the duke was about to fight, when one Cao Gui requested to be introduced to him.... The duke took him with him in his chariot. The battle was fought in Changshao. The duke was about to order the drums to beat an advance, when Gui said, "Not yet;" and after the men of Qi had advanced three times with their drums beating, he said, "Now is the time." The army of the Qi received a severe defeat; ...The duke asked Gui the reasons of what he had done. "In fighting," was the reply, "all depends on the courageous spirit. When the drums first beat, that excites the spirit. A second advance occasions a diminution of the spirit; and with a third, it is exhausted. With our spirit at the highest pitch we fell on them with their spirit exhausted; and so we conquered them."⁴⁵⁶

According to this anecdote, beating drums can incite *qi* in the soldiers on the battlefield. But inciting *qi* by means of an external source also has the severe limitation of being unsustainable.

Like the *Zuozhuan* anecdote, *Mencius* 2 A 2 demonstrates an unequivocal link between courage and *qi*. The discussion of courage occurs in the context of Gongsun Chou's 公孫丑 question about the way to attain an "unmoved heart." As is well known, the major theme of 2 A 2 is the interaction between *qi* and *xin*. In Mencius's elaboration, the topic of different types of courage seems to be a digression. However, given the close link between courage and *qi*, the cultivation of courage is completely relevant. As Manyul

⁴⁵⁵ For more on the meanings of *qi* (i.e., as breath, matter and fighting spirit) in general, see Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 101; Goldin, "Qi de hanyi jiqi jijiyi," 306-307, esp. n. 3.

⁴⁵⁶ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu*, 182-83; Translation by James Legge, *The Chinese Classics Vol. 5 The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen, Part I*, 86.

Im ably argues, the control of *qi* is involved in all three kinds of courage in the following account:⁴⁵⁷

北宮黜之養勇也，不膚撓，不目逃，思以一豪挫於人，若撻之於市朝。不受於褐寬博，亦不受於萬乘之君。視刺萬乘之君，若刺褐夫。無嚴諸侯。惡聲至，必反之。孟施舍之所養勇也，曰：‘視不勝猶勝也。量敵而後進，慮勝而後會，是畏三軍者也。舍豈能為必勝哉？能無懼而已矣。’孟施舍似曾子，北宮黜似子夏。夫二子之勇，未知其孰賢，然而孟施舍守約也。

As for Beigong You's cultivation of courage, his body would not shrink, his eyes would not blink. He regarded the least slight from someone like being beaten in the marketplace. Insults he would not accept from a man in baggy rags he also would not accept from a ruler who could field ten thousand chariots. He looked upon running a sword through a ruler who could field ten thousand chariots like running through a man in rags. He was not in awe of the various lords. If an insult came his way he had to return it. As for Mengshi She's cultivation of courage, he said, 'I look upon defeat the same as victory. To advance only after sizing up one's enemy, to ponder whether one will achieve victory and only then join battle, this is to be in awe of the opposing armies. How can I be certain of victory? I can only be without fear.' Mengshi She resembled [Kongzi's disciple] Zengzi. Beigong You resembled [Kongzi's disciple] Zixia. Now, I do not really know whose courage was preferable. Nonetheless, Meng Shishe preserved something crucial.⁴⁵⁸

Even though Mencius does not completely endorse the courage of Beigong You or Mengshi She, he is still willing to compare them to the disciples of Confucius. This indicates that there is something laudable about the way they cultivate their courage. Unlike the method of inciting *qi* from an external source in the anecdote from *Zuozhuan* above, Beigong You and Mengshi She's cultivation of courage demonstrates an internal calculation, as shown by the two verbs: *si* 思, to regard, and *shi* 視, to look upon. What motivates them to exhibit courageous acts externally is rooted within their mind: Beigong

⁴⁵⁷ Although I follow Manyul Im's proposition that *qi* control is relevant in all these cases, my understanding of the relationship between courage, *qi* and the unmoved heart is slightly different from that of Im. Im holds that "courage is directly relevant, or perhaps equivalent, to possessing an unmoved heart." I think courage is directly associated with *qi* and the flood-like *qi* is in turn relevant to the attainment of the unmoved heart. Lee Rainey has also correctly observed that "according to Mencius, *qi* has, or is, courage." See Manyul Im, "Moral Knowledge and Self Control in Mengzi" 66-70, esp. 66; Lee Rainey, "Mencius and His Vast Overflowing *Qi* (Haoran Zhi Qi)," *Monumenta Serica* 46 (1998):103.

⁴⁵⁸ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 2.189-192. Translation, with moderations, by Van Norden, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, 36.

You considers a small humiliation to be unbearable, and looks upon stabbing the ruler as being the same as stabbing a common person; Mengshi She looks upon victory on battlefield as being equal to defeat. They both actively engage their mind in gauging the situations and let their *zhi* 志, the direction of their mind, command the *qi*. As a result, they can summon enough *qi* to undertake courageous acts.

Thus Beigong You and Mengshi She are good examples of how a determined mind can summon adequate *qi* to act as it wills 志至焉，氣次焉. They do not passively respond to external circumstances, i.e., letting external circumstances affect their *qi* and their *qi*, in turn, affect the direction of their mind. As Mencius states later in 2 A 2, overwhelming external circumstances [such as facing a person of high rank or being confronted with a strong enemy on the battlefield in the case of Bei Gongyou and Mengshi She] can cause one to stumble or quiver, leading to the dissipation of *qi*, which in turn affects the heart.

Mencius states explicitly that Mengshi She can guard his *qi* 守氣. He does not explicitly say that Beigong You can firmly hold on to his *qi*. But guarding the *qi* is involved in both cases, as the above discussion shows. Also, it was a common assumption in the Warring States period that one can hardly act courageously without adequate *qi*, as the anecdote from *Zuozhuan* reveals. The difference between Mengshi She and Beigong You, however, is that the former not only guards his *qi*, but also holds on to the crucial 守約. Why does Mencius say that Mengshi She can preserve something crucial, yet Beigong You cannot? This is probably because the guiding principles underlying their mental calculations are different. What Beigong You cares about is his personal dignity and what motivates him to fight bravely is his unwillingness to bear insult or humiliation. In contrast,

Mengshi She is concerned with the victory of the state and what motivates him to fight fearlessly is the honor of the state. Apparently, Mengshi She is fighting for a higher purpose than Beigong You. Mengshi She's courage, however, is not yet the best.

昔者曾子謂子襄曰：“子好勇乎？吾嘗聞大勇於夫子矣：自反而不縮，雖褐寬博，吾不慄焉；自反而縮，雖千萬人，吾往矣。孟施舍之守氣，又不如曾子之守約也。”

Formerly, Zengzi said to his disciple Zixiang, 'Are you fond of courage? I once heard about great courage from Kongzi: If I examine myself and am not upright, even if opposed by a man in baggy rags, would I not tremble with fear? If I examine myself and am upright, even if it is thousands or tens of thousands of people who oppose me, I shall go forward.' Meng Shishe's preserving his *qi* was not as good as Zengzi's preserving what is crucial."⁴⁵⁹

In this passage, Mengshi She, who is praised as superior to Beigong You at grasping the crucial, is described as inferior to Zengzi. Why is Zengzi the best at grasping the crucial? In what way is Zengzi superior to the other two? The answer, again, lies in the underlying principles that guide their mental calculations. Zengzi is not always fearless. When Zengzi finds himself not to be upright (*suo* 縮), he trembles with fear. What motivates Zengzi to retreat or to move forward is whether he is morally right or wrong. This type of self-reflection (*zifan* 自反) is apparently absent in Beigong You and Mengshi She. Beigong You's demonstration of courage can, under certain circumstances, be purely rash and impudent. For example, he might stare back at a person without realizing that he was stared at simply because he had stepped on the other's feet. Also, lacking in morally-enlightened self-reflection, Beigong You might never realize that the real shame is one's own shameful motivation or behavior, but not insult from others. Likewise, Mengshi She's fearlessness on the battlefield might be completely misguided, for the war that he participates in might

⁴⁵⁹ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 2.193, Lau, *Mencius*, 61. Translation, with moderations, by Van Norden, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, 36-37.

be unjust. Therefore, true courage, as is demonstrated in the case of Zengzi, must be morally enlightened.

In spite of the differences in the guiding principle, the three cases all involve the summoning and control of *qi*. And, unlike the externally incited *qi* that easily dwindles, the courageous *qi* in these accounts is generated through careful calculation, is built up internally, and thus is more sustainable. This type of *qi* provides one with the strength and stamina to move forward irrespective of possible oppositions, difficulties and defeats. It is not as easily susceptible to the influence of external circumstances.

Nonetheless, there is a fundamental difference between the way in which Beigong You and Mengshi She summon *qi* and the way of Zengzi. Zengzi's *qi*, like the flood-like *qi* that Mencius discusses later on, is an "ethically informed" *qi* that gives one the moral stamina to persevere in the face of dangers, challenges, and setbacks.⁴⁶⁰ This is the second aspect that sets Mencian *qi* apart from the contemporary perceptions of *qi*. Mencius' flood-like *qi* is unique in that it has both a physical and moral dimension.⁴⁶¹ Mencius' innovation of *qi* lies precisely in that he borrows a contemporarily popular physical notion but gives it a moral dimension.

The nature of this ethical *qi* and the unique way to generate and cultivate it are delineated below.

⁴⁶⁰ For more on the "ethically-informed" *qi*, see Van Norden, "Introduction" in *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentary*, xxxix.

⁴⁶¹ The above discussion on courage and *qi* is highly indebted to Manyul Im, "Moral Knowledge and Self Control in Mengzi." For more on courage in *Mencius*, see Philip J. Ivanhoe, "Mengzi's Conception of Courage," *Dao* 5.2 (2006): 221-34, Jiang Xinyan, "Mencius on Human Nature and Courage," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 24.3 (1997): 265-89. Reprinted in *Essays on the Moral Philosophy of Mengzi*, eds. Xiusheng Liu and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Indianapolis and Cambridge, Mass.: Hackett, 2002), 143-62.

吾善養吾浩然之氣。... 其為氣也，至大至剛，以直養而無害，則塞于天地之間。其為氣也，配義與道；無是，餒也。是集義所生者，非義襲而取之也。行有不慊於心，則餒矣。我故曰，告子未嘗知義，以其外之也。必有事焉而勿正心，勿忘，勿助長也。

I am good at cultivating my floodlike *qi*. ...It is a *qi* that is supremely great and supremely unyielding. If one cultivates it with uprightness and does not harm it, it will fill up the space between Heaven and Earth. It is a *qi* that unites with righteousness and the Way. Without these, it starves. It is produced by accumulating righteousness. It cannot be obtained by a seizure of righteousness. If some of one's actions leave one's heart unsatisfied, it will starve. Consequently, I say that Gaozi never understood righteousness, because he regarded it as external.⁴⁶² Therefore, one must attend to [the heart], instead of correcting it. One shall not forget it, yet at the same time, not to help it to grow.⁴⁶³

This short passage contains one of the most important statements in *Mencius*. Not only is it a key to understanding Mencian moral self-cultivation, but also it is very revealing of Mencius' perception of human physiology, psychology, and spirituality. In this passage, Mencius first describes the nature of the flood-like *qi*. This *qi* is held to be extremely powerful and capable. Not only is it the basic physical constitution which can transform one's entire person when it is properly nurtured,⁴⁶⁴ but also it can be projected outwardly to influence the whole world.⁴⁶⁵

To better understand the *qi* that fills up the space between Heaven and Earth, it is necessary to refer to *Mencius* 7 A 13, where Mencius describes moral exemplars as flowing together with Heaven and Earth: "A gentleman transforms where he is passing through, and works wonders where he abides. He is in the same stream as Heaven above and Earth

⁴⁶² *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 2.200-202. Translation by Van Norden, *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, 39, with slight moderation.

⁴⁶³ Translation of this part my own.

⁴⁶⁴ For discussion of the transforming effect of moral cultivation on the body in *Mencius*, see ns. 451-453 above.

⁴⁶⁵ Lee Rainey associates the *qi* that fills up the space between Heaven and Earth with *yuanyi* 元氣, the original *qi* of the universe. This association seems to be forced. For one thing, Mencius is least concerned with cosmology. For another, *yuanyi* is a Han concept not yet known in the time of Mencius. The source Lee Rainey herself cites in the discussion of *yuanyi* (i.e., *Lunheng* by Wang Chong) shows that *yuanyi* is a popular Han term. See Lee Rainey, "Mencius and His Vast Overflowing *Qi*," 102-103.

below. Can he be said to bring but small benefit? 夫君子所過者化，所存者神，上下與天地同流，豈曰小補之哉?⁴⁶⁶ As the context of 7 A 13 reveals, flowing with Heaven and Earth is a figurative representation of the transforming effect of the sage kings on the common people.⁴⁶⁷ Similarly, the *qi* that fills up the space between Heaven and Earth describes figuratively the power and influence of the gentleman's morally-cultivated *qi*.

Next, Mencius elaborates on how the flood-like *qi* can be produced and cultivated. It is a *qi* that unites with righteousness and the *dao* 配義與道, and can be produced by accumulating righteousness 是集義所生者. The proper interpretation of *yi* 義 and *dao* 道 is therefore key to understanding Mencius' methods of *qi* cultivation. *Yi* is glossed as *renyi* 仁義 or *yili* 義理 by Zhao Qi 趙岐, with the former connoting an ethical attribute and latter, a principle of action.⁴⁶⁸ As an ethical attribute, *yi* is one of the four cardinal virtues growing from the heart of *xiu wu* 羞惡之心, the sense of [ethical] shame, as described in 2 A 6.⁴⁶⁹ Kwong-Loi Shun holds that *yi* as an ethical attribute has to do with a firm commitment to ethical standards.⁴⁷⁰ As a quality of action, *yi* is often associated with *li* 禮, the ritually appropriate, as Robert Eno and Kwong-Loi Shun have observed.⁴⁷¹ But unlike

⁴⁶⁶ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 7.895, Lau, *Mencius*, 290-291.

⁴⁶⁷ In a sentence that precedes the above statement, Mencius comments, "The people move daily towards goodness without realizing who it is that brings this about" 民日遷善而不知為之者. See *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 7.894, Lau, *Mencius*, 290-291.

⁴⁶⁸ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 2.200.

⁴⁶⁹ According to Kwong-Loi Shun, *xiu* is the reaction when one finds oneself to act or be treated below certain standards, whereas *wu* stresses the attitude of dislike or aversion toward one's own action or toward what happens to one. Van Norden thinks there is no need to make a clear distinction between *xiu* and *wu*, for *xiuwu* as a binome corresponds roughly to the sense of shame. More importantly, Van Norden also raises the issue of the distinction between conventional shame and ethical shame. For more on the heart of *xiuwu*, see Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 58-61; Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, 258-266, esp. 264.

⁴⁷⁰ Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 62.

⁴⁷¹ Robert Eno, *Confucian Creation of Heaven*, 113; Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 56-57.

li, which can be violated under certain circumstances, *yi* is the right course of action in all circumstances, according to Shun.⁴⁷²

That Mencius does not endorse the strict observation of ritual propriety in all circumstances can be seen by his advocacy for the concept of *quan* 權, measuring the pros and cons of different options on a moral scale before selecting the optimal course of action.⁴⁷³ In 4 A 17, Mencius clearly states that it is correct to stretch out a helping hand when one's sister-in-law is drowning, instead of strictly abiding by the ritual injunction that "man and woman should not touch each other" 男女授受不親, 禮也; 嫂溺援之以手者, 權也.⁴⁷⁴ The source of moral discretion [i.e., what is the right action under each circumstance], for Mencius, should be one's heart. As *Mencius* 6 A 7 describes, *yi* is what the heart regards as both correct and pleasant. "What is it that all hearts agree to be right? Reason and rightness.... Thus reason and righteousness please my heart in the same way as meat pleases my palate" 心之所同然者何也? 謂理也, 義也...故理義之悅我心, 猶芻豢之悅我口.⁴⁷⁵

Taking into consideration all the above-mentioned aspects, we find the best commentary on "*qi* uniting with *yi* and *dao*" to be that of Li Fu 李紱 (1673-1750):⁴⁷⁶ "*Yi*

⁴⁷² Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 57.

⁴⁷³ For more on *quan*, see Griet Vankeerberghen, "Choosing Balance: Weighing (*quan*) as a Metaphor for Action in Early Chinese Texts," *Early China* 30 (2005-06): 47-89; Paul R. Goldin, "The Theme of the Primacy of the Situation in Classical Chinese Philosophy and Rhetoric," *Asia Major* (third series) 18.2 (2005): 1-25.

⁴⁷⁴ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 4.521, Lau, *Mencius*, 163.

⁴⁷⁵ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6.765, Lau, *Mencius*, 251. Translation with moderations.

⁴⁷⁶ Li Fu was a Qing-dynasty scholar official at the courts of Emperor Yongzheng 雍正 and Qianlong 乾隆. Li Fu is both an upright official and an erudite scholar, known for his studies of the Confucian classics as well as of history. His works include the *Philosophical Lineages of Master Lu* 陸子學譜 in twenty volumes and the *Philosophical Lineages of Master Zhu in His Older Age* 朱子晚年學譜 in twenty volumes and the *Records of the Studies of Wang YangMing* 陽明學錄. As a follower of the Neo-Confucianist Lu Xiangshan

is what one's heart decides to do. The decisions are made when one is confronted with specific affairs [situations]. *Yi* is the heart of shame” 心之制裁為義，因事而發，羞惡之心。⁴⁷⁷ Based on Li Fu's commentary, we interpret *yi* in this passage as what one's heart approves to be the appropriate course of action based on its moral discretion and in concordance with its moral predispositions.

The original meaning of *dao* is the path that one walks on. Figuratively, it refers to the principle that one adheres to and the course of action that one is inclined to take. The connotation of *dao* in *Mencius* is not always positive. While exalting “the *dao* of Confucius” 仲尼之道 and “the *dao* of the gentlemen” 儒者之道, Mencius would very likely disagree with the “the *dao* of wives and concubines” 妾婦之道, and would certainly spare no effort in condemning “the *dao* of Yang Zhu and Mo Di” 楊墨之道.⁴⁷⁸ In other contexts, when *not* specified as the way of a certain person or a group of people, *dao* often refers to the principle or course that Mencius himself endorses, for example, as in “When the Way prevails in the Empire men of small virtue serve men of great virtue” 天下有道，小德役大德⁴⁷⁹ and in “there is a proper way to seek it” 求之有道.⁴⁸⁰

陸象山, Li Fu believes scholars should put their principles into practice and devote their learnings into assisting the worldly affairs 躬身實踐而歸之於匡時濟世. Qian Mu 錢穆 ranked him as one of the most important Qing scholars of the Lu-Wang lineage 陸王學派.

⁴⁷⁷ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 2.201.

⁴⁷⁸ It should be noted that the Mohists use the word *dao* in the same sense too. As Chad Hansen observes, “*Dao* could be bad, crooked, wasteful or, like Confucius' *dao*, simply wrong. Mozi wanted a new and more beneficial *dao*^{way} to guide that training process.” See Chad Hansen, *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 106.

⁴⁷⁹ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 4.495, Lau, *Mencius*, 155.

⁴⁸⁰ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 7.882, Lau, *Mencius*, 287.

Dao in this passage is also closely related to *yi*.⁴⁸¹ Li Fu defines *dao* as “the path that a person steps on with his shoes” 身所踐履為道,⁴⁸² representing, figuratively, what one puts into practice. And he further elaborates that “to act by following the [correct] principle means that one is able to lead one’s *xing* [i.e., to grasp the *dao*]” 順理而行，即率性之謂 [道] 也。⁴⁸³ On how *qi* is related to *yi* and *dao*, he comments, “There are situations in which the heart knows what is right and wrong, yet is unable to make the correct decision. These are cases where *qi* has not been united with *yi*” 嘗有心知其事之是非而不敢斷者，氣不足以配義也. “There are also situations in which the heart can make the correct decision, yet the body is unable to carry it out. These are cases where *qi* has not been united with *dao*” 亦有心能斷其是非而身不敢行者，氣不足以配道也。⁴⁸⁴

Therefore, both internal moral judgment and external moral conduct are essential for the Mencian cultivation of *qi*. The heart first makes the correct decision and then the person carries it out. The importance of sticking to righteous acts is reiterated in this statement: “Whenever some of one’s actions leave one’s heart unsatisfied [falling short of the heart’s standard], *qi* will starve” 行有不慊於心，則餒矣. *Xing* 行, action, can be identified with *dao*, the path one walks on, or the principle one puts into practice, for apparently, when one’s actions fail to reach the heart’s standards, one is not walking on the path of

⁴⁸¹ As Kwong-Loi Shun observes, *yi* is often related to a path or the *dao* in *Mencius*. See Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 56.

⁴⁸² Unlike Zhao Qi, who, under the sway of Han dynasty intellectual atmosphere, interprets *dao* as the Heavenly Way, Li Fu, under the influence of the evidential-proof 考據 tradition of Qing dynasty, makes an interpretation of *dao* that matches its literal meaning and is consistent with its connotations in *Mencius* in general.

⁴⁸³ Here Li Fu is referring to the “*Zhong yong*”: “leading one’s *xing* is called the *dao*” 率性之謂道. See Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 17.

⁴⁸⁴ Mengzi Zhengyi, 201.

righteousness. The above statement, together with the assertion that *qi* is produced by accumulating righteousness, stresses the importance of continuous and persistent conduct of moral acts out of appropriate motivations in the cultivation of the ethical *qi*.

Another important concept here is *xin*. As discussed above, *xin* is the origin of *yi*. *Xin* offers a reliable standard to gauge one's actions. As David Nivison points out, for Mencius "our innate moral feelings and dispositions (our 'heart' *xin* 心) are also an indispensable source of guidance."⁴⁸⁵ Indeed, there is plenty of evidence in *Mencius* indicating that *xin* is seen as a source of guidance, with the following passage from 2 A 6 being perhaps the most frequently cited.

所以謂人皆有不忍人之心者，今人乍見孺子將入於井，皆有怵惕惻隱之心。非所以內交於孺子之父母也，非所以要譽於鄉黨朋友也，非惡其聲而然也。由是觀之，無惻隱之心，非人也；無羞惡之心，非人也；無辭讓之心，非人也；無是非之心，非人也。惻隱之心，仁之端也；羞惡之心，義之端也；辭讓之心，禮之端也；是非之心，智之端也。人之有是四端也，猶其有四體也。

My reason for saying that no man is devoid of a heart sensitive to the suffering of others is this. Suppose a man were, all of a sudden, to see a young child on the verge of falling into a well. He would certainly be moved to compassion, not because he wanted to get in the good graces of the parents, nor because he wished to win the praise of his fellow villagers or friends, nor yet because he disliked the cry of the child. From this it can be seen that whoever is devoid of the heart of compassion is not human, whoever is devoid of the heart of shame is not human, whoever is devoid of the heart of courtesy and modesty is not human, and whoever is devoid of the heart of right and wrong is not human. The heart of compassion is the beginning of benevolence; the heart of shame, of righteousness; the heart of courtesy and modesty, of observance of the rites; the heart of right and wrong, of wisdom. Man has these four beginnings just as he has four limbs.⁴⁸⁶

Here the innate moral beginnings (*siduan* 四端)⁴⁸⁷ common to all human beings are described as the four "hearts." From the above description of the four hearts we can tell

⁴⁸⁵ Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism*, 8.

⁴⁸⁶ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 2.233-35, Lau, *Mencius*, 72-73. Translation with moderations.

⁴⁸⁷ *Duan* 端 literally means the tip. *Siduan* 四端 is commonly translated into the Four Sprouts or Germs of virtue because of the prevalence of plant metaphors in *Mencius*. Following Paul R. Goldin, we translate it into the "Four Beginnings" of virtue. See Goldin, *Confucianism*, 45.

that they encompass both cognitive and affective aspects.⁴⁸⁸ The heart of compassion is purely affective. The heart of right and wrong and the heart of courtesy, i.e. the potential to gauge what is correct and appropriate behavior, are on the cognitive side. The heart of shame involves both cognitive and emotive aspects. It somewhat overlaps with the heart of right and wrong, for shame or aversion/anger is derived from the cognition that one acts or is treated below the appropriate standard. *Xin* thus possesses emotional reactions that may prompt one to do good as well as the cognitive capacity to make sound judgments that may prompt one to walk on the right path.

Before we move on to discuss how Mencius reacts to the Gaozi- “Neiye” strand of self-cultivation, some questions remain to be addressed. First, given that *xin* possesses all the necessary resources to make it a reliable guide, why can’t it make the correct decision in certain circumstances, as Li Fu claims?

As discussed above, Li Fu observes that *yi* 義 is the correct decision made by the heart in response to specific situations. Although *xin* has *the capacity* to provide correct guidance, this potential can hardly be actualized in all circumstances. The dialogue between King Xuan of Qi 齊宣王 and Mencius in 1 A 7 is a good illustration. That King Xuan possesses the “heart of compassion” is attested by his inability to bear seeing an ox that is to be slaughtered for sacrifice. When the king orders that the ox be spared, his “heart of compassion” is actualized. Yet apparently this “heart of compassion” has not been actualized in more demanding situations, since the king fails to notice that his people are

⁴⁸⁸ That *xin* has both cognitive and affective aspects has been a consensus among scholars. For example, see Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 48; Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, 217.

suffering because of his unkind policies. To actualize his “heart of compassion,” Mencius suggests, King Xuan only needs “to take this very heart here and apply it to what is over there” 舉斯心加諸彼而已。⁴⁸⁹ This process is called extension (*tui* 推), one of the key concepts in Mencian moral cultivation.⁴⁹⁰ The extension of proper emotional reactions in one situation to other situations can motivate one to act properly in all circumstances, as the passage below from 7 B 31 suggests.

人皆有所不忍，達之於其所忍，仁也；人皆有所不為，達之於其所為，義也。人能充無欲害人之心，而仁不可勝用也；人能充無穿踰之心，而義不可勝用也。人能充無受爾汝之實，無所往而不為義也。

For every man there are things he cannot bear. To extend this to what he can bear is benevolence. For every man there are things he is not willing to do. To extend this to what he is willing to do is rightness. If a man can extend to the full his natural aversion to harming others, then there will be an over-abundance of benevolence. If a man can extend his dislike for boring holes and climbing over walls, then there will be an over-abundance of rightness. If a man can extend his unwillingness to suffer the actual humiliation of being addressed as ‘thou’ and ‘thee,’ then wherever he goes he will not do anything that is not right.⁴⁹¹

The extension of compassion is a process in which one cultivates one’s sensitivity to the needs of other people, a process in which one’s love of those for whom one has more natural affection is extended to those for whom one has less affection,⁴⁹² and a process in which one’s care for others is extended from more readily noticeable situations to less readily noticeable situations.

⁴⁸⁹ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 1.87, Lau, *Mencius*, 18-19.

⁴⁹⁰ For more on the role of extension in Mencian moral self-cultivation, see P. J. Ivanhoe, “Confucian Self Cultivation and Mengzi’s Notion of Extension,” in *Essays on the Moral Philosophy of Mengzi*, 221–41, Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, 234-246.

⁴⁹¹ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 1.1007-1008, Lau, *Mencius*, 322-23.

⁴⁹² This is best seen in the well-known sayings in 1 A 7, “Treat the aged of your own family in a manner befitting their venerable age and extend this treatment to the aged of other families; treat your own young in a manner befitting their tender age and extend this to the young of other families” 老吾老，以及人之老；幼吾幼，以及人之幼. See *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 1.86, Lao, 18-19.

Second, why would *xin*, having made the correct decision, sometimes fail to have its order executed? (I.e., under what circumstances would one's actions fall short of the standard of one's *xin* and leave one's *xin* displeased?) This sounds similar to the Apostle Paul's claim in Romans 7: 18, "For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." Yet Mencius never talks about the "weakness of the flesh." Instead he suggests that the king fails to practice kindness due to his "refusal to act, not to an inability to act" 是不為也，非不能也。⁴⁹³ Probably, for a king who has many resources at his disposal, extending kindness is easy. Yet for the ordinary people, especially those who have been stranded in economic difficulties, doing good can be more challenging. Mencius does admit the negative effect of environment on the cultivation of virtues. He observes that "In bad years, young men are mostly violent" 凶歲，子弟多暴，⁴⁹⁴ and that "the people will not have constant hearts if they are without constant means. Lacking constant hearts, they will go astray and fall into excesses, stopping at nothing" 若民，則無恆產，因無恆心。苟無恆心，放辟，邪侈，無不為已。⁴⁹⁵ Nonetheless, Mencius insists that those who have been through rigorous self-cultivation will be able to stick to moral standards in any situation. "Only a gentleman can have a constant heart in spite of a lack of constant means of support" 無恆產而有恆心者，惟士為能。⁴⁹⁶

Yet how can we account for the fact that a gentleman can overcome his circumstances, whereas the ordinary people often become victims of the environment? One

⁴⁹³ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 1.85, Lau, *Mencius*, 18-19.

⁴⁹⁴ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6.759, Lau, *Mencius*, 248-49.

⁴⁹⁵ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 1.94, Lau, *Mencius*, 22-23.

⁴⁹⁶ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 1.93, Lau, *Mencius*, 22-23.

possible answer, as Goldin suggests, is that there are conflicting factors in humans to determine their actions: *xin*, the greater part (*dati* 大體) and sense organs, the lesser parts (*xiaoti* 小體).⁴⁹⁷ Seduced by their desires (such as those for food and sex), people voluntarily forsake the precious gift of reflecting on their moral conduct and allow themselves to behave bad.⁴⁹⁸

Another possible answer lies in the aforementioned notion of *qi*, which conveys the physical weakness/strength as well as the moral weakness/strength. As discussed above, although *xin* is seen to be a reliable source of guidance, it is nonetheless susceptible to the impact of *qi* 氣也, 而反動其心, and *qi*, in turn, is susceptible to the influence of external environment, as in many contemporary texts. The disturbing effect of *qi* may account for the reason why *xin*'s direction can be moved and why its order cannot be carried out. The lack of adequate *qi* is precisely the reason for the gap between “loving good” and “doing good,”⁴⁹⁹ for without the moral strength, it would be impossible for us to act good, in spite of our willingness to do good. Therefore, Mencius does admit the impact of physical weakness on the mind and on the cultivation of virtue.

On the other hand, if the “ethically-informed *qi*” is gradually cultivated, it will be capable of unlimited expansion, providing one with the moral stamina to perform virtuous acts irrespective of the negative influence from external environment and one's own physical weakness. This is exactly why the gentleman who has been through rigorous self-

⁴⁹⁷ In *Mencius* 6 A 15, Mencius explains to his disciple Gongduzi 公都子 that *xin* is the “greater part,” and the sense organs (*er mu zhi guan* 耳目之官) are the lesser parts. See *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6. 792.

⁴⁹⁸ See Goldin, *Confucianism*, 53-54.

⁴⁹⁹ For discussion of the gap, see Nivison, “The Paradox of Virtue,” in *The Ways of Confucianism*, 36-38.

cultivation can possess a “constant heart” in spite of economic difficulties. The uniqueness of Mencian moral philosophy is that he draws on the current notion of *qi*, which is primarily physical, and gives it an ethical dimension.⁵⁰⁰ It is precisely the introduction of this ethical *qi* that makes Mencian theory of moral cultivation a realistic and appealing one.

As is seen in 2 A 2, cultivation of *qi* is a cumulative process. Each time one does good out of proper motivations, *qi* is cultivated, and the tendency of development toward mature virtue is reinforced. As one moves from easier tasks such as love for one’s parents, deference to one’s elder brothers, and rejecting food given in a humiliating manner, to more challenging tasks such as efforts to relieve the sufferings of a stranger and to reject the temptations of a high rank or huge salary received at the cost of dignity or uprightness, *qi* is gradually built up, till one attains the moral stamina of doing good voluntarily in all circumstances. As David Nivison observes, when one expresses “impulses to affection and respect in family relation situations” in appropriate behavior, a feeling of satisfaction follows. And the impulse becomes stronger by reinforcement. In the process, “one’s capacity for natural unforced moral action expands and more action is possible.”⁵⁰¹

To reiterate the importance of persistent, but unforced efforts in moral cultivation, Mencius adopts several metaphors involving plants.⁵⁰² Crops have a natural propensity to grow and ripen in due time, provided that they are given consistent attendance. A good farmer simply waters, fertilizes, and weeds them at the proper time and then waits patiently for them to come to fruition in due time. A bad farmer, on the other hand, would try to

⁵⁰⁰ For more on ethical dimension of *qi*, see Lee Rainey, “Mencius and His Vast Overflowing *Qi*,” 99-100; Manyul Im, “Moral Knowledge and Self Control in Mengzi,” 71

⁵⁰¹ Nivison, “The Paradox of Virtue,” 40.

⁵⁰² Including those in 2 A 2, 6 A 9 and 6 A 20.

expedite their growth through artificial efforts, like the one from the state of Song,⁵⁰³ or attend to them only sporadically. “Even a plant that grows most readily will not survive if it is placed in the sun for one day and exposed to the cold for ten” 雖有天下易生之物也，一日暴之、十日寒之，未有能生者也。⁵⁰⁴ As Graham puts it, “The moral energy ... grows inside us in its own time, we cannot seize it all at once from somewhere outside us.”⁵⁰⁵ Indeed, Mencian moral cultivation involves long-term continuous effort. Mencius admits that he attains the “unmoved heart” at the age of forty. And, as recorded in the *Analects*, Confucius attains the status of “following my heart’s desire without overstepping the line at the age of seventy” 七十而從心所欲不逾矩。⁵⁰⁶

Nonetheless, Mencius does not wish to discourage people from self-cultivation. Another important message conveyed by plant metaphors is that becoming virtuous is a natural propensity that everyone is endowed with. This propensity, according to Mencius, is primarily what constitutes *xing* 性, human nature. Mencius thus reacts against the contemporary notion of *xing* as all “the natural tendency of human development over the course of a lifetime,” as Graham’s seminal study reveals.⁵⁰⁷ And as Kwong-Loi Shun points out, “What is novel about his views on *xing* is that he regarded *xing* as constituted primarily by the development of the ethical predispositions of the heart/mind.”⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰³ The story of a farmer of Song who attempts to help his plants grow by pulling them up is recorded at the end of *Mencius 2 A 2*.

⁵⁰⁴ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6.779, Lau, *Mencius*, 252-53.

⁵⁰⁵ Graham, “The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature,” 31.

⁵⁰⁶ *Lunyu jishi*, 76, Lau, *Mencius*, 11.

⁵⁰⁷ Graham, “The Background of the Mencian theory of Human Nature,” 7-66. For more on Mencian theory of *xing*, see Irene Bloom, “Human Nature and Biological Nature in Mencius,” *Philosophy East and West* 47. 1 (1997): 21-32.

⁵⁰⁸ Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 198. As Bloom and Shun observe, *xing* in Mencius does include the biological tendencies, only these tendencies should be under constraints.

According to Shun, the pragmatic reason for Mencius to hold that *xing* has an innate moral direction is to motivate people toward ethical cultivation: moral cultivation is what we naturally do as human beings.⁵⁰⁹

Besides his innovative use of *xing*, Mencius adopts two other important concepts to indicate that humans are naturally disposed toward virtuous acts: the aforementioned *duan* 端, beginnings of virtue, and *cai* 才, the native capacity to become virtuous. In the passage below, Mencius explains how, for some people, the propensity of *xing* cannot be brought about, and the *cai* capacity cannot be actualized. This passage is also key to understanding Mencian moral philosophy, for it offers a reasonable account for the tension between human propensity to grow virtuous and the widespread phenomenon of immorality.

牛山之木嘗美矣，以其郊於大國也，斧斤伐之，可以為美乎？是其日夜之所息，雨露之所潤，非無萌蘖之生焉，牛羊又從而牧之，是以若彼濯濯也。人見其濯濯也，以為未嘗有材焉，此豈山之性也哉？雖存乎人者，豈無仁義之心哉？其所以放其良心者，亦猶斧斤之於木也，旦旦而伐之，可以為美乎？其日夜之所息，平旦之氣，其好惡與人相近也者幾希，則其旦晝之所為，有梏亡之矣。梏之反覆，則其夜氣不足以存；夜氣不足以存，則其違禽獸不遠矣。人見其禽獸也，而以為未嘗有才焉者，是豈人之情也哉？故苟得其養，無物不長；苟失其養，無物不消。

There was a time when the trees were luxuriant on the Ox Mountain, but as it is on the outskirts of a great metropolis, the trees are constantly lopped by axes. Is it any wonder that they are no longer fine? With the respite they get in the day and in the night, and the moistening by the rain and dew, there is certainly no lack of new shoots coming out, but then the cattle and sheep come to graze upon the mountain. That is why it is as bald as it is. People, seeing only its baldness, tend to think that it never had any trees. But can that possibly be the nature of a mountain? Can what is in man be completely lacking in moral inclinations? A man's letting go of his true heart is like what the axes do to the trees. When the trees are lopped day after day, is it any wonder that they are no longer fine? If, in spite of the nourishment a man gets in the day and in the night and of the effect of the morning *qi* on him, scarcely any of his likes and dislikes resembles those of other men, it is because what he does in the course of the day once again dissipates what he has gained. If this dissipation happens repeatedly, then the influence of the night *qi* will no longer be able to preserve what was originally in him, and when that happens, the man is not far removed from an animal. Others, seeing his resemblance to an animal, will be led to think that he never had any native

⁵⁰⁹ Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 199.

endowment. But can that be what a man is genuinely like? Hence, given the right nourishment there is nothing that will not grow, when deprived of it there is nothing that will not wither away.⁵¹⁰

Ye qi 夜氣 here stands for natural resources sustaining the growth of trees, as well as moral resources sustaining our moral development. Although we are all endowed with moral resources, persistently doing bad can squander them, as persistently doing good can build them up. As the ethical *qi* dissipates, the incipient moral sprouts, without nourishment, are no longer able to grow properly. In the long run, the propensity for the innate human moral sprouts to ripen into mature virtue can be thwarted if the forces impeding its development outweigh the forces sustaining it. Apparently, it seems to be the external force that thwarts the growth of moral sprouts, for in the parable, Ox Mountain becomes bald due to the grazing of animals and chopping of axes. But a careful analysis will show that this is probably not the case. The key to understand whether it is the inner factor or the external environment that causes the dissipation lies in this sentence: “What he does in the course of the day once again dissipates what he has gained” 其旦晝之所為，有梏亡之矣, which clearly shows that the ax chopping a man’s moral sprouts is his own conduct. Once again, the importance of conscious long-term self-cultivation is emphasized.

In summary, Mencian self-cultivation is a process of persistent conduct of moral acts (*dao* 道 and *xing* 行) out of proper motivations rooted in the *xin* (*yi* 義), which leads to a gradual increase in moral stamina (*qi*), enabling one to hold fast to virtue in increasingly challenging situations, till one attains an “unmoved heart” and may put the ethical rules into practice in whatever circumstance one encounters. In this process of moral

⁵¹⁰ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6.775-77, Lau, *Mencius*, 251.

cultivation, not only is the “ethically-informed” *qi* nourished, but also the innate moral beginnings grow into full-fledged virtue, and the tendency of growth proper to a human being (*xing* 性), is fulfilled.

Part IV The Mencian Reaction to the Gaozi- “Neiye” Self-Cultivation

i Rectifying the *xin* Versus Attending to the *xin*

After elaborating on his way of cultivating the flood-like *qi*, Mencius offers several warnings, with the first one being: “you must attend to your heart, but not to rectify it” 必有事焉而勿正心. As discussed before, this is a reaction to the practice of *zhengxin* 正心 prescribed in “Neiye,” which is very likely also what Gaozi endorses. What underlies the different methods recommended by the Mencian and Gaozi- “Neiye” traditions, however, is their different perceptions of the *xin*.

Xin in *Mencius* is depicted as the location of the sprouts of virtue and a reliable source of guidance. In particular, *xin* possesses emotive, cognitive and volitional dimensions, which work together to provide proper motivations and sufficient resources for one to perform virtuous acts, as will be illustrated below.

The role of emotion is highlighted in Mencian self-cultivation. Mencius reiterates that good actions can leave our hearts pleased 慊於心, and that reason and righteousness please our hearts 理義之悅我心.⁵¹¹ He also mentions that righteousness is what we desire

⁵¹¹ See n. 475 above.

義我所欲也。The following passage from 4 A 27 states that virtues of benevolence and righteousness can bring us great delight and joy.

仁之實，事親是也；義之實，從兄是也...樂之實，樂斯二者，樂則生矣

The essence of benevolence is the serving of one's parents; the essence of righteousness is obedience to one's elder brothers... the essence of music is the joy that comes of delighting in them [benevolence and righteousness].⁵¹²

What is more, shame and anger, though commonly viewed as negative emotions, are seen in *Mencius* to be precisely the source of righteousness. As the thought experiment in the following passage from 6 A 10 suggests, anger aroused when one's dignity and fame are at stake will lead one to righteous acts.

一簞食，一豆羹，得之則生，弗得則死。噉爾而與之，行道之人弗受；蹴爾而與之，乞人不屑也。

Here is a basketful of rice and a bowlful of soup. Getting them will mean life; not getting them will mean death. When these are given with abuse, even a wayfarer would not accept them; when these are given after being trampled upon, even a beggar would not accept them.⁵¹³

Mencius never suggests that we should moderate or control emotions. As Manyul Im points out, “modulation of one's emotional responses would not be an option for the aspiring nobleman or sage.”⁵¹⁴ Im even goes so far as to claim “that the Mencian virtuous person is, in an important sense, mastered by rather than master of his passions.”⁵¹⁵ Indeed, a key step in Mencian self-cultivation is to apply the naturally-generated emotional

⁵¹² Mengzi Zhengyi, 4.532, Lau, *Mencius*, 168-69. Translation with slight moderations.

⁵¹³ Mengzi Zhengyi, 6.784, Lau, *Mencius*, 255.

⁵¹⁴ Manyul Im, “Emotional Control and Virtue in the ‘Mencius,’” *Philosophy East and West* 49.1 (1999): 8.

⁵¹⁵ Im, “Emotional Control and Virtue,” 4.

impulses in one situation to other situations so that one can be prompted to act in a consistently benevolent and righteous way (*tui* 推).⁵¹⁶

The cognitive element of *xin* is highlighted in the following passage from 6 A 15.

耳目之官不思，而蔽於物，物交物，則引之而已矣。心之官則思，思則得之，不思則不得也。此天之所與我者，先立乎其大者，則其小者弗能奪也。

It is not the office of the ears and eyes to concentrate (*si* 思), and they are misled by things. Things interact with things and simply lead them along. But the office of the heart is to concentrate. If it concentrates then it will get [virtue]. If it does not concentrate, then it will not get it. This is what Heaven has given us. If one first takes one's stand on what is greater, then what is lesser will not be able to snatch it away. This is [how to] become a great person.⁵¹⁷

Xin is referred to elsewhere in 6 A 15 as “the greater part,” and the sensory organs, “the lesser parts.”⁵¹⁸ *Xin* is exalted as the most valuable part of the person⁵¹⁹ and held to be the site of the faculty of *si*, which is endowed by Heaven 此天之所與我者. Bryan W. Van Norden points out that the mental activity of *si* in *Mencius* should involve both the affective aspect of longing for and the cognitive aspect of thinking and judging.⁵²⁰ On the cognitive side, *si* is the capacity to make correct judgment and select the most appropriate course of action, without being clouded by external objects or misled by sensual desires. The assertion that Heaven endows man with the ability to *si* indicates that *si* is ranked as an indispensable moral capacity, for Heaven is consistently viewed as the source of ethical

⁵¹⁶ See ns. 490-492 above.

⁵¹⁷ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6. 792. Translation by Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, 231.

⁵¹⁸ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6. 792.

⁵¹⁹ Notice that the “Qiwu lun” of *Zhuangzi* contains an allusion to 6 A 15, in which Zhuangzi refutes the Mencian view of *xin* and claims that each part of the person is equal and one should not regard one part as the ruler and the other parts as subordinates or concubines. See *Zhuangzi jiaquan*, 52, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 38.

⁵²⁰ See Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, 231-32.

order throughout the Confucian tradition and is specified in *Mencius* 7 A 1 as the moral norm that should be abided by under all circumstances.⁵²¹

Xin also has some volitional elements. As Phillip J. Ivanhoe observes, *xin* has “the ability to direct and focus attention on parts of the self, e.g., moral responses, and engage these for self-cultivation.”⁵²² As the “greater part” of a person, it has the authority to rule over the “lesser parts.” In most occasions, the cognitive, affective and volitional aspects of *xin* converge to motivate and enable one to do good: what *xin* approves is precisely what it is pleased with.⁵²³ What it is pleased with, it will direct and focus its attention on.

As a result, Mencius encourages people to use the faculty of *xin* to the utmost extent. “The sage... having taxed the faculty of *si* in his heart to its utmost capacity, he went on to practice government that tolerated no suffering, thus putting the whole Empire under the shelter of his benevolence” 聖人...既竭心思焉，繼之以不忍人之政，而仁覆天下矣。⁵²⁴

In contrast, “*Neiye*” casts doubt on both the emotive and cognitive dimensions of the *xin*. It states explicitly that various emotions may cause *xin* to lose its resilience and vitality.

凡心之刑，自充自盈，自生自成；其所以失之，必以憂樂喜怒欲利。能去憂樂喜怒欲利，心乃反濟。

The mind is formed in as such that it,
Is naturally full and naturally replete,
Naturally born and naturally perfected.
Should its function be impaired,
It is certain to be due to sorrow and happiness, joy and anger, desire and profit seeking.
If we can rid ourselves of sorrow and happiness, joy and anger, desire and profit seeking,

⁵²¹ Mengzi Zhengyi, 7.877-78, Lau, *Mencius*, 286-87. For more on Heaven in *Mencius*, see Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 208; For discussion of the tension between Heaven and man in *Mencius*, see Puett, *To Become a God*, 134-40. Puett holds that when conflict between Heaven and man occurs, one must accept the order of Heaven, i.e., to accept one’s political fate while persists in moral cultivation.

⁵²² Philip J. Ivanhoe, “Review of Mencius and Early Chinese Thought,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57.3 (1998): 838.

⁵²³ See n. 475 above.

⁵²⁴ Mengzi Zhengyi, 4.485, Lao, *Mencius*, 149. Translation with moderation.

The mind will revert to its flawless state.⁵²⁵

A similar message is reiterated toward the end of “Neiye”: “It is ever so that man’s life is certain to depend on equanimity and good judgment. Its loss is certain to be because of joy and anger, sorrow and suffering” 凡人之生也，必以平正；所以失之，必以喜怒憂患。⁵²⁶ “The vitality of all people inevitably comes from their peace of mind. When anxious, you lose this guiding thread; When angry, you lose this basic point. When you are anxious or sad, pleased or angry, the Way has no place within you to settle” 凡人之生也，必以其歡，憂則失紀，怒則失端，憂悲喜怒，道乃無處。⁵²⁷

“Neiye” holds that the vital essence is what enables one to attain profound knowledge of and mastery over the world, as well as what guarantees one’s health and vitality. But the vital essence can be secured in the person only if a peaceful and tranquil mind is maintained. Since emotions and desires are precisely what disturb the mind, causing it to lose its equanimity and tranquility, the control of emotions is stressed throughout “Neiye.” “Moderate the five desires and get rid of the two violent emotions. Be neither joyous nor angry, then equanimity and good judgment will fill your breast” 節其五欲，去其二凶，不喜不怒，平正擅匈。⁵²⁸ “Love and desire: still them! Folly and disturbance: correct them!” 愛慾靜之，遇(愚)亂正之。⁵²⁹ Also, as discussed in Part I,

⁵²⁵ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.931, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 40. Translation with moderation.

⁵²⁶ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.947, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 52.

⁵²⁷ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.950, Roth, *Original Tao*, 94-95.

⁵²⁸ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.945, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 52.

⁵²⁹ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.950, Roth, *Original Tao*, 94-95

“Neiye” offers some specific means to moderate different types of emotions, including the recitation of odes and performance of music and rituals.⁵³⁰

The cognitive aspect of the heart is also portrayed negatively in “Neiye.” Unlike the faculty of *si* that is exalted in *Mencius*, *si* in “Neiye” is seen as a double-edged sword: one relies on it to attain knowledge, but over-exertion of this mental power is disastrous— if extended beyond the proper limit, *si* will even threaten one’s life. “When the *qi* is guided, there is life. Where there is life, there is thinking. With thinking, knowledge arises. When knowledge accumulates [to a point], [thinking] should be stopped. The heart/mind is patterned in such a way that excessive knowledge leads to the loss of its vitality” 氣道乃生，生乃思，思乃知，知乃止矣。凡心之形，過知失生。⁵³¹

Also, “Neiye” doubts that one has the capacity to attain truly useful knowledge through *si*. It suggests that ultimate knowledge cannot be attained through *si*, no matter how hard one tries. Compared to the wisdom of knowing fortune and misfortune without resulting to divination, which can only be attained when the vital essence is secured in the person, knowledge generated through *si* is limited, inferior, and even harmful. “You think and think about it, and think still further about it. You think, yet still cannot penetrate it. While the ghostly and numinous will penetrate it, It is not due to the power of the ghostly and numinous, but to the utmost refinement of your essential vital breath” 思之思之，又重思之，思之而不通，鬼神將通之，非鬼神之力也，精氣之極也。⁵³² These

⁵³⁰ See n. 315 above.

⁵³¹ Translation my own, for alternative translations, see Roth, *Original Tao*, 60; Rickett, *Guanzi* V.2, 43-44.

⁵³² *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.943, Roth, *Original Tao*, 82-83.

statements form a sharp contrast with Mencius' assertion that whenever one employs the faculty of *si*, one attains it 思則得之.⁵³³

“Neiye” also suggests that excessive thinking leads to nothing but a troubled mind and emaciated body, and if this tendency is not reversed, the result will be premature death. “If you continue to think with no relaxation, inwardly you will be troubled, and outwardly you will grow thin. If you do not make early plans to prevent this, your life will relinquish its abode” 思之而不捨，內困外薄，不蚤為圖，生將異舍.⁵³⁴ Therefore, the cognitive aspect of the heart needs to be moderated too. “In eating, it is best not to fill up; In thinking, it is best not to overdo. Limit these to appropriate degree, And you will naturally reach it [vitality]” 思莫若勿致，節適之齊，彼將自至.⁵³⁵

Besides the emotive and cognitive dimensions, *xin* in “Neiye” has a numinous, spiritual aspect, termed the “*xin* within *xin*.” “Within the mind there is yet another mind” 心之中又有心焉.⁵³⁶ This mystic “*xin* within *xin*” is seen to be the conduit where the *dao* flows and the vital essence resides. “The way...resides within the mind” 夫道者...乃在於心.⁵³⁷ “That mysterious vital energy within the mind: One moment it arrives, the next it departs” 靈氣在心，一來一逝,⁵³⁸ According to Roth, this numinous *xin* is the “nondual awareness of the Way,” and it possesses “the ability immediately and intuitively to know all the myriad things.”⁵³⁹

⁵³³ See n. 517 above.

⁵³⁴ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.945, Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 51.

⁵³⁵ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.945, Roth, *Original Tao*, 84-85.

⁵³⁶ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.938, Roth, *Original Tao*, 72-73.

⁵³⁷ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.931, Roth, *Original Tao*, 52-53.

⁵³⁸ *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.950, Roth, *Original Tao*, 96-97.

⁵³⁹ Roth, *Original Tao*, 108.

The function of this “*xin* within *xin*” is termed *yi* 意, which, according to W. Allyn Rickett, refers to “a basic mental capacity that precedes thought.”⁵⁴⁰ Although “*Neiye*” offers few clues as to what *yi* exactly means, it does highlight the contrast between *yi* and *si* as two types of mental activities: *Si* is basically human, whereas *yi* resembles Heaven.⁵⁴¹ *Si* may lead to an agitated mind, whereas *yi* is associated with the unified and concentrated mind.⁵⁴² *Si* cannot lead to profound knowledge, whereas *yi* is the subtle awareness that precedes language and resonates with the *qi* and *dao*.⁵⁴³ Based on the above discussion, we can see that *yi* possibly refers to the mental activity performed by the vital essence dwelling within the person.

Only when the normal contents of the mind are stably stilled will the mystic “*xin* within *xin*” start to function. Thus self-cultivation in “*Neiye*” is the practice to have the emotive and cognitive aspects of *xin* under control,⁵⁴⁴ so that the numinous aspect—the mystic *yi*-thinking—can take place. For this reason, “*Neiye*” prescribes to rectify the *xin* 正心, to order the *xin* 治心, and to stabilize the *xin* 定心, suggesting there is something in the mind that needs to be corrected and regulated.

These verbs form a sharp contrast with the verbs that take *xin* as the objective in *Mencius*. Mencius encourages one to attend to one’s heart 必有事焉[其心], listen to its

⁵⁴⁰ Rickett, *Guanzi V.2*, 31.

⁵⁴¹ As indicated by the statement “your subtle awareness moves in a Heavenly way” 意行似天. See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.948. Translation my own. For alternative translations, see Rickett, *Guanzi V. 2*, 54, Roth, *Original Tao*, 92-93.

⁵⁴² As seen in the phrase “unify your awareness, concentrate your mind” 一意搏心. See n. 313 above.

⁵⁴³ As seen in the following statements, “That mind within the mind: it is an awareness that precedes words. Only after there is awareness does it take shape; Only after it takes shape is there a word.” 彼心之心, 音(意)以先言, 音(意)然後形, 形然後言. *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.938, Roth, *Original Tao*, 72-73.

⁵⁴⁴ According to Roth, this practice is “to empty out the various normal contents of conscious experience, the emotions, the desires, the thoughts, and the perceptions.” See Roth, *Original Tao*, 113.

inner voice and let it reign over one's entire person.⁵⁴⁵ He also persistently advises people to “retain their hearts” 存其心, to “give full realization to their hearts” 盡其心, to “seek for their [lost] hearts” 求其[放]心.⁵⁴⁶ At the same time he warns against “letting go of their true heart” 放其良心,⁵⁴⁷ or “losing their original hearts” 失其本心,⁵⁴⁸ condemning those who have done so as “not far removed from an animal” 其違禽獸不遠矣.⁵⁴⁹

In summary, Mencius believes that *xin* is equipped with all the essential faculties that enable one to attain virtue and to exert influence on the world. Therefore the key to Mencian self-cultivation is to hold fast to the *xin* and never to let it go. “Neiye,” on the other hand, believes that the affective and cognitive aspects of *xin* are potentially harmful to the attainment of profound knowledge of and true mastery over the world. Therefore, the key to its self-cultivation is to have the *xin* well-ordered and its negative parts emptied.

ii, Is Righteousness Internal or External?

Gaozi is well-known for the perplexing doctrine that “benevolence is internal and righteousness external” 仁內義外, which is recorded in the famous debate between Gaozi and Mencius in 6 A 4 and between their disciples in 6 A 5. Scholars often refer primarily to these debates to decipher what Gaozi means by “righteousness being external.”

⁵⁴⁵ David S. Nivison has pointed out the importance of attending to the heart in *Mencius*. He suggests that one of the problems we encounter in moral cultivation is that we sometimes are not aware of/pay little attention to the voice of our hearts. As he puts it, “we all have genuine moral motivation, sometimes without noticing it.” See Nivison “The Paradox of Virtue,” in *Ways of Confucianism*, 40.

⁵⁴⁶ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 7.877, 6.786.

⁵⁴⁷ See n. 510 above.

⁵⁴⁸ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6. 786, Lau, *Mencius*, 255.

⁵⁴⁹ See n. 510 above.

It is generally agreed that Gaozi and Mencius both endorse the virtues of benevolence and righteousness: they both agree that it is natural for one to love one's close family members and that one should revere one's brother and follow ritual courtesy in treating an elder person. Scholarly opinions differ greatly, however, on what Gaozi means by righteousness's being external.

Shun and Van Norden have both studied 6 A 4-5 closely, but reach somewhat different conclusions. According to Shun, the best explanation of why righteousness is internal is that "one's knowledge of *yi* [one's recognition of what is *yi*] derives from certain features of the heart/mind"⁵⁵⁰ Thus whether righteousness is internal or external lies in whether the cognitive aspect of *xin* is involved when one performs the righteous acts. Van Norden, on the other hand, holds that the key to the debate lies in whether *yi* should involve affective factors. He proposes that "to claim righteousness is external is to hold that righteousness is a matter of performing the action appropriate to one's role in a given situation and does not require acting out of any particular motivation."⁵⁵¹ He further explains, "if righteousness is external, acting out of genuine righteousness requires only certain kinds of behavior and does not require acting out of any particular emotion."⁵⁵² Both Shun and Van Norden's arguments seem plausible, based on the text of 6 A 4-5 itself. To certain extent, Van Norden's interpretation is superior,⁵⁵³ mainly for the reason that Gaozi makes a distinction between the virtues of benevolence and righteousness, and

⁵⁵⁰ Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 99, 102-103.

⁵⁵¹ Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, n. 39, 227.

⁵⁵² Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, 289.

⁵⁵³ For Van Norden's argument on how his interpretation [built on Zhu Xi's 朱熹] is better than Shun's, see Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, 299-301.

apparently what sets benevolence apart from righteousness, according to 6 A 4-5, is that the former mainly involves love and affection, whereas the later does not involve these.

Van Norden's interpretation seems to be the most faithful to the text itself, yet this interpretation still leaves Gaozi in an obvious dilemma: even if one performs righteous acts without appealing to affection, e.g., performing certain acts out of social convention or decorum, one still has to internalize the social code first in order to be able to perform the righteous acts. After all, one has to be motivated toward an act in order to perform it, even if the motivation is superficial, self-interested, and inappropriate. In other words, one's *xin* has to be involved when one performs righteous acts. According to Van Norden, Gaozi thinks righteousness is external because no proper emotion is needed in performing a righteous act. Yet why would Gaozi hold that the emotional aspect of *xin* is internal, whereas its cognitive aspect is external? What is more, following the interpretation of Van Norden, Gaozi's point of righteousness being external would seem to be that righteousness is not a genuine virtue, for it lacks the appropriate internal motivation. Yet this can hardly be Gaozi's position, for apparently Gaozi is not against righteousness itself.

Therefore, the question is, are the debates recorded in *Mencius* 6 A 4-5 able to offer a complete picture of Gaozi's doctrine of righteousness being external? I suspect not. The analogies offered by Mencius, Gaozi and their disciples in the debates should be considered as strategies of argument rather than faithful reflections of their beliefs. Just consider how Mencius appeals to the water analogy in his debate with Gaozi on *xing* 性, human nature, in 6 A 2. Mencius builds on Gaozi's water analogy and appeals to the tendency for water to flow downward to refute Gaozi's view that *xing* has no fixed direction. This is surely an

effective means of argument. But imagine if modern readers were left with the text of 6 A 2 as our only reference, would it be possible for us to reach the conclusion that Mencius prefers the developmental model of *xing*?⁵⁵⁴ Probably not, for the tendency for water to flow downward least resembles the famous plant metaphors that recur elsewhere in *Mencius*, which are generally agreed to be better reflective of Mencius' theory of *xing* as a tendency to naturally grow toward certain direction given that adequate attendance and nourishments are provided.

Fortunately, we have a seven-chapter book revealing of Mencian doctrines and thus are able to have a somewhat thorough understanding of his moral philosophy. Unfortunately, however, little material is left that can be directly attributed to Gaozi. Although A. C. Graham has identified the "Jie" chapter of *Guanzi* as possibly belonging to the school of Gaozi, and Goldin has asserted that some of the *Guodian* manuscripts are closely related to Gaozi, these materials cannot offer many helpful clues to understanding the doctrine that righteousness is external, as Goldin and Van Norden have pointed out.⁵⁵⁵ Yet is it true that "we are left with *Mengzi* 6 A 4-5 as our primary source for understanding what the Gaozians and the Menzians meant by the internal/external distinction," as Van Norden notes?⁵⁵⁶

Another passage in *Mencius* that may shed light on the internal/external distinction, but has been rarely noticed to be relevant to the issue, is the passage on the cultivation of flood-like *qi* in 2 A 2. In this passage, Mencius' claim "Therefore I say Gaozi never

⁵⁵⁴ For Mencius' developmental model of *xing*, see Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," 26-42; Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 198.

⁵⁵⁵ See Goldin, "Xunzi in the light of the *Guodian* Manuscripts," 54; Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, 288.

⁵⁵⁶ Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, 288.

understood righteousness, because he regarded it as external” 我故曰，告子未嘗知義，以其外之也 is made immediately after he clarifies that the proper means to cultivate the flood-like *qi* is to accumulate righteousness internally, but not to grab it from an external source 是集義所生者，非義襲而取之也. From this context we can tell that the reason why Gaozi is criticized for “regarding righteousness as external” 外之 is that he attempts to “grab righteousness from an external source.” This passage thus offers another possible interpretation for the internal/external distinction: Mencius’ method of accumulating righteousness internally is to persistently perform good acts out of appropriate motivations, from easier situations to more challenging ones, until one can voluntarily do good in all situations. Gaozi’s doctrine that righteousness is external, on the other hand, suggests not only that righteousness lies in an external source, but also that one can attain righteousness quickly and suddenly, as if attacking an enemy and seizing his property (this is the basic meaning of *xi* 襲). As to the means by which one can attain righteousness, the following verses from “Neiye” may offer some clues.

形不正，德不來。中不靜，心不治。正形攝德，天仁地義，則淫然而自至。
If your physical form is not well-adjusted,
Then power would not come.
If you are not tranquil within,
Your mind will not be ordered.
Adjust your form and hold on to the Power,
The benevolence of Heaven and righteousness of the Earth,
Will naturally come in abundance.⁵⁵⁷

Interestingly, morality [benevolence and righteousness] here has a cosmic dimension. It is not regarded as something one gradually cultivates within the person, but presented as

⁵⁵⁷ See n. 309 above.

an external, cosmic material that may flow into the person. According to this passage, morality can be attained through the typical “Neiye” methods of self-cultivation: rectifying the physical form as well as regulating and stilling the mind. As one empties disturbing emotive and cognitive contents out of the mind and makes it tranquil through meditative practices, virtue will naturally come in abundance. Is it possible that this is what Gaozi means by “righteousness being external”? Given some contents of “Neiye” resemble Gaozi’s beliefs, as attested above, this hypothesis is not unlikely.

But an obvious problem with this interpretation is that “Neiye” locates both *ren* and *yi* as external, which is apparently at odds with Gaozi’s doctrine that *ren* is internal and *yi* external. Therefore, to prove the validity of this hypothesis, we have to offer a reasonable explanation to account for the contradiction. With a close look at all the propositions made by Gaozi in *Mencius* 6 A 1-4, however, the contradiction can somewhat be reconciled.

6 A 1 性，猶杞柳也；義，猶柎椀也。以人性為仁義，猶以杞柳為柎椀。

Human nature is like the *qi* willow. Righteousness is like cups and bowls. To make morality 仁義 out of human nature is like making cups and bowls out of the willow.⁵⁵⁸

6 A 2 性猶湍水也，決諸東方則東流，決諸西方則西流。人性之無分於善不善也，猶水之無分於東西也。

Human nature is like whirling water. Give it an outlet in the east and it will flow east; give it an outlet in the west and it will flow west. Human nature does not show any preference for either good or bad just as water does not show any preference for either east or west.⁵⁵⁹

6 A 3 生之謂性。

That which is inborn is what is meant by ‘nature.’⁵⁶⁰

6 A 4 食色，性也。仁，內也，非外也；義，外也，非內也。

Appetite for food and sex is nature. Benevolence is internal, not external; righteousness is external, not internal.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁸ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6.732, Lau, *Mencius*, 241.

⁵⁵⁹ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6.735, Lau, *Mencius*, 241.

⁵⁶⁰ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6.737, Lau, *Mencius*, 241.

⁵⁶¹ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6.743, Lau, *Mencius*, 243. Translation with slight moderation.

Gaozi's position on *xing* is well presented in the above passages. *Xing* is what humans are born with, i.e., the biological tendencies common to all animal species. *Xing* has no fixed direction of development. Additional effort is required so that humans may attain morality. As Van Norden puts it, according to Gaozi, "becoming virtuous is a process of reforming our nature in an artificial way."⁵⁶²

In addition, two points reflected in the above passages need our attention. First, in 6 A 1, Gaozi claims that *yi* 義 is like cups and bowls and that "to make *renyi* 仁義 out of human nature is like making cups and bowls out of the willow." In this statement, *yi* and *renyi* are interchangeable. Both stand for morality, which is not naturally endowed at birth.

Second, in 6 A 4, Gaozi makes a distinction between *ren* and *yi*. His claim "My brother I love, but the brother of a man from Qin I do not love"⁵⁶³ indicates that Gaozi agrees with Mencius that *ren* is the natural impulse to love one's family. He states that *ren* is internal immediately after the claim that appetite for food and sex is *xing*. Is it possible that Gaozi holds that *ren*, as the impulse to love one's immediate family members, like the appetite for food and sex, is what one is born with? The context makes this supposition possible. As Manyul Im puts it, "he [Mencius] and Gaozi must both take for granted that something's being *xing* implies that it is also *nei*, internal."⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶² Note that Gaozi's analogy of making cups and bowls out of the willow tree is very similar to Xinzi's analogy of curving the straight wood through steaming: "A piece of wood straight as a plumbline can, by steaming, be made pliable enough to bend into the shape of a wheel rim, so its curvature will conform to the compass" 木直中繩，輮以為輪. See *Xunzi jijie*, 1, Knoblock, *Xunzi V.1*, 135.

⁵⁶³ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 6. 744, Lau, *Mencius*, 243.

⁵⁶⁴ Im, "Moral Knowledge and Self Control in Mengzi," 61.

This supposition also fits Gaozi's perception of *xing* very well. As many have observed, for Gaozi, *xing* is what common to humans and animal species.⁵⁶⁵ We cannot deny that animal mothers naturally feed and love their babies, without being taught, as human mothers do. Accepting this supposition means that we accept the innateness theory, which is an alternative explanation for the internal/external distinction to that endorsed by Shun and Van Norden. According to this interpretation, Gaozi makes a distinction between *ren* and *yi*, not because the former involves proper motivations, whereas the latter does not, but because the former is an innate impulse one is naturally disposed to, whereas the latter has to be acquired through the effort of self-cultivation. Accepting this interpretation, the above-mentioned dilemma brought about by Shun and Van Norden's interpretations of Gaozi's theory could be avoided.⁵⁶⁶

To recapitulate, in the terminology of Gaozi, *ren*, when used as an individual term opposed to *yi*, refers to the natural impulse, which does not belong to the sphere of morality. *Yi*, on the other hand, stands for morality post-natally acquired through artificial efforts. The binome of *renyi* is interchangeable with *yi*, and both may stand for the artificially-acquired morality. The phrase *tian ren di yi* 天仁地義 in "Neiye," like *renyi*, may also stand for morality that has to be acquired with additional efforts.

Based on the above analysis, Gaozi's doctrine of *ren* being internal and *yi* being external can be summarized as below. Human beings have certain innate impulses that are desirable [which are termed *ren*], but these simply do not belong to the sphere of morality. Morality [which can be represented by *yi*, *renyi* or *tian ren di yi*] is located in an external

⁵⁶⁵ Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics*, 284-85; Goldin, *Confucianism*, 50.

⁵⁶⁶ See the discussion on pages 175 and 176 above.

source and can only be attained through such artificial efforts as those meditative methods prescribed in “Neiye.”

Mencius and Gaozi thus disagree not only on the source of morality, but also on what is the proper means to attain morality. Gaozi regards morality as external 外義, both in that he thinks that morality is not part of *xing*, human nature, and in that he believes that morality can spontaneously arrive in abundance 淫然而自至, as long as the appropriate meditative methods were adopted. Gaozi gives priority to *yan*, word- “What you do not get from the word, do not seek for in your heart” 不得於言，勿求於心.⁵⁶⁷ The earlier layer of “Neiye” also highlights the magic effect of word, or maxim. The manual of self-cultivation itself is possibly what Gaozi and “Neiye” means by “the word”—attaining the manual and following it, one will magically and instantly attain virtue as well as power and influence. This is precisely what Mencius strongly opposes—for Mencius, the attempt at attaining virtue instantly through practicing the “inner cultivation” can be as fruitless as helping the seedlings grow by pulling them up.

⁵⁶⁷ See n. 419 above.

CHAPTER 3 ATTAINING ETERNAL SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE THROUGH UNION WITH THE ANCESTOR: MIND-BODY DUALISM IN *ZHUANGZI*

The compendium of *Zhuangzi* is regarded as “a collection of writings from the fourth, third and second centuries B.C.” conventionally attributed to Zhuang Zhou 莊周 and his followers.⁵⁶⁸ The current version of *Zhuangzi*, in 33 *pian* 篇 (chapter), is generally considered to be descended from the redaction by Guo Xiang 郭象 (d. 312 C.E.) of the Western Jin 西晉.⁵⁶⁹ The “Bibliographical Treatise” (Yiwenzhi 藝文志) of *Hanshu* 漢書 lists a *Zhuangzi* in 52 *pian* 篇. In the 3rd and 4th centuries C.E., there occurred several commentary redactions of *Zhuangzi*. Two of the redactions (those by Sima Biao 司馬彪 (240 C.E.–306 C.E.) and a certain Mr. Meng 孟氏) contained 52 *pian*. These redactions were preserved till the Tang 唐 dynasty and became lost thereafter, except for the shorter and more popular redaction by Guo Xiang.

In this chapter, I argue that a mind-body dichotomy is prominent in *Zhuangzi*, despite persistent warnings against imposing the so-called “western” mind-body dualism onto early Chinese texts. In *Zhuangzi*, the spirit is seen to be derived from the *dao* and the body given by Heaven [and indirectly by the *dao*]. One should guard both the spirit and the body

⁵⁶⁸ A. C. Graham, “How Much of *Chuang-Tzu* Did *Chuang-Tzu* Write?” (1979) in *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 283. For more on textual issues of *Zhuangzi*, see Esther Klein, “Were there ‘Inner Chapters’ in the Warring States? A New Examination of Evidence about the *Zhuangzi*,” *T’oung Pao* 96. 4-5 (2010): 299-369; Harold D. Roth, “Who Compiled the *Chuang Tzu*,” in *Chinese Texts and Philosophical Contexts: Essays Dedicated to Angus C. Graham*, ed. Henry Rosemont, Jr. (LaSalle: Open Court Publishing Company, 1991), 79-128; Liu Xiaogan 劉笑敢, *Classifying the Zhuangzi Chapters* (The University of Michigan: Center for Chinese Studies Press, 1994).

⁵⁶⁹ For more on the transmission of the text, see Harold D. Roth, “*Chuang tzu*” in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China and The Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1993), 57-59.

against harms done by artificial human constructions. However, the spirit constitutes one's essence, whereas the condition of the body is seen to be irrelevant to one's core. Physical deformation, or even destruction of the body (imposed by Heaven rather than caused by artificial human endeavor) exerts no impact on one's spiritual integrity. Upon death, the body disintegrates and joins in the endless cosmic transformation. In contrast, the spiritual entity, if properly attended to, can transcend the physical form, survive physical death and gain an eternal existence through merging with the cosmic ancestor. This is the underlying reason why the Zhuangzian exemplars can calmly accept physical disfigurements, be reconciled with the brutal fate (*ming* 命), and face death with equanimity. Union with the *dao* can be attained through the unique Zhuangzian apophatic cultivation to eliminate all artificial human constructions and to cast aside the physical form. Zhuangzian self-cultivation often involves stages of elimination and results in levels of achievement. Following the cosmic order to live out the Heavenly allotted life span is only a precondition for the ultimate goal of Zhuangzian self-cultivation: transcendence of the physical form and the phenomenal world, entry into the formless realm and merging with the cosmic ancestor.

Part I “Mind-Body Dualism” in *Zhuangzi*

A widely accepted truism among scholars of early Chinese thought is that virtually all early Chinese text adopts a monistic view of human life,⁵⁷⁰ in spite of the fact that this has

⁵⁷⁰ The most influential proponents of this position are A. C. Graham and Roger T. Ames. See introduction, ns. 2-3. In a more recent article, Mark Berkson argues, “It is difficult to see where the metaphysical sense of transcendence can be located in a text [i.e., *Zhuangzi*] that lacks the dualism of, say, Platonic or Christian

been strongly challenged recently.⁵⁷¹ Many take it for granted that *Zhuangzi*, like other classical texts such as “*Neiye*,” endorses a mind-body holism. With this presumption as the starting point of interpretation, many conclude that the body is praised and physical cultivation highlighted in *Zhuangzi*, dismissing large amounts of textual evidence against this position. Chris Jochim, for example, insists that “distaste for the physical dimensions of existence” could hardly exist in *Zhuangzi*.⁵⁷² Similarly, Li Xiaofan asserts that the “body is seen to be of the highest value” in *Zhuangzi* and that “for *Zhuangzi*, the first step toward an ethical life is synonymous with the preservation of life force in one’s own body.”⁵⁷³

Others, though having noticed the Zhuangzian grievance against the physical form, never consider the possibility that the body can be an encumbrance to human perfection in *Zhuangzi*. For example, Deborah Sommer, who observes that the body is inconsistently

thought.” See Mark Berkson, “Death in the *Zhuangzi*,” in *Mortality in Traditional Chinese Thought*, eds. Amy Olberding and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 211. The lack of mind-body dualism in classical Chinese thought has also been widely accepted among Chinese and Japanese scholars. For example, Zhang Xuezhi 張學智 insists that “ancient Chinese philosophers were inclined to preserve the doctrine of a unified body and mind rather than to engage in a discussion on the separation of the two.” See Zhang Xuezhi, “Several Modalities of the Body-Mind Relationship in Traditional Chinese Philosophy,” *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 2.3 (2007): 379. Amy Li Xiaofan states that “[*Zhuangzi*] significantly liquidates the Cartesian dichotomy of body and mind.” See Amy Li Xiaofan, “Preserving Life Force: Antonin Artaud and *Zhuangzi* on the Body” in *Preservation, Radicalism, and the Avant-Garde Canon*, eds. Rebecca Ferreboeuf, Fiona Noble and Tara Plunkett (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 155. Hidemi Ishida writes, “The mind is therefore understood as fluid and is supposed to be in constant circulation, as are the energies and fluids of the body.” See Hidemi Ishida, “Body and Mind: The Chinese Perspective,” in *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques*, ed. Livia Kohn and Yoshinobu Sakade (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1989), 49-51.

⁵⁷¹ For arguments against the assumption that the mind-body dichotomy did not arise in early China, see Paul Rakita Goldin, “A Mind-body Problem in the *Zhuangzi*?” in *Hiding the World in the World: Uneven Discourses on the *Zhuangzi**, ed. Scott Cook (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 226-47; Edward Slingerland, “Body and Mind in Early China: An Integrated Humanities-Science Approach,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 81.1 (2013): 6-55; Goldin, “The Consciousness of the Dead,” 59-92.

⁵⁷² Chris Jochim, “Just Say No to ‘No Self’ in *Zhuangzi*,” in *Wandering at Ease in the *Zhuangzi**, ed. Roger T. Ames (Albany: State University of New York, 1998), 53.

⁵⁷³ Amy Li Xiaofan, “Preserving Life Force: Antonin Artaud and *Zhuangzi* on the Body,” 154, 157.

treated in *Zhuangzi*, makes a contrast between the body with discrete boundaries (*xing* 形) and the boundless body (*ti* 體), which is “interconnected with the larger universe” and can thus become an embodiment of the *dao*.⁵⁷⁴

Similarly, Thomas Michael distinguishes “the physical, fleshly and manifest body,” which is subject to time and mortality, from the “foundational body” whose components include yin-yang, *jing* 精, *qi* and *shen* 神.⁵⁷⁵ Zhuangzian cultivation of the body, as Michael suggests, is to cultivate the latter so as to transform the former. According to him, when the inner components received from Heaven are cultivated, the physical body would be transformed so that “these [foundational] components do not disperse; rather, they ‘transform together with the ten thousand beings.’”⁵⁷⁶ Based on this observation, Michael points out that it is important not to sustain the human form but to hold together something more essential, which he calls the “energies of the body.”⁵⁷⁷ Yet elsewhere in the same chapter, he makes a contradictory conclusion that cultivation of the foundational

⁵⁷⁴ See Deborah Sommer, “Concepts of the Body in the *Zhuangzi*,” in *Experimental Essays on Zhuangzi 2nd ed.*, ed. Victor Mair (Dunedin, FL: Three Pines Press, 2010), 218-222, 224. Obviously, the difference between *xing* 形 and *ti* 體 is not the same as what Sommer imagines it to be. As Nathan Sivin points out, *ti* refers to “the concrete physical body, its limbs, or the physical form generally”. See Nathan Sivin, “State, Cosmos, and Body in The Last Three Centuries B. C.,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55.1 (1995): 14. As my discussion below will show, it is *qi*, rather than *ti*, that is “interconnected with the larger universe.”

⁵⁷⁵ See Thomas Michael, *The Pristine Dao: Metaphysics in Early Daoist Discourse* (Albany: SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture, 2005), 115-128. This seems to have grown out of the “common sense” that *qi*, *jing*, and *shen* are all fundamentally material and that the latter two are but the refined and ethereal form of *qi*.

⁵⁷⁶ Michael, *The Pristine Dao*, 120. This proposition has an obvious loophole, for the transformation from the human form to other forms of life is seen in the *Zhuangzi* as a comic process purely decided by Heaven, as will be shown in my following discussion.

⁵⁷⁷ As my discussions below will show, what Michael calls the “energies of the body” shall better be understood as the spiritual essence that may remain intact despite the decadence of the body and its transformation into other forms of life. Under the influence of the embodiment theory, Michael regards the spirit, which should be held as a distinct entity, as mere extension of the body.

components received from Heaven will result in bodily rejuvenation and longevity, the necessary prerequisites for embodying the *dao*.⁵⁷⁸

In a recent article, Michael modifies his propositions and recognizes the distinction between physical cultivation and spiritual cultivation in *Zhuangzi*. He argues that the physical cultivation adopted by practitioners of *yangsheng* 養生 (nourishing life) is aimed at embodying the *dao* in a physical way, which results in bodily transformations and bodily rejuvenation,⁵⁷⁹ whereas the spiritual cultivation adopted by the adepts of *zuowang* 坐忘 (sitting and effacing)⁵⁸⁰ is aimed at merging with the *dao* spiritually. He correctly points out that it is the *zuowang* adepts, rather than *yangsheng* practitioners, “who represent the preferred members of the *Zhuangzi*’s inner and intimate club.” However, he fails to explain why physical cultivation, though widely covered in *Zhuangzi*, is not favored by “members of the *Zhuangzi*’s inner and intimate club.”⁵⁸¹

Another work that highlights the *yangsheng* practice is François Jullien’s book *Vital Nourishment, Departing from Happiness*, which is seen to be proposing the so-called “anti-Cartesian thesis” of “primacy of body over mind” and lauded as “a significant and indispensable addition to Chinese body politics or carnal hermeneutics.”⁵⁸² According to

⁵⁷⁸ Michael, *The Pristine Dao*, 126. The inconsistencies in Michael’s propositions are mainly caused by his rejection of the mind-body dualism in *Zhuangzi*.

⁵⁷⁹ I will offer an objection to this position in part III of this chapter. The aim of *yangsheng* in the *Zhuangzi*, as will be argued later, is to live out the Heavenly allotted life span rather than to transform or rejuvenate the body.

⁵⁸⁰ *Zuowang* is traditionally translated as “sitting and forgetting”. But *wang* 忘 apparently intends more than forgetting. It is cognate with *wang* 亡, to lose, suggesting to put something out of mind. Thus I translate *zuowang* as “sitting and effacing.”

⁵⁸¹ Thomas Michael, “Hermits, Mountains, and *yangsheng* in Early Daoism: Perspectives from the *Zhuangzi*,” in *New Visions of the Zhuangzi*, ed. Livia Kohn (St. Pesburg: Three Pines, 2015), 150, 159.

⁵⁸² See Jung Hwa Yol, “Review of Jullien, François, *Vital Nourishment: Departing from Happiness*,” *Dao* 9 (2010): 361-62.

Jullien, the practice of *yangsheng* indicates that “we must hone our edge [i.e. ‘cleanse our physical existence of impurities’] while also maintaining ‘our form.’”⁵⁸³ He believes that “to feed one’s life (*yangsheng*) unsettles the supposedly unshakable division [between “carnal nourishment” and “heavenly nourishment”] and thus resolves the material-spiritual dichotomy embedded in the Christian and Cartesian traditions.⁵⁸⁴ “The Chinese tradition,” according to Jullien, “thought first of feeding ‘life’ rather than elaborating on the ‘soul’ because it did not establish as sharp a separation between a principle of life and organic being.”⁵⁸⁵

It is true that *Zhuangzi* regards the body as a Heavenly-given component to be taken good care of and that physical cultivation is covered in several key chapters in *Zhuangzi*.⁵⁸⁶ Yet we must not overlook the theme of staying aloof from the body, which is recurrently evoked in *Zhuangzi*. Throughout the compendium, the body is never seen as an essential part of a human being. Zhuangzian exemplars are least concerned with bodily appearance or physical health. For them, bodily injury, physical deformation and even destruction of the body will not impact the true self.

⁵⁸³ François Jullien, *Vital Nourishment: Departing from Happiness*, trans. A. Goldhammer (New York, NY: Zone Books, 2007), 14.

⁵⁸⁴ Jullien, *Vital Nourishment*, 13. In a much earlier book, Wu Kuang-ming made a similar assertion that the ‘Cartesian split’ of mind and body is “as much of an evil for Chuang Tzu as trying to ‘lengthen the duck’s legs and shorten the crane’s legs...” See Wu Kuang-ming, *On Chinese Body Thinking: A Cultural Hermeneutic* (New York: Leiden, 1997), 389. These propositions reflect precisely what Edward Slingerland calls “‘Hegel with a happy face’- the idea that some essential Chinese holism can serve as a corrective to an equally essentialized Western thought.” See Slingerland, “Body and Mind in Early China,” 7.

⁵⁸⁵ Jullien, *Vital Nourishment*, 56-57. As Slingerland points out, Jullien’s reading of the piglets anecdote elsewhere in his book has forced him to acknowledge that the text suggests the presence of an entity “that puts the physical being to good use, something that Aristotle would no doubt have named ‘the soul.’” However, Jullien’s interpretative starting point leads him to dismiss the importance of this entity and arrives at the conclusion that *Zhuangzi* lacks “a substantial notion of the soul.” See Slingerland, “Body and Mind in Early China,” 32-33.

⁵⁸⁶ I will return to the issue of physical cultivation and the position of the body in part III of this article. For now, I propose that the spirit, rather than the body, is regarded as the core “self” in *Zhuangzi*.

In “Renjian shi” 人間世 and “Dechong fu” 德充符, there are many depictions of virtually adorable people who are physically crippled, deformed or disfigured. As suggested by Yang Rur-bin, the recurrent images of physical disfiguration in *Zhuangzi* cannot be coincident. They must be carefully selected to convey an important message.⁵⁸⁷ Yet what is the Zhuangzian message conveyed in these images? Let us first consider some anecdotes on the interaction between the disfigured people and the rulers.

魯哀公問於仲尼曰：“衛有惡人焉，曰哀駘它。丈夫與之處者，思而不能去也。婦人見之，請於父母曰‘與為人妻，寧為夫子妾’者，十數而未止也。未嘗有聞其唱者也，常和而已矣。無君人之位以濟乎人之死，無聚祿以望人之腹。又以惡駘天下，和而不唱，知不出乎四域，且而雌雄合乎前。是必有異乎人者也。寡人召而觀之，果以惡駘天下。與寡人處，不至以月數，而寡人有意乎其為人也；不至乎期年，而寡人信之。國無宰，寡人傳國焉。是何人者也？”

Duke Ai of Lu said to Confucius, “In Wei there was an ugly man named Ai Taituo. But when men were around him, they thought only of him and couldn’t break away, and when women saw him, they ran begging to their fathers and mothers, saying, ‘I’d rather be this gentleman’s concubine than another man’s wife!’—there were more than ten such cases and it hasn’t stopped yet. No one ever heard him take the lead—he always just chimed in with other people. He wasn’t in the position of a ruler where he could save men’s lives, and he had no store of provisions to fill men’s bellies. On top of that, he was ugly enough to astound the whole world, chimed in but never led, and knew no more than what went on around him. And yet men and women flocked to him. He certainly must be different from other men, I thought, and I summoned him so I could have a look. Just as they said—he was ugly enough to astound the world. But he hadn’t been with me more than a month or so when I began to realize what kind of man he was, and before the year was out, I really trusted him. There was no one in the state to act as chief minister, and I wanted to hand the government over to him. ...What kind of man is he anyway?”⁵⁸⁸

闔跂支離無脤說衛靈公，靈公說之，而視全人，其脰肩肩。甕盎大瘿說齊桓公，桓公說之，而視全人，其脰肩肩。故德有所長，而形有所忘...

Mr. Lamelike-Back-No-Lips talked to Duke Ling of Wei, and Duke Ling was so pleased with him that when he looked at normal men he thought their necks looked too lean and skinny. Mr. Pitcher-Sized-Wen talked to Duke Huan of Qi, and Duke Huan was so pleased with him that when he looked at normal men he thought their necks looked too lean and skinny. Therefore, if virtue is preeminent, the body will be forgotten.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁷ Yang Rur-bin 楊儒賓, “Zhili yu jianxing—lun xianqin sixiang li de liangzhong shenti guan” 支離與踐形—論先秦思想裏的兩種身體觀, in *Zhongguo gudai sixiang zhong de qilun ji shenti guan* 中國古代思想中的氣論及身體觀, ed. Yang Rur-bin (Taipei: Juliu, 1993), 417-19.

⁵⁸⁸ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 5.187, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 72-73.

⁵⁸⁹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 5.197, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 74-75.

Ai Taituo has neither wealth or power to exert influence on others, nor deep knowledge or sharp perception to instruct others. What he has is an astoundingly ugly body. Yet both the ordinary people and the ruler of Lu are so attracted by him that they choose to neglect his ugly appearance. This must be due to certain irresistible charisma that he possesses. Ai Taituo's astounding ugliness does not affect his charisma. Neither does the disfiguration of Mr. Lam-Hunchback-No-Lips and Mr. Pitcher-Sized-Wen. In fact, the rulers are so attracted by the two that they regard the normal appearance of other people as abnormal.

Despite their physical deformation, these people actually serve as models of virtue and human perfection. The selection of these physically contemptible people as the paragon of inner virtue indicates that spiritual integrity (*shenquan* 神全) and physical integrity (*xingquan* 形全) are completely irrelevant or even conflicting. As Deborah Sommer notices, people with mutilated misshapen forms are more readily to be liberated from its constrictions. While those with a whole body should be reminded to forget their forms.⁵⁹⁰ Indeed, the Zhuangzian construction of physically grotesque figures as moral exemplars flies in the face of the “Neiye”-*Mencius* notion that external physical conditions correlate to and reveal the inner state.⁵⁹¹

The above-quoted passages are focused on how other people respond to the physical disfiguration of the Zhuangzian protagonists. Next let us discuss how Zhuangzian sages

⁵⁹⁰ Deborah Sommer, “Concepts of the Body in the *Zhuangzi*,” 221-22.

⁵⁹¹ This is best reflected in the following statement in “Neiye”: “Those who keep their minds unimpaired within, Externally keep their bodies unimpaired” 心全於中，形全於外. See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.939, Roth, *Original Tao*, 74-75. For more on how moral cultivation transforms the inner state, which in turn brings about changes in external appearance in *Mencius*, see Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue*, 127. See also my discussion in chapter 2, ns. 445-453.

themselves perceive their bodily defects. Let us begin with a certain Wang Tai 王駘,⁵⁹² who has lost one foot yet still has lots of followers.⁵⁹³ Confucius, who serves as the mouthpiece of Zhuangzi here, regards Wang Tai as a sage whose viewpoints are worth serious consideration. The comment below made by Confucius is from Wang Tai's perspective and reveals his attitude toward the loss of his own foot.

仲尼曰：“自其異者視之，肝膽楚越也；自其同者視之，萬物皆一也。夫若然者... 物視其所一，而不見其所喪，視喪其足，猶遺土也。”

“If one sees things from the viewpoint of the differences,” said Confucius, “the liver and the gallbladder are as distant as Chu is from Yue. If one sees things from the viewpoint of their similarities, the myriad things are all one. He who realizes this ... sees what bespeaks the identity of things instead of what bespeaks their loss. He sees the loss of his foot as the sloughing off of a clump of earth.”⁵⁹⁴

Confucius' elaboration here affirms an important theme in *Zhuangzi*: the merging of the subject with the myriad things in the phenomenal world. The subject-object distinction blurs if one jumps out of his limited perspective and becomes merged with the myriad things in the world. Here there arises a question: does the merging with myriad things mean that the subject is dissolved? The answer is definitely no. For, if the subject is totally dissolved, then it becomes pointless to talk about anyone's perspective.⁵⁹⁵ As is stated in “Qiwu lun” 齊物論, “Heaven and earth were born at the same time as I was, and the ten

⁵⁹² Note that Wang Tai 王駘 and Ai Taituo 哀駘它 has the same character 駘 (meaning old, fatigued horse) in their names. It seems that their names are carefully selected to convey their physical condition.

⁵⁹³ Note that cutting off the feet is one of the corporeal punishments. Thus, losing one foot represents not only physical deformation, but also cultural stigma.

⁵⁹⁴ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 5.174, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 43.

⁵⁹⁵ Wu Yi 吳怡 argues strongly against the dissolvment of the subject. He states, “Suppose if there is no subject, how can one ‘forget’, ‘transform’ or enter the state of ‘free and easy wandering’?” 試想如果沒有這個我，又如何能忘，如何能化，如何能逍遙？ See Wu Yi, *Xiaoyao de Zhuangzi 逍遙的莊子* (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 2005), 73.

thousand things are one with me. We have already become one, so how can I say anything? But I have just said that we are one, so how can I not be saying something?” 天地與我並生，而萬物與我為一。既已為一矣，且得有言乎？既已謂之一矣，且得無言乎？⁵⁹⁶

But if the subject is not dissolved, how is it possible that Wang Tai does not differentiate his foot and the rest of the material world? This problem can be resolved when we draw on the spirit-body dualism. If the spirit can be separated from the body, then when his body gets merged with the objects, Wang Tai's mind can take a perspective that is unaffected by the bodily concerns and become an aloof observer of whatever happens at the material level, be it a foot that is cut off or a pile of earth that is thrown away.⁵⁹⁷ It is the spirit, not the body, that constitutes the essence of Zhuangzian sages. Therefore, physical injury, or even loss of parts of the body does not affect their core spiritual “self.”

The issue of self/no self in *Zhuangzi* has caused much dispute among scholars. *Ji* 己 and *wo* 我 have been commonly translated as “self.”⁵⁹⁸ The text itself has offered seemingly contradictory message on whether one should maintain a “self” or abandon it. In “Xiaoyao you” 逍遙遊, it is stated that “the Ultimate Person has no self” 至人無己。⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁶ *Zhuangzi Jiaoquan*, 2.70, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 43.

⁵⁹⁷ Lao Siguang 勞思光's discussion of the physical form in *Zhuangzi* can shed some light on the issue of the body-spirit separation. According to Lao, “The physical form does not belong to the ‘self,’ as the myriad things do not belong to the ‘self’” 形軀之非自我，亦如萬物之非自我。 “If the ‘awakened’ mind does not regard the physical form as one’s ‘self’, then we can infer that the physical form poses limitations on and encumbrance for the ‘self.’ Therefore, if the body disappeared, the ‘self’ would be liberated from the limitation and encumbrance of the body.” 又若自覺之心靈不以形軀為自我，則當知形軀對自我而言，實為一限制，亦為一負擔。如此，則形軀消失，轉是自我之限制與負擔之解除。 See Lao Siguang, *Xinbian Zhongguo zhexue shi* 新編中國哲學史 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 2005), 190-91.

⁵⁹⁸ For a competent analysis of these first-person pronouns, esp. of *wu* 吾 and *wo*, grammatically, see Thomas Ming, “Who Does the Sounding? The Metaphysics of the First-Person Pronoun in the *Zhuangzi*,” *Dao* 15 (2016): 59-61.

⁵⁹⁹ *Zhuangzi Jiaoquan*, 1.18.

In “Qiwu lun,” the phrase “I have lost my self” 吾喪我⁶⁰⁰ is adopted to describe the state of meditative trance a Zhuangzian exemplar has attained. In several other cases, however, the text suggests that sages do possess a “self.” For example, it is stated in “Qiwu lun” that “the Ultimate Person is spirit-like... not even life and death have any transforming effect on his self” 至人神矣 ... 死生无變於己。⁶⁰¹

Scholars have tried to resolve the tension by proposing the model of layered-selves.⁶⁰² Wu Kuang-ming 吳光明 proposes that Zhuangzi uses *wu* 吾 and *wo* 我 to denote the authentic self and objectifiable self respectively.⁶⁰³ Although Wu’s differentiation between the *wu*-self and *wo*-self from linguistic perspective has been proved to be unfounded by Paul Kjellberg, the contrast he makes between the authentic self and false self in *Zhuangzi* is still worth drawing on.⁶⁰⁴

Various terms have been adopted to describe the self that is rejected and celebrated respectively in *Zhuangzi*. Lao Siguang 勞思光 proposes that Zhuangzi negates the

⁶⁰⁰ *Zhuangzi Jiaoquan*, 2.40.

⁶⁰¹ *Zhuangzi Jiaoquan*, 2.80, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 21. Translation with minor modifications.

⁶⁰² Thomas Ming criticizes interpreters who adopt the model of layered selves, stating that they are “too keen on believing the promise of self-discovery after self-effacement.” He discusses the phrase *wu sang wo* 吾喪我 in light of the epistemic and linguistic theories of Hume, Wittgenstein and Anscombe, suggesting that this phrase involves a matter of meta-reflection and self-addressing and that it points to the failure to refer to a stable unified self. There are some loopholes in Ming’s interpretation. First, the coherence problem, which Ming claims that he can competently solve, still remains if we adopt his no reference theory. In particular, the statement “not even life and death have any transforming effect on his self” will pose great difficulty for his interpretation in favor of a fleeting, elusive self that lacks in “an essence.” Second, the proposition that *wu sang wo* is “a valid description of everyone instead of a mystical state achievable by the few” is untenable. As will be discussed in part IV of this chapter, the phrase *wu sang wo* occurs precisely in the context of a self-cultivation passage, as a description of the state Ziqi attained through the typical Zhuangzian means of self-cultivation. See Thomas Ming, “Who Does the Sounding? The Metaphysics of the First-Person Pronoun in the *Zhuangzi*,” 57-79, esp. 58, 64, 72 and 73.

⁶⁰³ See Wu Kuang-ming, *The Butterfly as Companion: Meditations on the First Three Chapters of the Chuang Tzu* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 16, 183, 416-17.

⁶⁰⁴ Paul Kjellberg, “Review of *The Butterfly as Companion: Meditations on the First Three Chapters of the Chuang Tzu*, by Kuang-ming Wu,” *Philosophy East and West* 43.1 (1993): 127-135.

“physical self” 形軀我, “cognitive self” 認知我 and “ethical self” 德性我, but exalts the “aesthetic self” 情意我.⁶⁰⁵ Judith Berling uses “socialized self” and “physical self” to convey what is rejected and “perfected self” to convey what is celebrated in *Zhuangzi*.⁶⁰⁶ Yang Rur-bin 楊儒賓 writes that *Zhuangzi* “dismantles the physical self and social self while embodying the self that is related to *xin* and *qi*” 肢離身軀我, 肢離社會我, 體現心氣我.⁶⁰⁷ Mark A. Berkson holds that *Zhuangzi* exalts a “natural self” in contrast to the “Confucian cultivated social self.”⁶⁰⁸

Chris Jochim finds the distinction between levels of self to be a projection of modern Western conception of selfhood upon ancient Chinese texts. According to him, the above-mentioned scholars exhibit “a surprising degree of unconscious acceptance of Western dualistic...assumptions related to selfhood.”⁶⁰⁹ Jochim further argues that the mind-body dualism is not applicable to *Zhuangzi*, which reflects “a pluralistic conception of the person, not a unitary one built concentrically around an inner, spiritual core.”⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁵ Lao Siguang, *Xinbian zhongguo zhexue shi*, 190-210.

⁶⁰⁶ As Berling correctly points out, “a human has a unique capability to transcend the limits of physical existence.” See Judith Berling, “Self and Whole in Chuang Tzu,” in *Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values*, ed. Donald Munro (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1985), 104-19, esp. 104 and 108.

⁶⁰⁷ Yang Rur-bin, “Zhili yu jianxing—lun xianqin sixiang li de liangzhong shenti guan 支離與踐形—論先秦思想裏的兩種身體觀,” in *Zhongguo gudai sixiang zhong de qilun ji shenti guan* 中國古代思想中的氣論及身體觀, ed. Yang Rur-bin (Taipei: Juliu, 1993), 449.

⁶⁰⁸ According to Berkson, the *Zhuangzi* regards the physical form as what human beings receive from Heaven/Nature. Thus the body should be accepted as part of the “natural self,” and can hardly be that which is rejected. I partially agree with Berkson. Natural/cultural and physical/spiritual contrast in the *Zhuangzi* is very complicated and I will address the issue in detail in part III. See Mark A. Berkson, “Conceptions of Self/No-Self and Modes of Connection: Comparative Soteriological Structures in Classical Chinese Thought,” *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 33. 2 (2005): 316-17.

⁶⁰⁹ Jochim, “Just Say No to ‘No Self’ in *Zhuangzi*,” 41. Chen Shouchang 陳壽昌’s (a Qing dynasty scholar) commentary on the butterfly dream, which says, “the authentic self intrinsically exists, despite the transformation of things” 他言物化, 真我自存 proves that the distinction between the authentic and false self was made by Chinese scholars long before they were exposed to the Western conceptions of self.

⁶¹⁰ Jochim, “Just Say No to ‘No Self’ in *Zhuangzi*,” 53.

Jochim's position, however, is not widely accepted.⁶¹¹ Edward Slingerland points out that all philosophical conceptions of the self, be it the Chinese or Western ones, “grow out of and make use of a deeper metaphysical grammar that has its roots in a common human embodied experience.”⁶¹² Slingerland has persuasively shown that metaphors about the self, including the distinction between “essential self” and “false self” in the western culture can be applied to *Zhuangzi*. According to the classification by Slingerland, *qi*, spirit (*shen* 神), the numinous (*ling* 靈) all belong to the category of the essential self, while such things as “likes and dislikes, life and death, the world, and the physical form” belong to the category of the false self.⁶¹³

In light of the distinction between the authentic self and false self, we infer that the words *ji* and *wo* cited above possess multiple layers of meaning. Whether they connote the positive authentic self or the negative false self depends on the context, but not, as Wu Kuang-ming suggests, on grammatical and semantic differences. In the phrase “the Ultimate Person has no self,” *ji* is used in parallel with fame (*ming* 名) and merit (*gong* 功).⁶¹⁴ Here *ji*'s close association with merit and fame indicates that it belongs to the false self in Slingerland's classification. The term *ji* in the warning against “losing one's self in

⁶¹¹ Despite the objection of Jochim, Berkson insists on adopting the self/no-self schema in his discussion of *Zhuangzi*. He writes “Despite Jochim's warning, I am going to say ‘yes’ to no-self in *Zhuangzi*. ... The selfless Zhuangzian sage does not resemble the Christian saint or the Mahayana Bodhisattva. Yet, *Zhuangzi* does have a version of what we can justifiably describe as ‘no-self’...” See Berkson, “Conceptions of Self/No-Self and Modes of Connection,” 327.

⁶¹² Edward Slingerland, “Conceptions of the Self in the *Zhuangzi*: Conceptual Metaphor Analysis and Comparative Thought,” *Philosophy East and West*, 54. 3 (2004): 323.

⁶¹³ Slingerland, “Conceptions of the Self in the *Zhuangzi*,” 330.

⁶¹⁴ “The Ultimate Person has no self; the Spirit Person has no merit; the Sage has no fame” 至人無己，神人無功，聖人無名。 See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 1.18. Translation my own. For alternative translations, see Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 32; Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 5-6; A. C. Graham, trans., *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters and other Writings from the Book Chuang-tzu* (London, Winchester, Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 45.

the pursuit of fame” 行名失己⁶¹⁵ in “Da zongshi,” on the other hand, represents the authentic self that should be carefully guarded. And the clause “not even life and death have any transforming effect on his self,” discussed above, indicates that Zhuangzian sages do possess a core self that remains unaffected by life and death at the physical level.

To return to the anecdote of Wang Tai: his attitude toward the body is common among the Zhuangzian exemplars. Consider one of the anecdotes of the four friends “who knows that life and death, existence and annihilation, are all a single body” 知生死存亡之一體者。⁶¹⁶

俄而子輿有病，子祀往問之。曰：“偉哉！夫造物者，將以予為此拘拘也！曲僂發背，上有五管，頤隱於齊，肩高於頂，句贅指天。”陰陽之氣有沴，其心閒而無事，跣足而鑑於井，曰：“嗟乎！夫造物者，又將以予為此拘拘也！”子祀曰：“汝惡之乎？”曰：“亡，予何惡！浸假而化予之左臂以為雞，予因以求時夜；浸假而化予之右臂以為彈，予因以求鴉炙；浸假而化予之尻以為輪，以神為馬，予因以乘之，豈更駕哉！...”

Soon Ziyu became ill, and Zisi went to visit him. Ziyu said: “Great is the Creator of Things—putting me out of shape like this! My back is hunched; my five sense-organs are on top; my chin is hidden in my navel; my shoulders are higher than the crown of my head; my neck-bones point to Heaven.” There was a disorder in his yin and yang *qi*, but his mind was at ease, as though there was nothing the matter. He limped over to a well and saw his reflection; he said: “Alas! The Creator of Things has put me out of shape like this!”

Zisi said: “Do you hate it?”

“No, how could I hate it? Suppose my left arm is transformed into a rooster; I would comply and keep track of the time of night. Suppose my right arm is transformed into a crossbow; I would comply and look for an owl to roast. Suppose my buttocks are transformed into wheels and my spirit into a horse; I would comply and ride—why would I ever need a car? ...”⁶¹⁷

In this story, Ziyu’s fatal illness has completely disfigured his physical form. When Zisi asks him if he resents such disfigurement, he replies that there is no reason for him to do so. And his action conforms with his words: he jauntily observes his own reflection in

⁶¹⁵ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.207.

⁶¹⁶ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6. 239, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 84.

⁶¹⁷ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6. 239, Translation by Goldin, “A Mind-body Problem in the *Zhuangzi*?,” 228.

the well with great interest and wonders how amazing it is for the “creator” (i.e. the *dao*) to have transformed him into such a crooked shape. It seems that what such physical changes bring him is not sorrow and bitterness, but amazement and awe. Furthermore, not only does he readily accept what happens to him at this stage, but he also joyfully conjures up what further transformation might take place on his bodily form—upon death.

Ziyu’s speech here touches upon transformation at the physical level upon death, another recurrent theme in *Zhuangzi*. In parallel with the story of Ziyu, Zili’s talk at the deathbed of Zilai shows similar expectation for the cycle of changes upon the termination of human life.

俄而子來有病，喘喘然將死，其妻子環而泣之。子犁往問之曰：“叱！避！無怛化！”倚其戶與之語曰：“偉哉造物！又將奚以汝為？將奚以汝適？以汝為鼠肝乎？以汝為蟲臂乎？”
Suddenly Zilai grew ill. Gasping and wheezing, he lay at the point of death. His wife and children gathered round in a circle and began to cry. Zili, who had come to ask how he was, said, “Shoo! Get back! Don’t disturb the process of change!” Then he leaned against the doorway and talked to Zilai. “How marvelous the Creator is! What is he going to make of you next? Where is he going to send you? Will he make you into a rat’s liver? Will he make you into a bug’s arm?”⁶¹⁸

For Zili, death is the starting point of a process of transformation from one bodily form into another. Human bodies disintegrate but do not perish upon death. Instead, they join in the recycle of matter and transform into some other forms of life—most likely animal bodies—as in the case of Zilai. Similar process of the miraculous transformation from one organism to another is described, in great detail, in “Zhile”至樂, in which the initial germs of life (*ji* 幾) is described to be able to develop into various life forms under favorable natural conditions and simple low-level organisms able to produce complex high-level

⁶¹⁸ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.244, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 85.

organisms, with human being on top of the chain, which in turn returns to the initial germs upon death and thus rejoins the endless cycle of life.⁶¹⁹

In the following dialogue between the two friends who are “observing the process of transformation” 觀化, the protean germ of life is rendered a more quotidian color: according to Uncle Lack-Limb, life is created from the minute dust. Interestingly, Uncle Lack-Limb’s vision of the origin of life reminds us of the biblical creation myth as reflected in Ecclesiastes 3:20 “all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again.”

支離叔與滑介叔觀於冥伯之丘，崑崙之虛，黃帝之所休。俄而柳生其左肘，其意蹶蹶然惡之。支離叔曰：「子惡之乎？」滑介叔曰：「亡。予何惡？生者，假借也；假之而生者，塵垢也。死生為晝夜。且吾與子觀化而化及我，我又何惡焉？」

Uncle Lack-Limb and Uncle Lack-Limb were seeing the sights at Dark Lord Hill and the wastes of Kunlun, the place where the Yellow Emperor rested. Suddenly a willow sprouted out of Uncle Lack-Limb’s left elbow. He looked very startled and seemed to be annoyed. “Do you resent it?” said Uncle Lack-Limb. “No—what is there to resent?” said Uncle Lack-Limb. “Our life is borrowed, and what we borrow to generate life is dust. Life and death are day and night. You and I came to watch the process of change, and now change has caught up with me. Why would I have anything to resent?”⁶²⁰

The protagonists in the above-quoted stories not only calmly accept the fate of death, but also look forward to the marvelous transformation that might take place upon death. What they exhibit is a typical Zhuangzian attitude toward death. A large amount of textual evidence indicates that such an attitude is what *Zhuangzi* sincerely advocates. However, it is hard for most of the common people to face death with such equanimity. After all, the insurmountable barrier between life and death does exist in early China, as in all cultures

⁶¹⁹ See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 18.655, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 195-96.

⁶²⁰ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 18. 645, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 192-93, translation with minor modifications.

and times. Therefore, we find a large portion of *Zhuangzi* to be devoted to removing people's fear of and dread for death. Consider the story of Lady Li in "Qiwu lun":

予惡乎知說生之非惑邪！予惡乎知惡死之非弱喪而不知歸者邪！麗之姬，艾封人之子也。晉國之始得之，涕泣沾襟；及其至於王所，與王同筐床，食芻豢，而後悔其泣也。予惡乎知夫死者不悔其始之蘄生乎！

How do I know that loving life is not a delusion? How do I know that in hating death I am not like a man who, having left home in his youth, has forgotten the way back? Lady Li was the daughter of the border guard of Ai. When she was first taken captive and brought to the state of Jin, she wept until tears drenched the collar of her robe. But later, when she went to live in the palace of the ruler, shared his couch with him, and ate the delicious meats of his table, she wondered why she had ever wept. How do I know that the dead do not wonder why they ever longed for life?⁶²¹

Here the analogy between Lady Li's sadness over her captivity and the fear of death can achieve a reassuring effect: it helps people to realize that the desire for life and hate of death may be caused merely by their ignorance of what is to come after death—for those who have habitually clung to life in this world, the world after death is surely intimidating—like the unknown situation in the state of Jin for Lady Li. However, it is highly possible that what death offers is a much more promising future than life—like the happy life Lady Li enjoys at the palace of the king of Jin. If people detest death out of their fear of the unknown world facing them upon death, then such fear is ungrounded—what is unknown may not necessarily be as dreadful as they imagine.

If the story of Lady Li has a strong skeptical and agonistic tone,⁶²² then the following speech made by the skull from an anecdote recorded in "Zhile" completely reverts the stereotyped notion that life is preferable than death.

⁶²¹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2. 87, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 47.

⁶²² For discussion of skepticism in this passage, see Lee Yearley, "The Perfected Person in the Radical *Zhuangzi*" in *Experimental essays on Zhuangzi* 2nd ed, ed. Victor Mair (Dunedin, FL: Three Pines Press, 2010), 124.

髑髏曰：“死，無君於上，無臣於下，亦無四時之事，從然以天地為春秋，雖南面王樂，不能過也。”

“When you’re dead,” said the skull, “there’s no ruler above you and no subjects below you. There are no affairs of the four seasons; instead, time passes leisurely as it does for heaven and earth. Not even the joys of being a south-facing king can surpass those of death.”⁶²³

For the skull, who has experienced death himself, death is a state of supreme joy and endless bliss, completely free of the worries, cares, labors and social constraints of human life. In this anecdote, what death offers is definitely a more promising future than life.⁶²⁴

In most other cases, however, life and death are regarded as the two equal stages that Heaven endows with the human being:

死生，命也，其有夜旦之常，天也。

Life and death are destined. Their constant alternation, like that of day and night, is due to heaven.⁶²⁵

The above analogy effectively neutralizes the demarcation between life and death. Like day and night, life and death follow each other in succession, the end of one becoming the starting point of the other. As Roger T. Ames suggests, “Like ‘up and down’ or ‘left and right’, life and death are correlative categories which depend upon each other for

⁶²³ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 18. 647, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 170.

⁶²⁴ The rejection of life and embracing of death revealed in this anecdote forms a sharp contrast with the skeptical tone in the anecdote of Lady Li. This case shows that the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters more often than not lack the intricacy and complexity of the Inner Chapters. Lee Yearley has offered an interesting perspective to account for the differences between the Inner Chapters and those chapters supposedly written by the transmitters of Zhuangzi. According to Yearley, chapters 1-7 reflect a radical Zhuangzi and chapters 17-22 reflect a conventional Zhuangzi. See Yearley, “The Perfected Person in the Radical Zhuangzi,” 125-26.

⁶²⁵ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6. 221, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 53.

explanation.”⁶²⁶ And as Berkson points out, “the cycle of life and death is the fundamental natural process,” which is “analogous to the changing of the seasons.”⁶²⁷

Apparently, the view of life and death as a natural process is gained from a larger perspective, namely, the perspective of Heaven or the *dao*. The question is, will it be possible for humans to acquire such a perspective? If death did bring about the annihilation of personal consciousness and identity, it would be ridiculous to consider life and death as being equal, and it would be impossible for human beings to transcend the limitation of human life and attain the perspective of Heaven. Furthermore, as the anecdote of the skull in the “Zhile” suggests, for the skull to perceive and elaborate on the ideal state brought about by death, it must possess consciousness and be able to function as the subject of perception. ⁶²⁸

The logical inference above somehow leads to the conclusion that human consciousness continues to exist despite the disintegration of the body. Textual evidence also corroborates this conclusion. In the story of Ziyu, the statement that disorder at the level of *qi* does not affect the state of his *xin* 陰陽之氣有沴，其心閒而無事 is quite telltale. Here the contrast between *qi* and *xin* is very indicative of the distinction made between physical form and spiritual entity, matter and mind. In “A Mind-body Problem in the *Zhuangzi*?”, Goldin offers a thorough analysis of this sentence and proposes “it seems as though the author presupposes a disembodied mental power within Ziyu that can

⁶²⁶ Roger T. Ames, “Death as Transformation in Classical Daoism,” in *Death and Philosophy*, eds. Jeff Malpas and Robert C. Solomon (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 59.

⁶²⁷ Berkson, “Death in the *Zhuangzi*,” 199.

⁶²⁸ See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 18. 647.

continue to function despite massive corporeal decay.”⁶²⁹ Goldin’s analysis of the wheel-horse metaphor in Ziyu’s speech is equally enlightening. He suggests that even after Ziyu’s spirit is transformed into a horse, he still retains the mental ability of assessment and decision-making.⁶³⁰

According to Goldin, Ziyu’s speech and several other textual clues all point to the existence of an “immaterial soul” standing aloof and remaining unaffected by the recycling at the material level upon death. Throughout *Zhuangzi*, there is plenty of evidence to support Goldin’s conclusion. What Goldin calls the “immaterial soul” is, in different contexts, termed *xin*, *shen*, *lingfu* 靈府, or *shi qi xing zhe* 使其形者.

死生存亡，窮達貧富，賢與不肖，毀譽、饑渴、寒暑，是事之變，命之行也；日夜相代乎前，而知不能規乎其始者也。故不足以滑和，不可入於靈府。

Life and death, preservation and loss, failure and success, poverty and wealth, worthiness and unworthiness, slander and praise, hunger and thirst, cold and heat—these are all the transformations of affairs and the operation of destiny. Day and night they alternate before us, but human knowledge is incapable of perceiving their source. Therefore we should not let them disturb our equanimity, nor should we let them enter our numinous treasury.⁶³¹

Here *lingfu* is seen as the most precious part of man that should be securely guarded against the damage made by concerns with external affairs, the ultimate of which being the preservation or destruction of physical life. This passage echoes the above discussed clause of “not even life and death have any transforming effect on his self.” Together, they indicate that *Zhuangzi* does endorse a spiritual core that remains unchanged despite the disintegration of the physical form.

⁶²⁹ Goldin, “A Mind-body Problem in the *Zhuangzi*?,” 229.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

⁶³¹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 5.190, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 47-48.

The distinction between the physical form and that which vitalizes it and departs from it upon death is highlighted in the following passage, in which “that which animated the form” (*shi qi xing zhe*) is described exactly as a “disembodied soul” that many scholars strongly discount as a possible Zhuangzian notion.⁶³²

適見純子食於其死母者，少焉眴若，皆棄之而走。不見己焉爾，不得類焉爾。所愛其母者，非愛其形也，愛使其形者也。

I happened to see some little pigs suckling at their dead mother. After a short while, they all abandoned her and ran away hastily. It was because they no longer saw themselves in her and because they no longer sensed her to be their kind. What they loved about their mother was not her physical form but that which animated her form.⁶³³

In the previously discussed anecdote concerning the deformed Wang Tai, when someone asked Confucius what was the unique way that Wang Tai used his *xin* 其用心也，獨若之何，⁶³⁴ Confucius gave the following explanation:

仲尼曰：“死生亦大矣，而不得與之變，雖天地覆墜，亦將不與之遺。...” 仲尼曰：“... 而況官天地，府萬物，直寓六骸，象耳目，一知之所知，而心未嘗死者乎！”

“Life and death are of great moment,” said Confucius, “but he is able to avoid their transformations. Though Heaven may collapse and earth overturn, he would not be lost in their wake.” ...said Confucius, “... how much more so should one who takes heaven and earth as his palace and the myriad things as his treasury, his trunk and limbs as a mere lodging, his senses as phenomena; who treats as a whole all that knowledge knows; and whose mind never dies!”⁶³⁵

Through the mouth of Confucius, Zhuangzi affirms the message that those who can successfully transcend the demarcation between life and death and remain impervious to

⁶³² For rejections of the disembodied soul or spiritual core in *Zhuangzi*, see Berkson, “Conceptions of Self/No-Self and Modes of Connection,” 317; Jochism, “Just Say No to ‘No Self’ in *Zhuangzi*,” 44.

⁶³³ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 5.190, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 47.

⁶³⁴ This echoes Harold H. Oshima’s proposition that difference between the sage and the ordinary people lies mainly in their use of *xin*. See Harold H. Oshima, “A Metaphorical Analysis of the Concept of Mind in the Chuang-tzu” in *Experimental Essays on Zhuangzi 2nd ed.*, ed. Victor Mair (Dunedin, FL: Three Pines Press, 2010), 66.

⁶³⁵ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 5.171-74, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 43-44.

the transformations at the physical level possess a *xin* that never dies. The immortal *xin*, as Liu Tao 劉濤 points out, “is an immaterial existence that can transcend the confinement of the material world, including one’s physical form” 是超越物質的存在，它可以擺脫形體等物質世界的限制。⁶³⁶

The passage above not only supports the existence of the disembodied soul, but also affirms the possibility for the soul to attain an eternal existence. Nonetheless, *xin* in *Zhuangzi* is far different from the conception of an indestructible soul in the Platonic or Cartesian tradition.⁶³⁷ As is shown in the two passages below, for many people, *xin* dies upon the death of the body. For some, *xin* dies even before the death of the body. The most deplorable thing, according to *Zhuangzi*, is for the precious *xin*, which should otherwise possess an eternal existence, to die at the same time as, or even before, the physical form.⁶³⁸

夫哀莫大於心死，而人死亦次之。

Now, there is no greater sadness than the death of the mind—the death of the person is secondary.⁶³⁹

人謂之不死，奚益？其形化，其心與之然，可不謂大哀乎？

Isn’t this lamentable? There are those who say that at least we are not dead, but what’s the good of it? Our physical form decays and with it the mind likewise.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁶ Liu Tao, “Xin yu xing de jiuchan: Zhuangzi xinxing lun fawei 心與形的糾纏：莊子心形論發微,” *Journal of Heilongjiang College of Education* 黑龍江教育學院學報 31.1 (2012): 182.

⁶³⁷ The nature of the soul in Platonic metaphysics is summarized as below: “soul is most similar to what is divine, immortal, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, unvarying, and constant in relation to itself; whereas body, in its turn, is most similar to what is human, mortal, multifarious, non-intelligible, dissoluble, and never constant in relation to itself.” See David Gallop, trans. *Plato Phaedo* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 31-32.

⁶³⁸ The distinction between death of *xin* and death of the body has very important implications. It further proves that *xin* is constructed as a spiritual entity, rather than a physical organ. If *xin* was a physical organ, it would die upon the death of the body. Thus it would be groundless to distinguish between the death of *xin* and that of the body. For more on the *xin*-body dualism and a corpus analysis of *xin* in early Chinese texts, see Slingerland, “Body and Mind in Early China,” 15-26.

⁶³⁹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 21.772, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 201.

⁶⁴⁰ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2.53, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 14.

Here we encounter the greatest difference between the Platonic-Cartesian mind-body dualism and Zhuangzian mind-body dualism. In the former, the indestructibility of the soul is not dependent on any condition. In Plato's *Phaedo*, for example, although different destinies were invented by Socrates for the souls of the wise, the virtuous and the tyrannical respectively, all souls are seen to be immortal and indestructible.⁶⁴¹ In the latter, however, for the *xin* to achieve an immortal status, certain prerequisites must be fulfilled first. Only the Zhuangzian sage is described as possessing an immortal, never-dying *xin*. What the ordinary man has, in contrast, is a near-death *xin* that cannot be restored to life 近死之心, 莫使復陽也.⁶⁴²

What, then, is the difference between the sage's *xin* and the ordinary man's *xin*? Under what conditions can one's *xin* attain a never-dying status? What, on the other hand, will lead to the death of *xin*? We already know that the mind-body dualism does exist in *Zhuangzi* and that textual evidence corroborates a distinction between physical death and spiritual death.⁶⁴³ This entails that the status of *xin* as a spiritual entity is not affected by injury or destruction at the physical level, as in the case of Ziyu, and in the following sentence: "Although he has a startled body, his *xin* is not injured; the house [where the spirit dwells] is destroyed, his essence suffers no death" 且彼有駭形而無損心, 有旦宅而無情死.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴¹ Gallop, trans. *Plato Phaedo*, 33-34.

⁶⁴² *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2.49.

⁶⁴³ Here the spiritual death refers to the destruction of one's *xin*, and it should be distinguished from the Christian sense of spiritual death, which indicates a separation from God.

⁶⁴⁴ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.256, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 88. Translation with modification.

Instead, what does most harm to the *xin* is the way one uses it: if one uses one's *xin* to distinguish between *shi-fei* 是非, *xin* will be clogged, contaminated and damaged. *Shi-fei*, as a unique human way to categorize and attach values to objects we encounter, is one of the greatest artificial distinctions that Zhuangzi is devoted to deconstructing.⁶⁴⁵ Distinguishing *shi-fei* is seen to be the source of confusion and chaos, as in the sentence: “the rules of benevolence and righteousness and the paths of right and wrong are all hopelessly snarled and jumbled” 仁義之端，是非之塗，樊然殽亂。⁶⁴⁶ *Shi-fei* is also seen as a barrier to one's access to the *dao*: “because right and wrong appeared, the Way was injured” 是非之彰也，道之所以虧也。⁶⁴⁷

The *xin* that is clogged with *shi-fei* is called *chengxin* 成心 (a completed *xin*) in the sense that prejudgments have been formed in it. According to Chong Kim-chong, *chengxin* refers to the “pre-established heart/mind with its own perspectives, prejudices and drives.”⁶⁴⁸

夫隨其成心而師之，誰獨且無師乎？奚必知代而心自取者有之？愚者與有焉。未成乎心而有是非，是今日適越而昔至也。

But if you go by the completed heart and take it as your authority, who is without such an authority? Why should it be only the man who knows how things alternate and whose heart approves its own

⁶⁴⁵ *Shifei* 是非 can be interpreted as 1) judging whether something belongs to a category or not as in “White horse is horse 白馬是馬 or white horse is not horse 白馬非馬 2) making distinction between right and wrong as in “rights and wrongs of the Confucians and the Mo-ists” 儒墨之是非. Graham's translation of the phrase as “that's it, that's not” adopts the first sense. See Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 54. Watson adopts the second sense and translates it as “right and wrong.” See Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 39.

⁶⁴⁶ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2.80, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 46.

⁶⁴⁷ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2.66; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 41.

⁶⁴⁸ Chong Kim-chong, *Zhuangzi's Critique of the Confucians: Blinded by the Human* (Albany: State University of New York, 2016), 12. For further discussion on the concept of *chengxin* and a comparison between *xin* in the *Zhuangzi* and *Mencius* and *Xunzi*, see Chong Kim-chong, “Zhuangzi's *Cheng Xin* and its Implications for Virtue and Perspectives,” *Dao* 10 (2011): 427-43. The revised version of this articles occurs in the chapter “The Pre-Established Heart/Mind” in Chong Kim-chong, *Zhuangzi's Critique of the Confucians*, 21-44.

judgements who has such an authority? The fool has one just as he has. For there to be ‘That’s it, that’s not’ before they are formed in the heart would be to ‘go to Yue today and have arrived yesterday.’⁶⁴⁹

Chengxin is very likely an allusion to the *Mencian xin* that approves and disapproves according to its innate moral standards. Such a *xin* makes binary oppositions and attach value tags to people and things in the world. But the validity of its judgment is questionable, as is revealed in the parable that human beings and other animal species thrive in different environment, prefer different food and have different standards of beauty.⁶⁵⁰ What is more, the standard of “right” and “wrong” formed from a particular perspective bring about endless disputes that can hardly be settled, such as that between the Confucians and Moists 儒、墨之是非。⁶⁵¹

In addition, attaching value tags to things and categorizing them according to artificial human standards lead to the desire for and attachment to those classified as preferable, as well as resentment of and loathing for those classified as unpreferable. Expectation for, attainment or deprivation of the desirable will in turn lead to various emotions such as delight, sadness, anxiety, worry and fear.⁶⁵² The following passage in “Qiwu lun” paints a bleak picture of the abhorrent state when one’s *xin* is engaged in judging, valuing and discriminating things:

⁶⁴⁹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2. 56, Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 53.

⁶⁵⁰ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2.80, Watson, 45-46.

⁶⁵¹ Negative attitude toward dispute is consistently exhibited in *Zhuangzi*. The most famous passage on the futility of dispute can be found in “Qiwu lun.” See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2.91, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 39, 48.

⁶⁵² Note that emotion itself is not rejected in *Zhuangzi*. The *Zhuangzian* sage is described as “[his] joy and anger are interconnected with the four seasons” 喜怒通四時, indicating that emotions consistent with the natural pattern are celebrated in *Zhuangzi*. *Zhuangzi* only rejects unnatural emotions that arise out of the acts of distinguishing, judging of and desire for things from a prejudiced perspective. For more on the distinction between “natural emotions” and the negative emotions, see Berkson, “Death in the *Zhuangzi*,” 214-16.

其寐也魂交，其覺也形開，與接為構，日以心鬪。縵者，宥者，密者。小恐惴惴，大恐縵縵。其發若機括，其司是非之謂也；其留如詛盟，其守勝之謂也；其殺如秋冬，以言其日消也；其溺之所為之，不可使復之也；其厭也如緘，以言其老洩也；近死之心，莫使復陽也。喜怒哀樂，慮嘆變慙，姚佚啟態；樂出虛，蒸成菌。日夜相代乎前，而莫知其所萌。

In sleep, men's spirits go visiting; in waking hours, their bodies hustle. With everything they meet they become entangled. Day after day they use their minds in strife, sometimes grandiose, sometimes sly, sometimes petty. Their little fears are mean and trembly; their great fears are stunned and overwhelming. They bound off like an arrow or a crossbow pellet, certain that they are the arbiters of right and wrong. They cling to their position as though they had sworn before the gods, sure that they are holding on to victory. They fade like fall and winter—such is the way they dwindle day by day. They drown in what they do—you cannot make them turn back. They grow dark, as though sealed with seals—such are the excesses of their old age. And when their minds draw near to death, nothing can restore them to the light. Joy, anger, grief, delight, worry, regret, fickleness, inflexibility, modesty, willfulness, candor, insolence—music from empty holes, mushrooms springing up in dampness, day and night replacing each other before us, and no one knows where they sprout from.⁶⁵³

When one uses one's *xin* as arbiters of right and wrong 司是非, *xin* becomes entangled, and stays in constant strife with external objects 與接為構, 日以心鬪. In a parallel passage, the conflict is described as “slicing or jostling with things” 與物相刃相靡.⁶⁵⁴ Driven by the ambition to gain an upper hand 守勝 in the constant fight with the external objects, one allows one's *xin* to be damaged beyond repair,⁶⁵⁵ till it approaches death and cannot be restored to life.

⁶⁵³ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2.48-49, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 37-38.

⁶⁵⁴ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2.52. Translation my own. For alternative translations, see Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 51, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 14, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 38.

⁶⁵⁵ For more discussion on the damage to the *xin*, See Oshima, “A Metaphorical Analysis of the Concept of Mind in the *Zhuangzi*,” 62-82, esp. 79. Oshima holds that “Likes and dislikes, concerns and fears were not conceived of as psychological states, but were actually envisioned as material impediments to the *xin*'s functionings.” According to Oshima, *xin* in *Zhuangzi* is described literally as a physical organ and metaphorically as the conduit where the *dao* flows and collects. I agree with Oshima that the damage done to the *xin* is irrevocable and will eventually leads to its death. I disagree with Oshima, however, in his understanding of *xin* as being physical and material. I find Oshima's interpretation of *xin* as a physical organ and his claim that “obstructions that block the flow of the *dao* into the *xin* were the cause of ‘spiritual’ death” to be self-contradictory.

Is there a way to restore one's *xin* back to life before it is irrevocably damaged? In the following passage from “Renjian shi,” a remedy for healing one's *xin* is provided. This is called “fasting of the mind” (*xinzhai* 心齋).

若一志，无聽之以耳而聽之以心，无聽之以心而聽之以氣。聽止於耳，心止於符。氣也者，虛而待物者也。唯道集虛。虛者，心齋也。
“Maintaining the unity of your will,” said Confucius, “listen not with your ears but with your mind. Listen not with your mind but with your *qi*. The ears are limited to listening, the mind is limited to tallying. *Qi*, however, awaits things emptily. The Way gathers in emptiness, and emptiness is the fasting of the mind.”⁶⁵⁶

Like *ji*, *xin* has different connotations in different contexts in *Zhuangzi*. In this passage, *xin* that is “limited to tallying” 止於符 refers to the *chengxin*, a mind that is clogged with artificial cultural distinctions and tends to make destructive evaluations and judgments. To practice fasting of the mind, one needs to empty one's *chengxin* of all the artificial distinctions so that it can become the conduit where the *dao* collects. Only after what composes the *chengxin* is emptied out can one's *xin* regain its function to objectively reflect and spontaneously respond to transformations, as the *dao* does.

In the hierarchy presented here, the *dao* is on the top, followed by *qi*, the clogged *xin*, and the sensory organ. Crucially, this reverses the *xin-qi* order in the hierarchy presented in *Mencius* 2 A 2, which holds that *qi* should be guided by *zhi* 志 (the will power of *xin*).⁶⁵⁷ In this sense, this passage deconstructs the *Mencian* notion of *xin* as a legitimate source of moral evaluation.⁶⁵⁸ Unlike the *Mencian qi* that needs to be directed and ordered, *qi* in this

⁶⁵⁶ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 4. 130, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 32, Translation with modifications.

⁶⁵⁷ See chapter 2, n. 448.

⁶⁵⁸ For a comparison of this passage with *Mencius* 2 A 2, see Bryan W. Van Norden, “Competing Interpretations of the Inner Chapters of the ‘Zhuangzi,’” *Philosophy East and West* 46.2 (1996): 256-58.

passage is regarded as a legitimate guidance for us. It is empty and able to respond spontaneously to things, possessing the same character as the fasted *xin* of the sage.⁶⁵⁹

But why is *qi* singled out as the source of guidance? In previous studies of the practice of fasting of the mind, different answers have been suggested. Harold Roth suggests that to listen with *qi* is to focus on one's breathing.⁶⁶⁰ This association with breathing meditation, however, may reduce the philosophical subtlety and profundity of this passage. Zhang Xuezhi holds that when the stage of listening with the *qi* is achieved, the boundaries between physical body and *xin* are dissolved. Both "are identical as *qi* and integrate with the indiscriminative *qi* of the universe."⁶⁶¹ This interpretation is even more unfounded, for *xin* and *qi* are presented in *Zhuangzi* as two distinct entities, the former being spiritual and the latter material.

To satisfactorily answer this question, we need to closely examine the relationship between *qi* and human life. An elaboration on how *qi* is described in *Zhuangzi* will also enhance our understanding of its distinct mind-body dualism. The two passages below both describe life and death from the perspective of the transformation of *qi*.

察其始而本無生，非徒無生也，而本無形，非徒無形也，而本無氣。雜乎芒芴之間，變而有氣，氣變而有形，形變而有生，今又變而之死，是相與為春秋冬夏四時行也。

But I reflected on her beginning and realized that originally she was unborn. Not only was she unborn, originally she had no form. Not only did she have no form, originally there was no *qi*. Intermingling with nebulousness and blurriness, a transformation occurred and there was *qi*; *qi* was

⁶⁵⁹ In "Ying diwang" 應帝王, the sage who has emptied himself, is said to have a mirror-like *xin* that objectively reflects and properly responds to things. "Be empty, that is all. The Perfect Person uses his mind like a mirror—going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing." 亦虛而已。至人之用心若鏡，不將不迎，應而不藏。 See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 7. 298, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 97. Translation with minor modification.

⁶⁶⁰ Roth, *Original Tao*, 155.

⁶⁶¹ Zhang Xuezhi, "Several Modalities of the Body-Mind Relationship," 387.

transformed and there was form; the form was transformed and there was birth; now there has been another transformation and she is dead.⁶⁶²

生也死之徒，死也生之始，孰知其紀！人之生，氣之聚也，聚則為生，散則為死。若死生為徒，吾又何患！故萬物一也，是其所美者為神奇，其所惡者為臭腐；臭腐復化為神奇，神奇復化為臭腐。故曰：‘通天下一氣耳。’聖人故貴一。

“For life is the disciple of death and death is the beginning of life. Who knows their regulator? Human life is the coalescence of *qi*. When it coalesces there is life; when it dissipates there is death. Since life and death are disciples of each other, how should I be troubled by them? Thus the myriad things are a unity. What makes the one beautiful is its spirit and wonder; what makes the other loathsome is its stench and putrefaction. But stench and putrefaction evolve into spirit and wonder, and spirit and wonder evolve once again into stench and putrefaction. Therefore it is said, ‘A unitary *qi* pervades all under heaven.’ Hence the sage values unity.”⁶⁶³

Both passages above elaborate on the familiar Zhuangzian theme that life and death are unified and the myriad things are identical, from the perspective of the unitary *qi* under Heaven. Why are life and death equal stages of physical transformation (*hua* 化), and human form equal to animal forms such as rat’s liver 鼠肝 and bug’s leg 蟲臂? Because there exists a unitary *qi* that underlies the material transformations and remains constant in the process of endless changes (*bian* 變). Through the condensation and dissipation of this unitary *qi*, things with different physical forms come into existence and transform from one to another.

Here *qi* is described as the basis of human physical constitution, and the primordial material out of which all things between heaven and earth are made of. Nonetheless, the depiction of life and death as the condensation and dissipation of *qi* is an incomplete picture of human existence, for it only accounts for human life at the physical level but does not touch upon its spiritual dimension. Nor is the cosmogonic picture presented here a

⁶⁶² *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 18. 643, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 169. Translation with minor modifications.

⁶⁶³ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 22.807, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 212. Translation with minor modifications.

complete one. (The unitary *qi* pervades whatever is under Heaven 天下, but does not go beyond Heaven.) It holds that the unitary *qi* comes into being automatically out of the nebulousness and blurriness 芒芴, the source of which is not clearly explained.

The following passage offers a detailed account of how the primordial *qi* comes into being.

夫昭昭生於冥冥，有倫生於無形，精神生於道，形本生於精，而萬物以形相生。
Luminosity is produced from darkness,
Differentiation is produced from formlessness,
[Spiritual] Essence is produced from the Way,
The Root of Form is produced from Essence,
And the myriad things produce each other through their forms.⁶⁶⁴

In this cosmogony, [Spiritual] Essence is born directly out of the *dao*. The Root of Form (*xingben* 形本) is in turn born out of Essence. Serving as the source out of which the myriad things with distinct forms are born, and the bridge between the formless realm and beings with distinct forms, the Root of Form is apparently an appellation for the unitary *qi* of all under Heaven. In the hierarchy of formless (*wuxing* 無形) and form (*youlun* 有倫), the *dao*, Essence, and the Root of Form all belong to the realm of the formless. In this sense, the unitary *qi*, as the Root of Form, is more akin to the *dao* than beings with individuated physical forms are. The former marks the state of union and undifferentiation, whereas the latter mark the state of differentiation and separation.

Now we are in a better position to understand why the “fasting of the mind” passage recommends to listen with the *qi* rather than with the ear or a *xin* preoccupied with artificial constructions. Both the ear and the clogged *xin* are confined by the individuated form,

⁶⁶⁴ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 22.816, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 215. Translation with minor modification.

which is not only separated (*fen* 分) from the rest of the physical world, but also furthest away from the *dao*. Perceptions made by them are likely to be limited, biased and misleading. Therefore, one needs to block the sense organs and empty the preoccupied mind so as to awaken the unitary *qi*, which connects one with not only the myriad physical beings, but also the generative cosmic spirit. Paying attention to the unitary *qi* helps one to break the boundary of the discrete physical form and attain union with the myriad things in the world. Above all, by listening with the unitary *qi*, one becomes in rapport with the generative cosmic spirit and thus releases one's *xin* from the confinement of individual physical form and social-cultural constraints.

In a word, paying attention to the unitary *qi* helps one to achieve a fasted *xin*. After all, consciousness and intellect arise in one's *xin*, rather than in the *qi*. And as shown above, when one's *xin* is clogged with human schemes and social-cultural distinctions, it would be gradually damaged due to constant strife with physical objects.⁶⁶⁵ Thus, by listening with the *qi*, one's *xin* would be emptied of all the destructive factors and thus able to maintain equanimity when confronted with such distress as social-cultural stigma, natural disasters and even the destruction of the physical body. Unlike the clogged *xin* which is constantly "sliced and jostled" by things, the fasted *xin* is in harmony with the physical objects and able to maintain vitality, as illustrated in the passage below.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁵ See pages 206-208 above.

⁶⁶⁶ Note that as a dualist, Zhuangzi encounters a similar dilemma as Descartes does, that is, how is it possible for the spiritual entity to interact with the body and the rest of the material world. Descartes attempts to resolve the dilemma by proposing "a certain extremely small gland" in the innermost part of the brain through which the soul exercises its functions on the entire body. See Stephen H. Voss, trans. *René Descartes The Passions of the Soul* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 1989), 36. In *Zhuangzi*, this tension is resolved through positing the unitary *qi* (i.e., the Root of Form) as the intermediary between the formless spiritual realm and the material world of beings with multifaceted forms, as well as between *xin* and the physical form.

使之和豫，通而不失於兌，使日夜無卻而與物為春，是接而生時於心者也。

If you can make [your *xin*] be in harmony with things and take delight in them; if your *xin* can penetrate into [the rest of the world] without losing joy; if day and night there is no fissure between your *xin* and things, and you share with them the springtime, then proper seasons will in turn be generated in your *xin*.⁶⁶⁷

The image of spring, as a symbol of life and revival, forms a sharp contrast with the image of bleak and lifeless winter described in a “Qiwu lun” passage cited above.⁶⁶⁸

Part II Spiritual Roaming in the Realm Beyond the Physical World and Merging with the Cosmic Ancestor

Through fasting of the mind, the sage not only keeps his *xin* alive, but also allows it to return to the root 復其根 and merge with undifferentiated primordial chaos 渾沌.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁷ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 5.190. Translation my own. For alternative translations, see Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 48, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 74, Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 80.

⁶⁶⁸ See n. 653 above. It should be noted that in “Qiwu lun”, which conveys a strong skeptical message, *xin* is mainly used in the negative sense. In contrast, *xin* in “Dechong fu” and “Da zongshi”, which are centered on the Zhuangzian exemplars, are all used in the positive sense, except one case in which it is neutral. For a seminal study of skepticism in *Zhuangzi*, see P. J. Ivanhoe, “Skepticism, Skill, and the Ineffable Tao,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 61.4 (1993): 639-54, esp. 648, n. 34 and 652. Ivanhoe holds that the tendency to mistrust any proposal about what is right and wrong are “most clearly and dramatically present in chapter two.” He concludes that “Zhuangzi was not a skeptic or a relativist; he had a wordless, unwavering faith in his Way,” which is exhibited through “examples of skillful individuals.” I hold that contrast in the meaning of *xin* confirms that a therapeutic skepticism is adopted in *Zhuangzi*: “Qiwu lun” serves mainly to deconstruct the negative way to use one’s *xin*, i.e., to engage one’s *xin* in prejudgments, prejudices and biases. After these preconceptions are swept away, readers of *Zhuangzi* will be readier to accept the positive message conveyed through the construction of Zhuangzian exemplars in the later chapters. Besides Ivanhoe, several authors in *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the Zhuangzi*, including Kjellberg, Schwitzgebel, and Yearley, all agree that “Zhuangzi is promoting skepticism as therapy for a variety of problems.” See Don Levi, “Review of Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the *Zhuangzi*,” *Philosophy East and West*, 49.4 (1999): 529. For more on therapeutic skepticism in *Zhuangzi*, see Van Norden, “Competing Interpretations of the Inner Chapters of the ‘Zhuangzi,’” 258. Cheng Chung-ying also asserts that the *Zhuangzi* “contains skeptical elements for constructive purposes.” See Cheng Chung-ying, “Nature and Function of Skepticism in Chinese Philosophy,” *Philosophy East and West* 27. 2 (1977): 140. Similarly, John Trowbridge states, “Zhuangzi arguably moves beyond aporetic skepticism in his positive recommendations regarding *dao*.” See John Trowbridge “Skepticism as a Way of Living: Sextus Empiricus and *Zhuangzi*,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32.2 (2006): 255.

⁶⁶⁹ The anecdote of *hundun* 混沌, in which the faceless Emperor of the Middle Land named *hundun* (the undifferentiated primordial chaos), lost his life after Emperors of the South Sea and North Sea bored seven openings on him, is recorded at the end of “Ying diwang.” In this anecdote undifferentiation symbolizes life

This process is referred to as “to undo one’s *xin* and set free one’s spirit” 解心釋神, a particular Zhuangzian version of “nourishing one’s *xin*” 心養.

鴻蒙曰：“意！心養 ... 墮爾形體，吐爾聰明；倫與物忘，大同乎滓溟；解心釋神，莫然無魂。萬物云云，各復其根，各復其根而不知。渾渾沌沌，終身不離。

“Well, then—mind-nourishment!” said Big Concealment. “... Smash your form and body, spit out hearing and eyesight, forget you are a thing among other things, and you may join in great unity with the deep and boundless. Set free the mind, let go of the spirit, be blank and soulless, and the ten thousand things one by one will return to the root—return to the root and not know why. Dark and undifferentiated chaos—to the end of life none will depart from it.”⁶⁷⁰

The liberated *xin* then participates freely in the spiritual wandering. Wandering 遊 is a unique Zhuangzian way to convey spiritual freedom.⁶⁷¹ The image of wandering conveys a carefree and purposeless state, as is suggested in the title of the first chapter: “free and easy wandering” (*Xiaoyao you*). The realm in which the Zhuangzian exemplars wander deserves special attention. *Zhuangzi* is filled with such descriptions as “wanders beyond the four seas” 遊乎四海之外,⁶⁷² “wanders beyond the dust and grime” 遊乎塵垢之外⁶⁷³ and “go wandering in infinity” 以遊無窮者.⁶⁷⁴ Consider this passage from “Ying diwang.”

予方將與造物者為人，厭則又乘夫莽眇之鳥，以出六極之外，而遊無何有之鄉，以處墳垠之野。汝又何帛以治天下感予之心為？

and vitality, whereas differentiation symbolizes death. See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 7. 301, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 97.

⁶⁷⁰ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 11. 395, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 122, translation with modifications.

⁶⁷¹ Yang Rur-bin, who holds that self-cultivation in the *Zhuangzi* is rooted in early Daoist traditions, admits that the notion of “you” 遊 is a unique invention by Zhuangzi. See Yang Rur-bin, “From ‘Merging the Body with the Mind’ to ‘Wandering in Unitary Qi’: A Discussion of Zhuangzi’s Realm of the True Man and Its Corporeal Basis,” in *Hiding the World in the World: Uneven Discourses on the Zhuangzi*, ed. Scott Cook (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 112.

⁶⁷² *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 1.24, 2.80, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 7, 21.

⁶⁷³ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2.85, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 46.

⁶⁷⁴ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 1.17, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 5.

I'm about to become a companion of the Creator of Things. When I get tired, I'll mount upon a nebulous bird to go beyond the limits of the universe and wander in Never-never Land so that I may dwell in its wide open spaces. Why the dickens are you disturbing my mind with this talk of governing all under heaven?"⁶⁷⁵

And this passage from "Da zongshi":

彼遊方之外者也，而丘游方之內者也。外內不相及，而丘使女往弔之，丘則陋矣。彼方且與造物者為人，而遊乎天地之一氣。... 反覆終始，不知端倪，茫然彷徨乎塵垢之外，逍遙乎無為之業。彼又惡能憤憤然為世俗之禮，以觀眾人之耳目哉！

"Such men as they," said Confucius, "wander beyond the realm; men like me wander within it. Beyond and within can never meet. It was stupid of me to send you to offer condolences. Even now they have joined with the Creator as men to wander in the single breath of heaven and earth... turning and revolving, ending and beginning again, unaware of where they start or finish. Idly they roam beyond the dust and dirt; they wander free and easy in the works of nonaction. Why should they fret and fuss about the ceremonies of the vulgar world and make a display for the ears and eyes of the common herd?"⁶⁷⁶

The two passages above contain several key phrases telltale of the realm of the Zhuangzian wandering. The single breath of Heaven and Earth 天地之一氣 is reminiscent of the undifferentiated primordial *qi*. The phrase "beyond the limits of the universe" 六極之外 and "beyond the realm" 方之外 indicates where the sages wander is spatially beyond the physical universe we are living in. The place of "Not-Even-Anything" 無何有之鄉 has a sense of non-being, and indicates a cosmogonic stage before material things came into being. "Beyond the dust and dirt" 塵垢之外 suggests a transcendence of the physical world, for dust is supposedly the minute particle of matter.

The one in companion with which Zhuangzian exemplars wander is the Great Creator (*zaowuzhe* 造物者). As the anecdotes of Ziyu and Zili illustrate, *zaowuzhe* is the single designer and operator of the endless cycle of material transformation. As an appellation for

⁶⁷⁵ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 7.279, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 67.

⁶⁷⁶ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.248, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 86-87.

the *dao*, *zaowuzhe* is categorically distinguished from the physical world. Accordingly, for the Zhuangzian sages to roam in companion with the *zaowuzhe*, they have to transcend the physical world, including their own physical forms. The theme of Zhuangzian sages' transcendence of physical forms and the material world to wander in the realm of the *dao* is reiterated in the passage below:

若夫藏天下於天下，而不得所遯，是恆物之大情也。特犯人之形而猶喜之，若人之形萬化而未始有極也，其為樂可勝計邪！故聖人將遊於物之所不得遯而皆存。善妖善老，善始善終，人猶效之，又況萬物之所係，而一化之所待乎！

But if you were to hide the world in the world, so that nothing could get away, this would be the final reality of the constancy of things. You happen to take on the human form and are delighted. But the human form is one among ten thousand transformations that never come to an end. How can such joys be countable? Therefore the sage wanders in the realm where things cannot escape but are all preserved. If one delights in early death and delights in old age; delights in the beginning and delights in the end, then people take on him as a model. How much more so should that which ten thousand things are tied to and all transformations alike rely on [be modeled on]?⁶⁷⁷

This passage elaborates on the relationship between the *dao*, the cycle of material transformation and the particular human form. The *dao* is that which underlies and regulates the whole process of transformation 一化之所待, and that which generates and sustains all the myriad formed beings 萬物之所係. Human form is only one unit in the cycle of the endless transformation at the material level. The metaphor of “hiding the world in the world” 藏天下於天下 is adopted to show that wherever an object is hidden or whatever transformation it goes through, it cannot escape the *dao*. Thus the central message of this passage is to urge one to be detached from his particular human form and take delight in the miraculous cycle of transformation and ultimately, to go beyond the

⁶⁷⁷ Zhuangzi *jiaquan*, 6.221, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 81. Translation with modifications.

transformation at the *qi* level and reach the cosmic origin where all things are preserved and nothing can be hidden from 遊於物之所不得遷而皆存.

Elsewhere, the cosmogonic origin is termed *zong* 宗, ancestor of the physical world.

審乎無假，而不與物遷，命物之化，而守其宗也。

He sees clearly into that which is self-sustaining and does not change with things; he names the transformation of things and holds fast to their Ancestor. ⁶⁷⁸

Being in union with the Ancestor can grant one great potency. In “Ying diwang,” there is an anecdote about what happened between Huzi 壺子⁶⁷⁹ and a shaman named Jixian 季咸, whose mastery of physiognomy is described to be spirit-like. Jixian’s skill becomes completely ineffective, though, when he meets Huzi, who shows him signs of death, life, and no-life or no-death in different occasions. The most formidable of all is the sign of “not yet emerged from my Ancestor” 未始出吾宗, which causes the shaman to flee immediately after catching one sight of Huzi. If Jixian has attained the power of the spirits, then through his union with the Ancestor, what Huzi exhibits is an even greater power than the spirits. ⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁸ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 5.171. Translation my own. For alternative translations, see Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 43, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 68-69; Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 76.

⁶⁷⁹ Hu 壺 is cognate with *hu* 瓠, meaning gourd. According to Wen Yiduo 聞一多, *paohu* 匏瓠 is cognate with Fuxi 伏羲, the ancestor of human beings. The image of gourd itself is suggestive of the primordial chaos. Thus the name Huzi 壺子 itself is reminiscent of the cosmic ancestor. See Duan Yucui 段玉裁 *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (Shanghai, Shanghai guji, 1981), v.7 part II 337; Wen Yiduo 聞一多, *Fuxi kao* 伏羲考 (Shanghai, Shanghai guji, 2006), 58-59. For the meaning of 瓠, see *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 Vol. 8, eds. Luo Zhufeng 羅竹風 et al. (Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian, 1990), 281.

⁶⁸⁰ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 7.292, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 95-97.

By returning to the cosmic Ancestor, one attains not only the power to manipulate one's physical appearance, as Huzi does, but also the potency to stay impervious to cosmic changes.

至人神矣：大澤焚而不能熱，河、漢涸而不能寒，疾雷破山、風振海而不能驚。若然者，乘雲氣，騎日月，而遊乎四海之外。死生無變於己，而況利害之端乎！

The Ultimate Person is spirituous, ...If the great marshes were set on fire, he would not feel hot. If the rivers turned to ice, he would not feel cold. If violent thunder split the mountains, he would not be injured. If whirlwinds lashed the seas, he would not be frightened. Such being the case, he rides the clouds, mounts the sun and moon, and wanders beyond the four seas. Since not even life and death have any transforming effect upon him, how much less do benefit and harm?⁶⁸¹

What is more, the Zhuangzian sages may even attain a quasi-magical command over cosmic forces. Listed below are the clues pointing to a grasp of the cosmic power contained in the two passages quoted above: riding the clouds and mounting the sun and moon are indicative of a godlike control of cosmic forces; the capacity to fathom Heaven and to see clearly into the self-sustaining 無假⁶⁸² suggests one has grasped the secrets of cosmic generation; the power to name the transformation of things 命物之化 suggests that one becomes a co-operator of the Creator and participates in laying out the cosmic order.

The following passage from “Tiandi” 天地 explains, from a cosmogonic perspective, why returning to the Ancestor can grant Zhuangzian sages such great potency.

泰初有無，無有無名，一之所起，有一而未形。物得以生，謂之德；未形者有分，且然無間，謂之命；留動而生物，物成生理，謂之形；形體保神，各有儀則，謂之性。性修反德，德至同於初。同乃虛，虛乃大。合喙鳴，喙鳴合，與天地為合。其合緜緜，若愚若昏，是謂玄德，同乎大順。

In the Great Primordial, there was nonbeing; there was no being, no name. Out of it arose One; there was One, but it had no form. Things got hold of it and came to life, and it was called

⁶⁸¹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2.80, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 21. Translation with minor modification.

⁶⁸² *Wujia* 無假, literally meaning not to borrow from anything else, refers to the ontological status of the *dao*, i.e., not depending on anything for its existence.

Potency. Before things had forms, they had their allotments; these were of many kinds, but not cut off from one another, and they were called fates. Out of the flow and flux, things were born, and as they grew they developed distinctive patterns; these were called forms. The forms and bodies held within them spirits, each with its own characteristics and limitations, and this was called the inborn nature. If the nature is cultivated, you may return to Potency, and Potency at its highest peak is identical with the Beginning. Being identical, you will be empty; being empty, you will be great. You may join in the cheeping and chirping and, when you have joined in the cheeping and chirping, you may join with Heaven and earth. Your joining is wild and confused, as though you were stupid, as though you were demented. This is called Dark Potency. Rude and unwitting, you take part in the Great Submission.⁶⁸³

This passage reiterates the spirit-form dualism from a cosmogonic perspective. The cosmogony presented here is a typical spontaneous generation: the One arises on its own accord from the Great Primordial. The One contains in it a latent force of generation, which is called the Great Potency (*de* 德). Owing to the Great Potency, the myriad things in the realm of form come into being. The process of cosmic generation is a process from union to differentiation. When things are not yet formed and [their seeds] are contained in the undivided One, they already possess a latent tendency of differentiation 未形者有分. With division and differentiation, things that possess forms come into being. Each formed being embraces its own spirit 形體保神. This is defined as *xing* 性, the inborn nature. The union of form and spirit, which is the last step in the cosmic generation process and the furthest from the cosmic Ancestor, is considered to be the least potent stage.

In order for things that embrace their spirits to gain more potency, they have to cultivate their *xing* so as to gain the potency of cosmic generation. The cultivation of *xing* is an endeavor to escape the “union of form and spirit.” It is a process in which one climbs the cosmogonic ladder, following the reversed order of cosmic generation, and eventually

⁶⁸³ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 12. 433, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 131-32, translation with minor modifications.

acquire a union with the cosmic Ancestor. When one gains the potency that enables one to merge with the cosmic Ancestor 德至同於初, one successfully transcends the limitation of one's nature as a being with "a form that embraces spirit," and attains the greatest power of Dark Potency 玄德.

The above passage does not answer which part of human life can return to the cosmic Ancestor. But the following passage from "Lie Yukou" 列御寇 provides some clues.

小夫之知，不離苞苴竿牘，敝精神乎蹇淺，而欲兼濟道物，太一形虛。若是者，迷惑於宇宙，形累不知太初。彼至人者，歸精神乎無始，而甘冥乎無何有之鄉。水流乎無形，發泄乎太清。悲哉乎！汝為知在毫毛，而不知大寧！

The understanding of the petty person never gets beyond gifts and wrappings, letters and calling cards. His Spiritual Essence is clouded by the shallow and trivial, and yet he wants to be the savior of both the world and the Way, to blend both form and emptiness in the Great Unity. Such a man will blunder and go astray in time and space; his body entangled, he will never come to know the Great Beginning. But he who is a Perfect Person lets his spirit return to the Beginningless, to lie down in pleasant slumber in the Village of Not-Anything-At-All; like water he flows through the Formless, or trickles forth from the Great Purity. How pitiful—you whose understanding can be encompassed in a hair-tip, who know nothing of the Great Tranquility!⁶⁸⁴

This passage contrasts the petty person with the Ultimate Person. The petty person is characterized by the ambition to care for the material beings and assist the *dao* at the same time 兼濟道物, and the vanity to blend both form and emptiness in the Grand One 太一形虛. As a result, his Spirit is confined by shallow human knowledge and encumbered by the physical form. And it is precisely the entanglement of physical form that prevents the petty person from being united with the Grand Beginning 形累不知太初. The Perfect Person, on the other hand, sets his Spirit free and lets it ramble in the realm of No-Beginning 歸精神乎無始 and Non-Being 無何有之鄉. Clearly, of the two components of human life, it

⁶⁸⁴ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 32.1261, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 356. Translation with modifications.

is the Spirit, not the physical form, that can transcend the phenomenal world, reaching the realm of the formless and travelling back to the cosmic origin.

Combining this message with the cosmogony which posits that “[Spiritual] Essence is produced from the Way and the Root of Form is produced from Essence,”⁶⁸⁵ we can better understand why it is the spirit, rather than the physical form, that can return to the cosmic Origin. The spirit is both akin to the *dao* in nature and closest to it in the cosmogonic hierarchy. In contrast, the individuated physical form, which is born out of the Basic Form, is both categorically distinguished from the *dao* and furthest away from it in the cosmogonic hierarchy.

This passage below skips *xingben* 形本 and emphasizes the generative power of the [Spiritual] Essence, which is seen to be the source out of which all material beings are born.

精神四達並流，無所不極，上際於天，下蟠於地，化育萬物，不可為象，其名為同帝。純素之道，惟神是守，守而勿失，與神為一，一之精通，合於天倫。... 故素也者，謂其無所與雜也；純也者，謂其不虧其神也。能體純素，謂之真人。

[Spiritual] Essence reaches the four directions, flows now this way, now that—there is no place it does not extend to. Above, it brushes Heaven; below, it coils on the earth. It transforms and nurses the ten thousand things, but no one can make out its form. Its name is called One-with-God. The way to purity and whiteness is to guard the spirit, this alone; guard it and never lose it, and you will become one with spirit, one with its pure essence, which communicates and mingles with the Heavenly Order. ... Whiteness means there is nothing mixed in; purity means the spirit is never impaired. He who can embody purity and whiteness may be called the True Person.⁶⁸⁶

Here the Spiritual Essence is described in a similar way as *jing*, essence is described in “*Neiye*.” Both are treated as the generative cosmic force that flows throughout the universe, generates and nurtures the myriad formed beings.⁶⁸⁷ But unlike *jing* in “*Neiye*,” which

⁶⁸⁵ See n. 664 above.

⁶⁸⁶ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 15.558-59, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 169-70. Translation with minor modifications.

⁶⁸⁷ See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.931, Roth, *Original Tao*, 46-47. See also chapter 2, n. 398.

connotes the concentrated and purified *qi*,⁶⁸⁸ *jingshen* 精神 (or *jing*) in *Zhuangzi*, as discussed above, represents a spiritual existence categorically distinguished from the material *qi*. Also, unlike “*Neiye*,” which supports the mind-body union and calls whoever keeps the essence in his chest a sage,⁶⁸⁹ this *Zhuangzi* passage indicates that the spirit would lose its purity and potency if mingled with the physical form. Therefore, the sage diligently guards his spirit against corporeal influences. Through guarding the spirit and not having it mixed with the physical form, the True Person becomes the embodiment of the Great Purity.

To conclude, the three passages cited above can mutually illuminate one another. They can buttress, from a cosmogonic perspective, the legitimacy of Zhuangzian self-cultivation as a project to gradually slough off the physical form so as to have a free and easy spiritual wandering with the cosmic Ancestor. They also help to account for why Zhuangzian exemplars can face death with equanimity. On the surface, this is because they regard life and death as an equal process, and see their particular life form as part of the cosmic transformation. The underlying reason, however, is that they have discovered and attained their “true self,” that is, the Spiritual Essence that cannot be affected by life and death, or any transformation taking place in the phenomenal world.

Part III Is the Body Rejected or Embraced? — The Question Readdressed

⁶⁸⁸ See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.937, Roth, *Original Tao*, 60-61.

⁶⁸⁹ See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.931, Roth, *Original Tao*, 46-47.

Given the large amount of textual evidence supporting that the body encumbers ultimate spiritual liberation, one may wonder why scholars such as Jochim, Berkson, Michael, Jullien, Wu Kuang-ming and Li Xiaofan all insist that the body is positively presented in *Zhuangzi*.⁶⁹⁰ The main reason, as Berkson and Michael have noticed, might be that the body is identified with Heaven, which is consistently presented in *Zhuangzi* as an inviolable guiding principle for man.⁶⁹¹ But we still need to consider the question: is Heaven so benign that whatever it endows with humans should be dearly cherished? To address this question, let us begin with the anecdote presented at the end of “Da zongshi.”

子輿⁶⁹²與子桑友，而霖雨十日。子輿曰：“子桑殆病矣！”裹飯而往食之。至子桑之門，則若歌若哭，鼓琴曰：“父邪母邪！天乎人乎！”有不任其聲，而趨舉其詩焉。子輿入，曰：“子之歌詩，何故若是？”曰：“吾思乎使我至此極者而弗得也。父母豈欲吾貧哉？天無私覆，地無私載，天地豈私貧我哉？求其為之者而不得也。然而至此極者，命也夫！”

Ziyu and Zisang were friends. Once it rained incessantly for ten days. Ziyu said to himself, Zisang is probably having a bad time, and he wrapped up some rice and took it for his friend to eat. When he got to Zisang's gate, he heard something like singing or crying, and someone striking a lute and saying: Father? Mother? Heaven? Man? It was as though the voice would not hold out and the singer were rushing to get through the words. Ziyu went inside and said, “What do you mean—singing a song like that!” “I was pondering what it is that had brought me to this extremity, but I couldn't find the answer. My father and mother surely wouldn't wish this poverty on me. Heaven covers all without partiality; earth bears up all without partiality—heaven and earth surely wouldn't single me out to make me poor. I try to discover who is doing it, but I can't get the answer. Still, here I am—at the very extreme. It must be fate.”⁶⁹³

The incessant rain is a natural disaster, which would have deprived Zisang of his life, were it not for his friend Ziyu, who came to his rescue with food. Zisang could not figure

⁶⁹⁰ See Jochim, “Just Say No to ‘No Self’ in *Zhuangzi*,” 47; Berkson, “Conceptions of Self/No-Self and Modes of Connection,” 317-18. See also ns. 572, 573, 575, 576, 578, 582, 583, 584 above.

⁶⁹¹ Unlike the morally normative Confucian Heaven, the Zhuangzian Heaven is cosmically normative. For the normative vision of Zhuangzi from the perspective of Heaven, see Ivanhoe, “Skepticism, Skill, and the Ineffable Tao,” 652. For more on the normative Heaven in *Zhuangzi*, see Paul Kjellberg “Dao and Skepticism,” *Dao* 6 (2007): 287.

⁶⁹² Note that it is the same Ziyu, whom, in another anecdote in the same chapter, gave a long speech on physical transformation and *ming* 命, when he suffered from a fatal disease that completely transfigured him.

⁶⁹³ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6. 269-70, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 91.

out why Heaven was doing this to him and ascribed it to *ming* 命. (In this sense, the English words “fate” and “destiny” would be the closest in meaning to *ming*.) But *ming* itself in early China is closely related to Heaven’s Mandate. Therefore, although Zisang was not openly blaming Heaven, one can still sense his helplessness and despondency. Zisang’s predicament somehow reminds us of the direct questioning of Heaven’s benignity in *Laozi*, which says, “Heaven and Earth are not humane. They regard the ten thousand things as straw dogs” 天地不仁，以萬物為芻狗。⁶⁹⁴

Zisang’s reaction to his predicament seems to be different from the Zhuangzian sages, who are described to face sickness, deformation and death with equanimity. Most Zhuangzian exemplars, such as Wang Tai, Zili, and Uncle Lame-Gait discussed above, are able to embrace each stage of transformation granted by Heaven. “So if I think well of my life, for the same reason I must think well of my death” 善吾生者，乃所以善吾死也。⁶⁹⁵

However, although Zhuangzian sages ultimately submit to Heaven, they do this often after careful and at times painful deliberation, as in the following speech by Ziyu.

且夫得者時也，失者順也，安時而處順，哀樂不能入也。此古之所謂縣解也，而不能自解者，物有結之。且夫物不勝天久矣，吾又何惡焉？

Moreover, what we obtain, we obtain because it is the right time; what we lose, we lose because we must follow [the flow of Nature]. If we are at peace with our time and dwell in the flow, sorrow and joy cannot enter into us. This is what the ancients called “unencumbered.” Those who are unable to release themselves are tied down by objects. “But nothing can ever win against Heaven—that’s the way it’s always been.” Why would I resent it?⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹⁴ See *Boshu Laozi Jiaozhu*, 243, Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching*, 196.

⁶⁹⁵ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.221, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 80.

⁶⁹⁶ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.240. Translation by Goldin, “A Mind-body Problem in the *Zhuangzi*?,” 228.

First, Ziyu deems concerns over gains and losses and the negative emotions brought about by such concerns to be encumbering to his core self. Second, Ziyu admits that any attempt to fight against Heaven is doomed to fail. After the aforementioned reasoning, Ziyu elects to accept his fate with equanimity. His immediate reaction to the disease and disfigurement, however, is not presented in the text. But we can infer it through comparing Ziyu's speech with the changes in Zhuangzi's attitude toward the death of his wife. Confronted with the death of his wife, Zhuangzi's first reaction was not different from that of the ordinary people: "When she first died, do you think I didn't grieve like anyone else?" 是其始死也，我獨何能無概然！⁶⁹⁷ But upon thinking over the nature of life and death, Zhuangzi realized that there was no reason for his grief. Therefore, when Hui Shi came to offer condolences to Zhuangzi, he was surprised to see the latter banging at a basin and singing a song, instead of wailing and weeping, as regular mourners would do.

Viewing Zisang's lamentation and Ziyu's explanation in light of the changes in Zhuangzi's reactions to his wife's death, we start to understand that Zisang's response, which is seemingly inconsistent with the attitude of other exemplars, is nothing but a representation of the authentic response of all Zhuangzian exemplars when they are first confronted with disasters that Heaven pours on them, whether sickness, poverty, or death. Through analyzing how the Zhuangzian sages come to terms with Heaven's mandate, we get a sense of how harsh Heaven's blows can be for those submissive to it, let alone for those who vainly attempt to escape or overpower it.

⁶⁹⁷ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 18.643, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 192.

Heaven represents the ultimate cosmic principle that human beings cannot resist at all. Therefore surrendering to Heaven and accept whatever Heaven endows is the only choice left for man. This is why the attitude “to know that these things could not be otherwise, and be content with them as our destiny” 知其不可奈何而安之若命⁶⁹⁸ is reiterated in *Zhuangzi*. In a sense, it is not that the sages are so pleased with Heaven’s gift that they cheerfully receive it, but that they have no other choice but to accept it without grievance,⁶⁹⁹ for fighting Heaven with human cleverness will only worsen one’s situation and expedite death, both physically and spiritually.⁷⁰⁰ *Zhuangzi* adopts the image of the mantis trying to stop the carriage with his arms to convey the futility of such efforts.⁷⁰¹ The heavy-hearted pessimistic tone is so prevalent in *Zhuangzi* that Liu Xiaogan regards the “the fundamental enigma of haplessness and inevitability in human existence, which is usually represented by the conventional term *ming*” as the primary dimension of *Zhuangzi*’s philosophy.⁷⁰²

Now we are in a better position to interpret the mind of Ziyu and Uncle Lame-Gait when the former jauntily looked at his own disfigured image in the well and the latter watched willow sprouting out of his arm with amusement: in embracing physical mutation, tumor, or even transformation into animal forms, what they exhibit is a special *Zhuangzian*

⁶⁹⁸ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 4.138, Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 70.

⁶⁹⁹ Note that the phrase “having no choice but” 不得已 occurs fifteen times in *Zhuangzi*, indicating that the notion of involuntary submission is an important theme in it.

⁷⁰⁰ For how the contrived human schemes confine one’s *xin* and leads to premature spiritual death, see pages 206-208 above.

⁷⁰¹ “Don’t you know about the praying mantis that waved its arms angrily in front of an approaching carriage, unaware that they were incapable of stopping it?” 汝不知夫螳螂乎？怒其臂以當車轍，不知其不勝任也。 See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 4.148, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 62.

⁷⁰² Liu Xiaogan, “Three Groups of Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters,” in *Dao Companion to Daoist Philosophy*, ed. Liu Xiaogan (New York: Springer, 2015), 222.

courage to face the tragedy of human life with humor, self-mockery and light-heartedness. Only through willingly accepting Heaven's mandate could their *xin* be protected against disturbing emotions and freed from the entanglement of objects 安時而處順，哀樂不能入也，此古之所謂縣解也 so as to have a free and easy wandering in a sphere beyond the physical world.

Next let us reconsider the position of the body in *Zhuangzi*. This is a complicated issue, involving three sets of dichotomies: Heaven and man, mind and body, and *dao* and Heaven. *Zhuangzi* puts these into three tiers, with artificial human constructions, which belong to the sphere of man, at the lowest tier, Heaven and human body received from Heaven in the middle, the *dao* and human spirit derived from the *dao* at the top.

The Heaven-man distinction is revealed in this passage, and elaborated in the dialogue that immediately follows.⁷⁰³

故聖人有所遊，而知為孽，約為膠，德為接，工為商。聖人不謀，惡用知？不斲，惡用膠？無喪，惡用德？不貨，惡用商？四者，天鬻也。天鬻者，天食也。既受食於天，又惡用人？有人之形，無人之情。有人之形，故群於人；無人之情，故是非不得於身。眇乎小哉！所以屬於人也。警乎大哉！獨成其天。

Hence, the sage roams in his own realm. For him knowledge is a curse, commitment is a glue, putting others in his debt is trafficking, creating artifices is peddling. Since the sage does not scheme, what use has he for knowledge? Since he does not chop in pieces, what use has he for glue? Since he loses nothing, what use has he for repayments? Since he does not treat things as commodities, what use has he for peddling? For these four things, he buys at the market of Heaven. To “buy at the market of Heaven” is to be fed by Heaven. Having received his food from Heaven, what use has he for man? He has the shape of a man, is without what is essentially man. He has the shape of a man, and therefore congregates with men; he is without what is essentially man, and therefore “That’s it, that’s not” are not found in his person. Indiscernibly small, that which attaches him to man! Unutterably vast, the Heaven within him which he perfects in solitude!’.⁷⁰⁴

惠子謂莊子曰：“人故無情乎？”

⁷⁰³ For the dichotomy of Heaven and man, see also Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 195-99.

⁷⁰⁴ *Zhuangzi jiaquan*, 5.197, Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 82. Translation with modifications.

莊子曰：“然。”

惠子曰：“人而無情，何以謂之人？”

莊子曰：“道與之貌，天與之形，惡得不謂之人？”

惠子曰：“既謂之人，惡得無情？”

莊子曰：“是非吾所謂情也。吾所謂無情者，言人之不以好惡內傷其身，常因自然而不益生也。”

惠子曰：“不益生，何以有其身？”

莊子曰：“道與之貌，天與之形，無以好惡內傷其身。今子外乎子之神，勞乎子之精，倚樹而吟，據槁梧而暝。天選子之形，子以堅白鳴！”

Huizi: “Is it the case that human beings do not possess *qing* [the basic traits of man]?”

Zhuangzi: “That is so.”

Huizi: “A human being that, however, does not possess *qing*—how can that be called ‘human being’?”

Zhuangzi: “The *dao* has given him an appearance, heaven has given him a form, how could it be that he is not called ‘human being’?”

Huizi: “Since he is called ‘human being’, how could it be that he does not possess *qing*?” Zhuangzi: “This is not I mean by *qing*. When I mention “not possessing *qing*”, I am speaking of a human being who does not let likes and dislikes internally harm his body, [but instead] constantly adheres to the natural and not [artificially] add anything to life.

Huizi: Without adding anything to life, how can the human being have his body [i.e. how can he maintain or preserve life]?”

Zhuangzi: “The *dao* has given him an appearance, heaven has given him a form, and he does not let likes and dislikes internally harm his body. Now you expel your spirit, wear out your vitality, you lean against a tree and mutter, or doze off upon a table. Heaven has chosen your form, but you babble on about ‘hard’ and ‘white’!⁷⁰⁵

The sage, who rejects the entire corpus of artificial knowledge, cultural conventions, and social obligations [represented by knowledge (*zhi* 知), commitment (*yue* 約), repayment (*de* 德),⁷⁰⁶ and artifice (*gong* 工)⁷⁰⁷], is said to receive exclusively from Heaven and never adopt human constructions. By praising the sage’s act to complete Heaven in him and condemning the petty, insignificant human artifice, this passage establishes the priority of Heaven over man. It also distinguishes between *ren zhi xing* 人之形 (human

⁷⁰⁵ Zhuangzi *jiaoquan*, 5. 200-201. Translation by Chong Kim-chong, “Zhuangzi and Hui Shi on *Qing*,” *Tsinghua Journal of Chinese Studies* 40.1 (2010): 31-32.

⁷⁰⁶ Following Wu Rulun 吳汝綸 and Wang Shumin, who thinks that 德 in this context is cognate with 得, to attain. See Zhuangzi *jiaoquan*, 5.198-199, n. 7.

⁷⁰⁷ Following Sima Biao 司馬彪, who glosses 工 as 工巧, artifices, and interprets the whole phrase as “By creating artifices, commerce and traders will arise” 工巧而商賈起. See Zhuangzi *jiaoquan*, 5.198, n. 7.

body) and *ren zhi qing* 人之情: the sage, who rejects human constructions so as to complete Heaven in him, possesses *ren zhi xing*, but not *ren zhi qing*. Without *ren zhi qing*, the *shi-fei* distinction would not enter his person 無入之情，故是非不得於身。 *Ren zhi xing* is thus associated with Heaven. *Ren zhi qing*, on the other hand, stands for artificial human constructions, as opposed to Heaven, such as the notorious *shi-fei* distinction.

The association of *qing* with artificial human constructions is very unusual, for elsewhere in *Zhuangzi* and in *Mencius*, *qing* usually refers to “the state of perfect genuineness,” as Graham correctly observed.⁷⁰⁸ In *Mencius* 6 A 6, for example, *qing* can be identified with the innate [Heavenly endowed] sprouts of morality.⁷⁰⁹ In *Zhuangzi*, *qing* is used in parallel with *zhen* 真 in describing the governor of man’s physical form (*zhenjun* 真君), and in parallel with *xin* 信 in describing the *dao*.⁷¹⁰ Another notable case occurs in the anecdote of Qin Shi 秦失 offering condolences upon the death of Lao Dan 老聃, in

⁷⁰⁸ *Qing* was traditionally understood as emotions or passions. Graham, the first scholar to question this trend, asserts that “The *qing* of X is ‘what is genuinely X in it,’ ‘what X essentially is.’” Although Graham’s proposition that in pre-Han literature *qing* never means ‘passions’ has been questioned, his analysis of *qing* in *Zhuangzi* and *Mencius* remains enlightening. As Paul R. Goldin states, “I still believe that Graham was basically right when he identified ‘what is essential or genuine’ as the original meaning of *qing*.” Nonetheless, we shall not deny that *qing* does cover a wide semantic range and may sometimes incorporate human emotions, and it does go through semantic changes in later texts such as “Xing Zi Ming Chu” and *Xunzi*. See A. C. Graham, “The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature, Appendix: The Meaning of *Ch’ing* 情,” *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature* (Singapore: The Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986), 61; Paul R. Goldin, “Review of Eifring, Halvor, ed., *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*,” *Dao* 9 (2010): 239. For an excellent study of the subtle shifts in the meaning of *qing* in light of the philosophical debates in early China, see Michael Puett, “The Ethics of Responding Properly: the notion of *qing* 情 in early Chinese thought,” in *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. Halvor Eifring (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 37-68. For more on the semantic range of *qing* in pre-Han sources, see Christoph Harbsmeier, “The Semantics of *Qing* 情 in Pre-Buddhist Chinese,” in *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. Halvor Eifring (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 69-148; Matthew L. Duperon, “The Role of *Qing* 情 in the *Huainanzi*’s Ethics,” *Early china* 38 (2015): 80-82.

⁷⁰⁹ Graham identifies *qing* in *Mencius* 6 A 6 with the innate sprouts of morality and *qing* in several *Zhuangzi* passages with the genuine state discovered by the sage. See Graham, “The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature, Appendix: The Meaning of *Ch’ing* 情,” 63.

⁷¹⁰ *Zhuangzi jiaquan*, 2.52. and 6.228. See also Chong, “Zhuangzi and Hui Shi on *Qing*,” 27.

which *qing* is directly associated with Heaven. In a funeral culture that encourages open expression of deep sorrow, Qin Shi's cursory expression of grief seemed extremely insincere and impolite. Yet when questioned by Lao Dan's sons, Qin Shi criticized the extended wailing by other mourners, which apparently fits social norms, as "hiding from Heaven and against the natural and genuine [way to express condolences]" 遁天倍情.⁷¹¹ Therefore, as Michael Puett points out, "Heaven and *qing* are thus linked and both are presented as being in opposition to custom."⁷¹² And as Chong-kim Chong states, "*qing* [here] refers to the (natural) state of affairs in general," "[in contrast to what is humanly contrived]."⁷¹³

Seems confusing: why does *qing* in *Zhuangzi* connote diametrically opposed senses, sometimes consistent with Heaven, sometimes contradictory to Heaven? Up to now no satisfactory answer has been offered yet, though many have noticed that *qing* in the context of "*wu ren zhi qing*" [or "*wu qing*"] is quite unusual. Graham asserts that *qing* in this case is "self-evidently bad," whereas *qing* in *Mencius* and elsewhere in *Zhuangzi* is "self-evidently good."⁷¹⁴ But he fails to explain why.⁷¹⁵ Chad Hansen, who reads *qing* as a natural reality feedback, goes so far as to assert that for *Zhuangzi*, all human *qing* takes the form of a *shi-fei* judgment, "infected with a learned, linguistic content."⁷¹⁶ Chong-kim

⁷¹¹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 3.111.

⁷¹² Puett, "The Ethics of Responding Properly: the notion of *qing* 情 in early Chinese thought," 57.

⁷¹³ See Chong, "Zhuangzi and Hui Shi on Qing," 28-29.

⁷¹⁴ See Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature, Appendix: The Meaning of *Ch'ing* 情," 62-63.

⁷¹⁵ Note that Graham's major aim is to reject the interpretation of *qing* in the dialogue as passions or emotions. The core of his argument lies in that even if *qing* carries the negative sense here, it is still not equal to passion. See Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature, Appendix: The Meaning of *Ch'ing* 情," 62.

⁷¹⁶ Hansen is right in pointing out that *qing* in this case involves *shi-fei* distinction, but his generalization can hardly do justice to *qing* in other cases, throughout *Zhuangzi*. His interpretation of *qing* seems to fit the

Chong, who largely agrees with Graham, redefines *qing* as “fundamental facts” in order to incorporate both the positive and negative senses. He writes, “the artifices and structures can be referred to as the facts (*qing*) that have been constructed by human beings.”⁷¹⁷

No one has noticed that the text is playing with the meaning of *qing*, as it is playing with that of *ji*. Like *ji*, which may mean either authentic or false self in different contexts, *qing* may denote the true or false qualities of man.⁷¹⁸ Thus in stating that the sage does not possess *ren zhi qing*, the text is meant to say that the sage does not possess [what is **falsely** regarded as] the genuine traits of man: the sage shares with ordinary man the same physical formation, but is free from human artifice that confines the ordinary man. By deliberately subverting the positive sense of *qing*, the author stresses that men are so used to artificial constructions that they regard them as the essential and genuine traits, without realizing that they are but superfluous additions to life.

Yet this completely baffles Hui Shi, who understands *qing* in its regular sense, in the same way as it baffles modern interpreters. Hence in the following dialogue Hui Shi questions the logic of the statement by asking how could it be that man possesses no essential, genuine traits of man. Zhuangzi answers him by saying that the defining character of man should be his physical form given by the *dao* and Heaven. Yet Hui Shi, being inferior to Zhuangzi in both insight and philosophical subtlety, as he is consistently portrayed in *Zhuangzi*, cannot get the clue and throws the question back to Zhuangzi.

general picture he paints of Zhuangzi as a relativist and a linguistic skeptic. See Chad Hansen, “Qing (Emotions), in Pre-Buddhist Chinese Thought,” in *Emotions in Asian Thought, A Dialogue in Comparative Philosophy*, ed. Joel Marks and Roger T. Ames (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1995), 181-211.

⁷¹⁷ See Chong, “Zhuangzi and Hui Shi on Qing,” 31.

⁷¹⁸ For discussion on the positive and negative senses of *ji*, see pages 194-195 above.

Confronted with the dull counterpart, Zhuangzi has to explain explicitly that his definition of *qing* subverts the regular meaning and by *wuqing* 無情, he means man should not let such artificial distinctions as right and wrong, likes and dislikes to harm his body. Therefore this round of talk not only clarifies the connotation of *qing* but also reiterates the priority of Heaven and body over artificial human constructions.

Afterwards, Zhuangzi initiates the second round of talk with a proposition that is equally baffling to Hui Shi: besides not inwardly injuring the body with likes and dislikes, one needs to “constantly adheres to the natural and not [artificially] add anything to life” 常因自然而不益生也. Hui Shi, who is confused about the Zhuangzian version of preserving life, again questions the consistency of Zhuangzi’s proposition by asking “Without adding anything to life how can the human being have his body [i.e. how can he maintain or preserve life]?” 不益生，何以有其身？

The Zhuangzian position on bodily preservation and nourishment can be baffling to modern interpreters as well. The confusion is caused largely by the textual complexity. *Zhuangzi* is a text that contains more than one layers, and interpreters can draw completely different conclusions based on portions of the text they hold to be the most important. In order to clear up the confusion, we need to read the text as a whole and examines particular passages against the central theme of the text, as suggested by Bryan W. Van Norden and Eske Møllgaard.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁹ In his seminal study on the seeming contradictions in the text, Bryan W. Van Norden analyzes the competing interpretations of *Zhuangzi* and correctly points out that some interpretations may be applicable to portions of the text, but can hardly do justice to the text as a whole. More recently, Eske Møllgaard has pointed out that interpreters of *Zhuangzi* need to follow the biblical exegesis and weigh individual passages against the central theme of the entire text. See Van Norden, “Competing Interpretations of the Inner Chapters

The principle of preserving life is put forward in “Yangsheng zhu”養生主 and elaborated in “Renjian shi.” The opening passage of “Yangsheng zhu” sets the preservation of [physical] life as a goal: “you can preserve your body, Maintain your life, Nurture your inmost viscera, And complete your allotted years” 可以保身，可以全生，可以養親，可以盡年。⁷²⁰ The story of Cook Ding cutting the ox in the same chapter is meant to clarify the principle of *yangsheng*, for it ends with Lord Wenhui’s 文惠君 comments: “From hearing the words of the cook, I have learned how to nourish life!” 吾聞庖丁之言，得養生焉。⁷²¹

“Renjian shi” contains two sets of episodes, as Graham has noticed,⁷²² but reflects a single theme that preserving life is more important than catering to artificial human constructions. The first set discusses how desires for knowledge 知 and fame 名 may involve one in dangerous political intrigues that lead to nothing but the destruction of life.⁷²³ The second set describes how a good-for-nothing tree 散木 grows giant and old and becomes worshipped as a sacred tree, how animals with blemishes are exempt from

of the ‘Zhuangzi’,” esp. 247 and 251; Eske Møllgaard, *An Introduction to Daoist Thought: Action, Language, and Ethics in Zhuangzi* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 13.

⁷²⁰ See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 3.99, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 26.

⁷²¹ See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 3.105, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 27.

⁷²² See Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 66.

⁷²³ The first episode in “Renjian shi,” in which Confucius derides Yan Hui for his ambition to remonstrate the ruler of Wei 衛 so as to revert his tyrannical rule, is filled with such expressions as “I’m afraid you are simply going to your execution” 若殆往而刑耳; “You will be sure to die at the tyrant’s hands” 必死於暴人之前矣; “[The rulers] are executed” 身為刑戮. See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 4.119, 120, 124, Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 66-67. Notice that this episode is an apparent ridicule of the Confucian political projects, for Confucius was known to have been deeply involved in the political affairs of Wei 衛 and Zilu 子路, one of his favorite disciples, died violently in the military strife at Wei. These episodes thus deconstruct the Confucian moral cultivation, which, according to *Zhuangzi*, is mainly driven by the ambition for fame and prestige.

being slaughtered for sacrifices, and how a disfigured man is spared from military and labor service. According to the sacred tree, which speaks to Carpenter Shi 匠石 in his dream, it is their imperfection or uselessness that enable these living things to live out the Heaven-allotted life span without being cut off in the midway 終其天年而不中道夭.⁷²⁴ In contrast, the timber and fruit trees, and animals without defect can hardly avoid the fate of being chopped off or slaughtered. “Their utility makes life miserable for them, and so they don’t get to finish out the years Heaven gave them, but are cut off in mid-journey. They bring it on themselves—the pulling and tearing of the common mob.” 以其能苦其生者也, 故不終其天年而中道夭, 自掊擊於世俗者也.⁷²⁵ Thus those who cater to the worldly standard of beauty and usefulness only end up harming and losing their lives.

The sacred tree’s rejection and criticism of Carpenter Shi’s opinion effectively deconstruct the artificially-constructed binary oppositions of useful/useless, attractive/repulsive, auspicious/ominous.⁷²⁶ Through this method of deconstruction, the ordinary value system is subverted, the body and natural life span are exalted, and the priority of Heaven/nature over man/culture is established. Thus allegories in “Renjian shi” can all serve to support the principle of protecting one’s body against harms done by attempts at catering to artificial human standards or satisfying artificial desires.

⁷²⁴ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.203, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 77.

⁷²⁵ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 4.151, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 64.

⁷²⁶ The sacred tree rejected Carpenter Shi in the following way, “As for me, I’ve been trying a long time to be of no use, and though I almost died, I’ve finally got it. This is of great use to me. If I had been of some use, would I ever have grown this large?” 且予求無所可用久矣, 幾死, 乃今得之, 為予大用。使予也而有用, 且得有此大也邪! It then went on to criticize Carpenter Shi, “Moreover you and I are both of us things. What’s the point of this—things condemning things? You, a worthless man about to die—how do you know I’m a worthless tree?” 若與予也皆物也, 奈何哉其相物也? 而幾死之散人, 又惡知散木! See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 4.151, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 64.

Nonetheless, preference of the body over artificial constructions does not mean that *Zhuangzi* endorses all kinds of physical cultivation. And if we think *Zhuangzi* approves the adoption of physical cultivation to extend the Heavenly-allotted life span, we would be as wrong as Hui Shi is. The Zhuangzian version of life preservation is aimed at “living out the years allotted by Heaven.” Yet Heaven never guarantees one a healthy and long life.⁷²⁷ Instead, as discussed above, Heaven may add tumor to one’s arms, transform one’s body into rat’s liver or bug’s legs, or pour out natural disasters to terminate one’s physical life. What is more, Heaven disapproves any adoption of unnatural means to extend the life span it allots, in the same way as it disapproves any action to shorten such life span. After all, the method that Cook Ding adopts to attain perfection at ox-carving, which is said to be revealing of the secrets of *yangsheng*, is to “rely on Heaven’s structuring, ... go by what is inherently so” 依乎天理...因其固然.⁷²⁸ The right means of *yangsheng*, therefore, should be in full compliance with Heaven and involve a total acceptance of one’s life form and life span. Any attempt at extending one’s life span beyond the years allotted by Heaven through artificial human efforts is nothing but “assisting heaven with man” 以人助天, which the Zhuangzian exemplars would never adopt.⁷²⁹ This is precisely why *Zhuangzi* stresses that one needs to “constantly adhere to what is naturally so and not add anything to life,” in addition to not harming life with artificial constructions.

So far the Zhuangzian attitude toward the body is clear: when Heaven gives you a body, accept it and take good care of it. When Heaven disfigures your body or transforms it into

⁷²⁷ Note that *Zhuangzi* never endorses the pursuit of longevity. For him, death at 800 hundred years and death at three days can both be a good death, as long as this is what Heaven mandates.

⁷²⁸ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 3.105, Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 64.

⁷²⁹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.207, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 52.

other forms of life, welcome them and treat them in the same way as you treat the healthy human body. Thus the principle of protecting the body against harms done by artificial human endeavors is not inconsistent with the endorsement for a detached attitude toward the bodily condition, calmly accepting the body granted by Heaven, be it a healthy and strong one, or a disfigured and even transformed one.

Now let us move on to see if the Zhuangzian version of bodily preservation and its celebration of the spiritual aspect of life can be reconciled. In the third round of talk with Hui Shi, Zhuangzi points out that by exhibiting shallow human wisdom through gibbering about hard and white (*jianbai* 堅白), Hui Shi not only abuses his Heavenly-given body but also expels his spirit and exhausts his vital essence 今子外乎子之神，勞乎子之精。⁷³⁰ Zhuangzi uses *shi-fei*, *haowu* 好惡 and *jianbai* to indicate Hui Shi's actions of judging, categorizing and debating. Engaging one's *xin* in these actions would irrevocably damage it and cause it to die even before death of the body.⁷³¹ Letting go of these endeavors, on the other hand, will protect the spiritual essence against premature death. Therefore, abandoning artificial human constructions is a precondition for preserving the body, as well as for safeguarding one's spirit. What is more, fully embracing whatever Heaven grants one, including defects at the physical level, will help to attain spiritual equanimity and to eventually set the spirit free from the constraints of the form so as to enter the realm of the *dao*.

⁷³⁰ The theme that artificial human efforts that violate the principle of non-action not only harm the physical form but also endanger the spiritual core is recurrently evoked in *Zhuangzi*. Another example can be found in "Ying diwang," in which Lao Dan 老聃 negatively comments on the one who strenuously exerts himself in studying things and learning the *dao* by saying this person is doing nothing but "wearing out his body and grieving his mind" 勞形怵心. See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 7.282; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 94.

⁷³¹ For discussion on the death of *xin*, see pages 206-207 above.

Finally, an examination of the body-mind dichotomy against the Heaven-*dao* hierarchy will help to clarify why spiritual cultivation is prioritized over bodily preservation. In *Zhuangzi*, both the *dao* and Heaven are presented as the cosmic principle that should be unconditionally abided by. But the *dao* is cosmogonically anterior to and ontologically more fundamental than Heaven. It is the cosmic origin and generating force of all spiritual and material entities, as in the following statement: “[The *dao*] ...is its own source, its own root. Before Heaven and earth existed it was there, firm from ancient times. It gave spirituality to the spirits and to God; it gave birth to Heaven and to earth. It exists beyond the highest point, and yet you cannot call it lofty; it exists beneath the limit of the six directions, and yet you cannot call it deep. It was born before Heaven and earth, and yet you cannot say it has been there for long; it is earlier than the earliest time, and yet you cannot call it old.” 夫道...自本自根，未有天地，自古以固存；神鬼神帝，生天生地；在太極之先而不為高，在六極之下而不為深；先天地生而不為久，長於上古而不為老。⁷³² Obviously, the *dao* is not dependent on anything for its existence, whereas Heaven is generated from the *dao* and dependent on the *dao* for its existence. Heaven [sometimes together with Earth], as the source and governing principle of individuated material beings,⁷³³ overlaps with the *dao* only in the phenomenal world.

Of the body-spirit dichotomy, the body is seen to be derived from Heaven [and indirectly from the *dao*], as in the sentence “the *dao* has given him an appearance, heaven

⁷³² *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6, 228, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 81. Note that the depiction of the *dao* here again forms a sharp contrast with the relative and skeptical passages prevalent in “*Qiwu lun*.” This confirms Van Norden’s observation that passages of objectivism coexists with passages of skepticism and relativism in the Inner Chapters. See Van Norden, “Competing Interpretations of the Inner Chapters of the ‘*Zhuangzi*’,” 251, 256.

⁷³³ As in the saying “Heaven and Earth are the father and mother of the myriad things” 天地者，萬物之父母也。 See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 19.665-66, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 175.

has given him a form” 道與之貌，天與之形. The spirit, as discussed in part I, is derived directly from the *dao*.⁷³⁴ If properly cultivated, the spirit can transcend the phenomenal world governed by Heaven and attain an eternal existence through merging with the *dao*. Therefore, as the *dao* is above Heaven, the spirit is prioritized over the body in *Zhuangzi*.

To further elucidate these hierarchies, let us take a look at the opening passages from “Dasheng” 達生, which recapitulate all the above-discussed issues, including the relationship between the Heaven and man, body and spirit, and physical and spiritual cultivation.

達生之情者，不務生之所無以為...有生必先無離形，形不離而生亡者有之矣。生之來不能卻，其去不能止。悲夫！世之人以為養形足以存生，而養形果不足以存生，則世奚足為哉！...夫欲免為形者，莫如棄世。棄世則無累，無累則正平，正平則與彼更生，更生則幾矣。事奚足棄而生奚足遺？棄事則形不勞，遺生則精不虧。夫形全精復，與天為一。天地者，萬物之父母也，合則成體，散則成始。形精不虧，是謂能移；精而又精，反以相天。

Those who understand the reality of life do not labor over that which life does not rely on. ... For there to be life, a necessary prerequisite is that it not be separated from the physical form, but there are instances of non-separation from the physical form yet life is lost. When life comes, it cannot be refused. When life goes, it cannot be stopped. How sad that the people of the world think that nourishing the physical form is sufficient to preserve life! But when it turns out that nourishing the physical form is insufficient for the preservation of life, what on earth is the necessity of following the worldly practice! ... Now for those who desire to escape this preoccupation with the physical form, there is no better course than to abandon the worldly practice. Once one abandons the worldly practice, there are no entanglements. When there are no entanglements, there will be correct equanimity. When there is correct equanimity, one will transform together with other things. If one can transform together with other things, one is almost there. But why is it necessary to abandon affairs and to set aside the preoccupation with life? By abandoning affairs, the form is not toiled. By setting aside the preoccupation with life, the essence is not diminished. When the form is complete and the essence is restored, you become one with Heaven. Heaven and earth are the father and mother of the myriad things. When they join, the body is complete. When they disperse, completion begins anew. When the form and essence are undiminished, this is called “being able

⁷³⁴ See n. 664 above. Such statements as “essence is produced from the *dao*” 精神生於道 and “the *dao* has given him an appearance, heaven has given him a form” 道與之貌，天與之形 in *Zhuangzi* form an interesting contrast with the statement that “the heavens bring forth their vital essence, the earth brings forth their bodies” 天出其精，地出其形 in “*Neiye*.” This affirms the distinction between the Zhuangzian dualism and the “*Neiye*” monism. The monistic cosmology of “*Neiye*” correlates human spiritual essence with Heaven, the ethereal *qi* and human form with Earth, the turbid *qi*. In the Zhuangzian dualism, however, the spirit is correlated to the *dao* and body correlated to Heaven and indirectly to the *dao*. See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49.945, Roth, *Original Tao*, 86-87.

to shift [with the transformations].” With your essence refined and further refined, you return to be the assistant of Heaven.⁷³⁵

As the first sentence indicates, this passage is aimed at fathoming the essential reality or genuine condition of life 達生之情. Yet it contains several seemingly contradictory phrases on how to treat life: to preserve life (*cunsheng* 存生), transform [with] life (*gengsheng* 更生) and abandon life (*yisheng* 遺生). The attitude toward the physical form also seems to be inconsistent: it advocates to avoid cultivating the form (*mian weixing* 免為形), yet at the same time sets completing the form and restoring the essence (*xingquan jingfu* 形全精復) as a goal. As we try to reconcile these seemingly inconsistent notions, the distinct Zhuangzian attitude toward life will be revealed.

Let us first address why this passage insists on preserving life and advocates to abandon life at once. To address this question, we need to consider the typical Zhuangzian way to play with the ambiguity of words. Like words such as *ji*, *xin* and *qing* discussed above, the meaning of *sheng* 生 in this passage is context-dependent. In *cunsheng* (to preserve life) the spiritual dimension of life is stressed. As is revealed in the piglet allegory, the spirit is the animating force of life which might depart even when the physical form is still intact. This is exactly why “there are instances of non-separation from the physical form yet life is lost” 形不離而生亡者有之矣. Since attending to the body won’t do to preserve the spiritual essence, it naturally follows that “nourishing the physical form is insufficient for the preservation of life” 養形果不足以存生.

⁷³⁵ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 19. 665-66, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 174-75. Translation with modifications.

Sheng in *yisheng* (to abandon life) and *gengsheng* (to transform with life), on the other hand, connotes the physical life. So does *sheng* in the sentence “When life comes, it cannot be refused. When life goes, it cannot be stopped” 生之來不能卻，其去不能止. It is precisely because birth and death at the physical level are determined purely by Heaven that man should set aside the preoccupation with the preservation of physical life and readily join in the transformation at the physical level together with the myriad things 與彼更生. Flowing with the cosmic transformation, one crosses the boundary of the distinct human form, guards the unitary *qi* and thus becomes closer to the *dao*. Therefore, “if one can transform together with other things, one is almost there” 更生則幾矣.

Let us move on to see if the notions of *mian wei xing* and *xingquan* can be reconciled. The relationship between the two is parallel to that between the *bu yi sheng* 不益生 and *you qi shen* 有其身 in the dialogue between Zhuangzi and Hui Shi cited above.⁷³⁶ *Weixing* is reminiscent of *yishen* 益生. Both means making artificial attempts to nourish the body or extend the [Heavenly allotted] physical life. *You qi shen* and *xingquan* convey similar message in that both suggest that the body is given and completed by Heaven, not by any artificial human endeavor. Therefore, as *bu yi sheng* and *you qi shen* are consistent, *mian wei xing* and *xingquan* can be reconciled, for it is precisely through withholding from making artificial endeavors to nourish life that one can leave a chance for Heaven to complete one’s physical form.

⁷³⁶ Suppose Hui Shi had a chance to read this passage, he would very likely raise the following question, “How is it possible to complete the physical form without cultivating it?” [免為形，何以形全?].

The body-spirit dichotomy is reiterated at the end of this passage. It states that one can “complete one’s form, restore one’s essence and become one with Heaven” 形全精復，與天為一，if one “abandons worldly affairs” 棄事 and “sets aside the preoccupation with [the preservation of physical] life” 遺生. Union with Heaven is a stage one has to go through on his way toward spiritual liberation. As Michael Puett points out, “the liberation that comes from no longer being dependent upon things precisely involves an acceptance of the order of Heaven.”⁷³⁷ Yet fully complying with Heaven is not the ultimate goal of the Zhuangzian adept, who aims to “get his essence refined and further refined, until he returns to be the assistant of Heaven” 精而又精，反以相天. This final statement thus indicates that the well-cultivated spirit can transcend Heaven and in turn assist Heaven.⁷³⁸

In the passage that immediately follows, the human potential to transcend the physical world governed by Heaven is further elaborated.

子列子問關尹曰：“至人潛行不室，蹈火不熱，行乎萬物之上而不慄。請問何以至於此？”關尹曰：“是純氣之守也，非知巧果敢之列。居！吾語女。凡有貌象聲色者，皆物也，物與物何以相遠？夫奚足以至乎先？是色而已。則物之造乎不形，而止乎無所化，夫得是而窮之者，物焉得而止焉！彼將處乎不淫之度，而藏乎無端之紀，遊乎萬物之所終始，壹其性，養其氣，合其德，以通乎物之所造。夫若是者，其天守全，其神無郤，物奚自入焉！”

⁷³⁷ Michael Puett, “‘Nothing Can Overcome Heaven’: The Notion of Spirit in the *Zhuangzi*,” in *Hiding the World in the World: Uneven Discourses on the Zhuangzi*, ed. Scott Cook (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 255.

⁷³⁸ Here my interpretation is slightly different from that of Michael Puett. Puett holds that Zhuangzi would “oppose any attempt to transcend the human form” and that the liberated spirit still surrenders to Heaven. See Puett, “‘Nothing Can Overcome Heaven’: The Notion of Spirit in the *Zhuangzi*,” 256. Elsewhere he claims, “This concern with not being dependent on or bound by things, with becoming untied, with wandering beyond any boundary, is intimately and directly tied to a cosmological claim: the liberated spirit accords with Heavenly patterns, helps things to be as they naturally ought to be, and allow things to fulfill their Heaven-given allotment.” See Puett, *To Become a God*, 132. As discussed in part II and will be shown in part IV of this chapter, the Zhuangzian exemplars do aim at transcending the physical form so as to attain spiritual merging with the *dao*. Furthermore, full compliance with the Heavenly order is only a precondition for spiritual liberation in *Zhuangzi*. It is a means rather than an end. The liberated spirit, having transcended the human form and the phenomenal world, would stay impervious to the physical objects and no longer be subject to the Heavenly order.

Ziliezi said to the Barrier Keeper Yin, “The Ultimate Person can walk under water without choking, can tread on fire without being burned, and can travel above the ten thousand things without being frightened. May I ask how he manage this?” Barrier Keeper Yin replied, “This is because he guards the pure *qi*—it has nothing to do with wisdom, skill, determination or courage. Sit down and I will tell you about it. All that have appearances, forms, voices, colors—these are mere things. How could one thing and another thing be far removed from each other? And how could any one of them be worth considering as a predecessor? They are forms, colors—nothing more. But things are formed in that which has no form, and end in that which does not go through transformation. If a man can get hold of this and exhaust it fully, then how can things stand in his way? He may rest within the bounds that know no excess, hide within the borders that know no end, wander where the ten thousand things have their end and beginning, unify his nature, nourish his *qi*, unite his potency, and thereby be pervaded with that by which things are formed. A man like this guards what belongs to Heaven and keeps it whole. His spirit has no fissure, so how can things enter in and get at him?⁷³⁹

Here, the ultimate attainment is described to be a union with the *dao*, rather than Heaven. Ziliezi’s description of the Ultimate Person as one whom nothing in the physical world can injure is reminiscent of the Ultimate Person who stays impervious to cosmic changes.⁷⁴⁰ Barrier Keeper Yin explains, from the perspective of the relationship among the *dao*, man and the rest of the physical world, how it is possible for these exemplars to achieve this. According to him, all things possessing physical forms are created or terminated by the *dao*, that which neither possesses form 不形 nor goes through transformation 無所化. One who has grasped and fathomed the *dao* will no longer be confined by the physical world but roam in the realm where things are formed and destructed 夫得是而窮之者，物焉得而止焉，彼將...遊乎萬物之所終始. Barrier Keeper Yin also points out that through the practice of such self-cultivation methods as “unifying one’s nature, nourishing one’s *qi* and uniting one’s potency,” one can “be pervaded with that by which things are formed,” i.e., the *dao* 通乎物之所造. Union with

⁷³⁹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 19. 668-69, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 198. Translation with modifications.

⁷⁴⁰ See n. 681 above.

the *dao* in turn guards one's spirit as well as the unitary *qi* so that none of the physical objects can get a chance to hurt him. The distinct Zhuangzian version of self-cultivation as a means to transcend Heaven and the physical world will be elaborated in the following section.

Part IV Zhuangzian Self-cultivation: A Unique Means to Transcend the Physical World and Attain Spiritual Liberation

In his seminal studies of the self-cultivation tradition in early China, Harold D. Roth has offered a thorough analysis of almost all the passages related to the mystical meditative practice, in “Neiye” and “Xinshu,” *Zhuangzi, Daode jing* 道德經, *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 and *Huainanzi*.⁷⁴¹ In *Zhuangzi*, Roth finds two particular cases that belong to the same inner cultivation tradition as exemplified in “Neiye”: “sitting-and-effacing” and “fasting of the mind.” He argues that such Zhuangzian practices “followed a regimen of inner cultivation first enunciated in *Inward Training* [‘Neiye’].”⁷⁴² Being focused solely on what is common among all the self-cultivation passages, Roth overlooks that the methods and goals of self-cultivation presented in these texts differ greatly.

⁷⁴¹ See Harold D. Roth, “Psychology and Self-Cultivation in Early Taoist Thought,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 51. 2 (1991): 599-650; “Evidence for stages of Meditation in Early Taoism,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 60.2 (1997): 295-314; “Bimodal Mystical Experience in the ‘Qiwulun 齊物論’ Chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子,” in *Hiding the World in the World: Uneven Discourses on the Zhuangzi*, ed. Scott Cook (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 15-32; “Inward Training and the Chuang Tzu” in *Original Tao*, 153-61.

⁷⁴² Roth, *Original Tao*, 174.

In this section, an analysis of the Zhuangzian self-cultivation will be offered, with a focus on how it differs from and reacts to that in “Neiye.”⁷⁴³ A thorough analysis of the related self-cultivation passages will further clarify the distinct body-mind dualism in *Zhuangzi*. Let us start with the oft-cited sitting-and-effacing passage in “Renjian shi.”

顏回曰：“回益矣。”
仲尼曰：“何謂也？”
曰：“回忘仁義矣。”
曰：“可矣，猶未也。”
他日復見，曰：“回益矣。”
曰：“何謂也？” 曰：“回忘禮樂矣。”
曰：“可矣，猶未也。”
他日復見，曰：“回益矣。”
曰：“何謂也？”
曰：“回坐忘矣。”
仲尼蹴然曰：“何謂坐忘？”
顏回曰：“墮肢體，黜聰明，離形去知，同於大通，此謂坐忘。”
Yan Hui said, “I’m improving!”
Confucius said, “What do you mean by that?”
“I’ve forgotten benevolence and righteousness!”
“That’s good. But you still haven’t got it.”
Another day, the two met again and Yan Hui said, “I’m improving!”
“What do you mean by that?”
“I’ve forgotten rites and music!”
“That’s good. But you still haven’t got it.”
Another day, the two met again and Yan Hui said, “I’m improving!”
“What do you mean by that?”
“I can sit down and efface everything!”

⁷⁴³ Due to different perceptions of human life reflected in these texts, versions of self-cultivation they endorse differ greatly both in the methods adopted and goals arrived at. However, the subtle differences among these texts have long been overlooked. Roth is not the only one who analyzes all these texts as if they hold a single perception of human life. Ames cites passages from the “Neiye,” *Zhuangzi*, and *Lunheng* 論衡 to support his proposition of mind-body holism, neglecting that these texts differ greatly in their perceptions of human life. See Ames, “The Meaning of Body in Classical Chinese Philosophy,” 163-68. Similarly, Yang Rur-bin claims that passages from *Huainanzi*, *Lüshi chunqiu*, “Neiye” and *Zhuangzi* “can be said to be products of the same cultural milieu ... the doctrine they espouse can be used to corroborate each other in the absence of more sufficient textual sources.” See Yang Rur-bin, “From ‘Merging the Body with the Mind’ to ‘Wandering in Unitary Qi,’” 101. So far, the only scholars who point out the differences between the “biospiritual” practices in “Neiye” and the “spiritual exercises” in *Zhuangzi*, to my knowledge, are Russell Kirkland and Eske Møllgaard. For more on the propositions by Kirkland, see ns. 758 and 760 below. Møllgaard points out that “Neiye” “wants to control things,” whereas *Zhuangzi* “wants to be liberated from things,” and that nothing like “Zhuangzi’s notion of wandering (*you*)” cannot be found in “Neiye.” See Møllgaard, *An Introduction to Daoist Thought*, 134.

Confucius looked very startled and said, “What do you mean, sit down and efface everything?” Yan Hui said, “I smash up my limbs and trunk, drive out eyesight and hearing, depart from form, do away with knowledge, and merge myself with the Great Thoroughfare. This is what I mean by sitting down and effacing everything.”⁷⁴⁴

The process Yan Hui talks about involves a step-by-step elimination of social-cultural constructions previously assimilated into one’s mind.⁷⁴⁵ “Benevolence and righteousness” stand for moral standards. “Rites and music” stand for cultural conventions and social regulations. The elimination of these aspects helps to dissolve the “social self.” For Yan Hui, who is portrayed as the mentor of Confucius in this anecdote, the dissolution of the “social self” is considered to be the preparatory stage for the more radical and higher-level abandonment: the dissolvment of the physical form, which is represented by “smashing up my limbs and trunk, driving out eyesight and hearing, departing from form, and doing away with knowledge” 墮肢體，黜聰明，離形去知。⁷⁴⁶

The abandonment of sensual perception and knowledge that Yan Hui practices here is repeatedly evoked in the Inner Chapters. In the anecdote of “fasting of the mind,” Confucius mentions that “the channels inward through eyes and ears are cleared, and you expel knowledge from the heart” 徇耳目內通而外於心知。⁷⁴⁷ According to Yang Rur-bin, eyes and ears channeled inwardly entail that “sense organs ... lose their specific functions

⁷⁴⁴ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 4.267, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 90. Translation with modifications. A similar scenario is presented in the story of Woodcarver Qing 梓慶, who, through a seven-day fasting practice, gradually eliminated from his mind the thoughts of congratulations or rewards, of titles or stipends; the thoughts of praise or blame, of skill or clumsiness; and eventually put out of mind his limbs and body. See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 19.705, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 205-206.

⁷⁴⁵ Roth consider these descriptions to be familiar “apophatic aspects of the breathing meditation found in other sources of inner cultivation theory.” See Harold D. Roth, “Bimodal Mystical Experience in the ‘Qiwulun 齊物論’ Chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子,” 18.

⁷⁴⁶ Similar expressions, such as “to put physical form beyond them” 外其形骸, and “to efface liver and gall, cast aside ears and eyes” 忘其肝膽, 遺其耳目 recur in “Da zongshi.” See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.248, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 60, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 87. Translation with modification.

⁷⁴⁷ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 4.134, Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 69.

and move toward uniformity with deep-level human consciousness.”⁷⁴⁸ Channeling senses inwardly may have further implication. We know that sensual perception is the channel through which we perceive as well as receive stimuli from the external physical world. Thus, by switching the channel inwardly, the adept of Zhuangzian self-cultivation reduces the impact of material world to the least extent so that his spiritual core can roam in the realm beyond the physical world. “A man like this doesn’t know what his eyes and ears are pleased with, he let his *xin* roam in harmony with the Power [of the *dao*]” 不知耳目之所宜，而游心於德之和。⁷⁴⁹

The practice of expelling knowledge 去知 also deserves careful consideration. Like *ji*, *xin*, *qing* and *sheng*, *zhi* 知 is not without ambiguity in *Zhuangzi*.⁷⁵⁰ The text mentions lesser knowledge (*xiaozhi* 小知) of the cicada and dove; knowledge that leads to conflict and strife, as in “knowledge is a tool in competition” 知也者，爭之器也。⁷⁵¹ It also mentions greater knowledge (*dazhi* 大知) of the *peng* 鵬 bird; knowledge that enables one to ascend to the *dao* 知之能登假於道; and above all, authentic knowledge 真知 of the True Person 真人. Some scholars hold that Zhuangzi rejects “analytical or conceptual”

⁷⁴⁸ Yang Rur-Bin, “From ‘Merging the Body with the Mind’ to ‘Wandering in Unitary Qi’,” 95.

⁷⁴⁹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 5.174. Translation my own. For alternative translations, see Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 69; Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 77; Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 43.

⁷⁵⁰ Given the widespread phenomenon of the same word possessing both positive and negative senses in *Zhuangzi*, I suspect that *chongyan* 重言, as one of the three linguistic features of the *Zhuangzi* summarized in the “Yuyan” 寓言 chapter, is meant to be words possessing double meanings. 重言 is traditionally translated as quotations or repeated words, and glossed as *zhongyan*, weighted words of people of the past, quoted to give credit to an argument. Yet ironically, the text itself explains that people of old age are mere “stale remnant of the past” 陳人, whose opinions are not worth serious consideration. Therefore, it seems better to interpret *chongyan* as the unique Zhuangzian way to play with the ambiguity of words. See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 27. 1087-88, n. 2, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 303-304, Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 279.

⁷⁵¹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 4.119, Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 67.

knowledge, but exalts “intuitive or aesthetic” knowledge;⁷⁵² or that Zhuangzi distrusts “intellectual knowledge” of “knowing why,” but celebrates “intuitive knowledge” of “knowing how.”⁷⁵³ But given the strong opposition to narrow perspectives⁷⁵⁴ and the tendency to negate sensual perception⁷⁵⁵ shown throughout *Zhuangzi*, it is equally valid to interpret authentic knowledge as that which transcends the limited human perspective and sensual perception of the material world to penetrate into the mystic *dao* and illuminate everything under Heaven. In contrast, knowledge to be discarded in Yan Hui’s sitting-and-effacing practice is that which is formed from limited human perspectives or generated through sensual perception of the phenomenal world.

To conclude, Yan Hui’s practice here differs greatly from the scenario presented in “Neiye.” In “Neiye,” spiritual prosperity and physical health promote each other.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵² See Robert E. Allinson, *Chuang-Tzu for Spiritual Transformation: An Analysis of the Inner Chapters* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 26.

⁷⁵³ See Ivanhoe, “Skepticism, Skill, and the Ineffable Tao,” 648. Similarly, Kjellberg asserts that “in spite of Zhuangzi’s skepticism concerning linguistic or ‘rational’ knowledge, he has absolute faith in intuitive or ‘natural’ knowledge.” See Paul Kjellberg, “Sextus Empiricus, Zhuangzi, and Xunzi on ‘Why Be Skeptical?’” in *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the Zhuangzi*, eds. Paul Kjellberg and P. J. Evanhoe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 15.

⁷⁵⁴ For more on perspectivism and on the distinction between greater and lesser knowledge in *Zhuangzi*, see Donald Sturgeon, “Zhuangzi, Perspectives, and Greater Knowledge,” *Philosophy East and West*, 65.3 (2015): 892-917.

⁷⁵⁵ Besides in this anecdote, the negation of sensual perception is reflected in the story of Cook Ding, who is often seen as a typical exemplar of “knowing how.” Cook Ding explains that in butchering the ox, he “goes at it by spirit, and don’t look with his eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants” 臣以神遇而不以目視，官知止而神欲行。 This indicates that Cook Ding’s mastery of ox butchering is not based on his sensual perception but on knowledge of the spiritual mystery. Cook Ding’s reply to the Lord (“What I care about is the Way, which goes beyond skill” 臣之所好者道也，進乎技矣) further proves that his gnosis has transcended the ordinary experiential skill and penetrated into the *dao*. See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 3.105, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 51-52.

⁷⁵⁶ Harold Roth asserts that one can easily find “a seam-less web in the *Inward Training* connecting the physiological, psychological and spiritual aspects of the human being.” See Roth, *Original Tao*, 106. For more on the “symbiotic relationship” between the physical and spiritual aspects in “Neiye,” see Ames, “The Meaning of Body in Classical Chinese Philosophy,” 168. Also, as Russell Kirkland observes, self-cultivation in “Neiye” “involves the purification and proper ordering of one’s body as well as one’s heart/mind” and that “the spiritual life [in “Neiye”] involves practices that also have physical components.” See Kirkland, *Taoism: The Enduring Tradition*, 48. See also my discussion in chapter 2, on page 143, ns. 445-446.

Through the practice of inner cultivation, sensual perception is refined and the physical function improves, which in turn lead to the spiritual essence being securely lodged in one's person.⁷⁵⁷ While in this anecdote, the ultimate stage of self-cultivation involves not only a complete abandonment of sensual perception and knowledge attained through this means, but also a separation from the physical from 離形, as a result of which, one's spiritual core merges with the *dao*. Besides, none of the typical “Neiye” techniques of self-cultivation—the alignment of the body, stilling of the mind, or concentration of the thought—is applicable to the self-cultivation project depicted by Yan Hui in this passage.⁷⁵⁸

Let us continue our discussion with the opening passage in “Qiwu lun.” This passage contains two interesting images that have become the slogan of Zhuangzian self-cultivation: the withered wood 槁木 and dead ashes 死灰.

南郭子綦隱几而坐，仰天而噓，嗒焉似喪其耦。顏成子游立侍乎前，曰：“何居乎？形固可使如槁木，而心固可使如死灰乎？今之隱几者，非昔之隱几者也。”子綦曰，“偃，不亦善乎，而問之也！今者吾喪我，汝知之乎？...”

Ziqi of South Wall sat leaning on his armrest, staring up at the sky and breathing—vacant and faraway, as though he'd lost his self. Yancheng Ziyou, who was standing by his side in attendance, said, “What is this? Can you really make the body like a withered tree and the mind like dead ashes? The man leaning on the armrest now is not the one who leaned on it before!” Ziqi said, “You do well to ask the question, Yan. Now I have lost myself. Do you understand that?...”⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁷ This is reflected in the following statement: “With a stable mind at your core, With the eyes and ears acute and clear, And with the four limbs firm and fixed, You can thereby make a lodging place for the vital essence” 定心在中，耳目聰明，四枝堅固，可以為精舍。See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 937, Roth, *Original Tao*, 60-61. See also chapter 2, n. 402. Russell Kirkland has noted that “the diligent effort to attract and retain the spiritual forces called *qi*, *shen* and *dao*,” which is key to “Neiye,” can hardly be found in *Zhuangzi*. See Kirkland, *Taoism: The Enduring Tradition*, 47.

⁷⁵⁸ Such key words of self-cultivation practice as to align, (*zheng* 正), to still, (*jing* 靜), and to concentrate (*ding* 定), recur in “Neiye.” For more on the inner cultivation practice in “Neiye,” see Roth, *Original Tao*, 109-118. See also my discussion in chapter 2, on pages 123-25.

⁷⁵⁹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2.40, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 36. Translation with moderation.

The word *xu* 嘘 (exhale slowly) indicates that Ziqi is practicing breathing meditation. “As though he’d lost his self” 似喪其耦 suggests that Ziqi has fallen into a meditative trance. “He is not the one who leaned on it before” 非昔之隱几者 indicates he is completely transformed after the meditative practice. The breathing meditation described here differs greatly from the self-cultivation practice described in “Neiye.” First, the image of Ziqi’s body forms a sharp contrast with that in “Neiye.” Ziqi’s meditation causes his physical form to emaciate, like a withered tree, whereas the “Neiye” inner cultivation serves to strengthen the body and improve physical appearance. Frequently found in “Neiye” are such images as strong limbs, supple muscles, bright eyes, and ample and smooth skin, all of which are seen as a natural result of the spiritual essence securely lodged in the physical form.⁷⁶⁰ Second, Ziqi’s meditation involves a complete emptying of his mind, as a result of which his *xin* is totally devoid of any emotional and mental activity, becoming like the dead ashes. In Contrast, “Neiye” involves moderation of thinking and emotions, but not complete abandonment of them. *Xu* 虛 (to empty), which is a key to the self-cultivation project in *Zhuangzi* and *Xunzi*,⁷⁶¹ is never mentioned in “Neiye.”

The following passage from “Zhi beiyou” further reflects the contrast between the “Neiye” and Zhuangzian self-cultivation.

⁷⁶⁰ For example, “Their skin will be ample and smooth, Their ears and eyes will be acute and clear, Their muscles will be supple and their bones will be strong” 皮膚裕寬，耳目聰明，筋信而骨強; “For people who have attained the Way, It permeates their pores and saturates their hair” 得道之人，理丞而屯泄. See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 939, 950, Roth, *Original Tao*, 76-77, 96-97.

⁷⁶¹ For discussion on the self-cultivation in *Zhuangzi* and *Xunzi*, see David Nivison, “Hsun Tzu and Chuang Tzu,” in *Chinese Texts and Philosophical Contexts: Essays Dedicated to Angus C. Graham*, ed. Henry Rosemont, Jr. (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1991), 129-142; Aaron Stalnaker, “Aspects of Xunzi’s Engagement with Early Daoism,” *Philosophy East and West* 53.1 (2003): 87-129.

齧缺問道乎被衣，被衣曰：“若正汝形，一汝視，天和將至；攝汝知，一汝度，神將來舍。德將為汝美，道將為汝居，汝瞳焉如新出之犢而無求其故！”言未卒，齧缺睡寐。被衣大說，行歌而去之，曰：“形若槁骸，心若死灰，真其實知，不以故自持。媒媒晦晦，無心而不可與謀。彼何人哉！”

Nieque asked Piyi about the Dao. Piyi said, “Align your body, unify your vision, and the Harmony of Heaven will come to you. Call in your knowledge, unify your bearing, and Spirit will come to lodge in you. Potency will be your beauty, the Way will make a dwelling of you, and your eyes will be as those of a newborn calf. You will not try to find out the reason why.” Before he had finished speaking, however, Nieque fell sound asleep. Piyi, immensely pleased, left and walked away, singing this song: Body like a withered corpse, mind like dead ashes, true in the realness of knowledge, not conceited with artifice, dim dim, dark dark, mindless, you cannot consult with him: what kind of man is this!⁷⁶²

This anecdote presents an interesting interaction between two imaginary figures, with one exemplifying the Zhuangzian self-cultivation and the other following the “Neiye” tradition. Piyi’s 被衣 teaching is reminiscent of the self-cultivation outlined in “Neiye”: both the methods prescribed and results attained are similar.⁷⁶³ To align your body, unify your vision and moderate your thinking are typical practices prescribed in “Neiye.” “Spirit will come to lodge in you. Potency will be your beauty, the Way will make a dwelling of you” 神將來舍，德將為汝美，道將為汝居 are familiar “Neiye” style description of how the practice of inner cultivation will lead to the *dao* and essence accumulating in the adept.⁷⁶⁴ “Eyes as a new-born calf” stands for perfection of the physical body, which is among the holistic benefits of inner cultivation.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶² *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 22.811, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 237. Translation with modifications.

⁷⁶³ Roth quotes Piyi’s instruction here as evidence for the similarity between self-cultivation in “Neiye” and *Zhuangzi*. But, as Eske Møllgaard points out, the text clearly mocks the instructions of Piyi by continuing with Nieque introducing a different type of practice “much closer to the tone and content of the *Zhuangzi*.” See Møllgaard, *An Introduction to Daoist Thought*, 134-35.

⁷⁶⁴ Descriptions of the cumulation of *dao*, *de* and *jing* in one’s person abound in “Neiye”: “When the mind is tranquil and the vital breath is regular, The Way can thereby be halted” 心靜氣理，道乃可止; “When your body is not aligned, the inner power will not come” 形不正，德不來; “Diligently clean out its lodging place And its vital essence will naturally arrive” 敬除其舍，精將自來. See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 49. 935, 937, 938, Roth, *Original Tao*, 54-55, 66-67, 70-71

⁷⁶⁵ For more on the holistic benefits of inner cultivation in “Neiye”, see Roth, *Original Tao*, 118-23.

The depiction of Nieque 齧缺, on the other hand, is reminiscent of the self-cultivation practiced by Nanguo Ziqi and Yan Hui. “Body like a withered corpse, mind like dead ashes” 形若槁骸，心若死灰 is almost a verbatim repetition of the description of Nanguo Ziqi in his meditative trance. “True in the realness of knowledge, not conceited with artifice” 真其實知，不以故自持 makes a distinction between authentic knowledge and artificial human knowledge. *Gu* 故, which is often misunderstood as “reason” or “precedent,” could mean artifice or human cleverness in this context.⁷⁶⁶ Nieque, like Yan Hui, is casting aside human wisdom and artifice while holding fast to the authentic knowledge that penetrates into the *dao*.

Nieque dozed off and showed no interest in what Piyi preached, as if it were a cliché that he had been long familiar with. Piyi, on the other hand, was amazed by the behavior of Nieque. The two gentlemen’s reaction to each other clearly indicates that Piyi’s practice is inferior to that of Nieque. Thus this anecdote serves precisely to downplay the strand of self-cultivation represented by “Neiye” and exalts the Zhuangzian strand of self-cultivation.

To recapitulate. Self-cultivation described in the above passages has a common feature: not only is social-cultural constructions to be emptied, but also the body is to be emaciated

⁷⁶⁶ Following Wang Niansu 王念孫, who in *Dushu zazhi* 讀書雜誌, interprets *gu* 故 as *qiao* 巧 (skillfulness or artifice). Wang Niansun holds that this sentence conveys the Zhuangzian ideal to eliminate human wisdom and artifice to follow the pattern of Heaven 莊子所謂 “去智與故，循天之理” 也. See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 22. 813-14, n. 9. *Gu* is defined as “being sly, deceitful, artificial or pretentious” 詭詐, 巧偽 in *Hanyu da cidian* Vol. 5, 428. *Gu* is listed in parallel with *zhi* 智 (both conveying a negative sense) in “Xinshu shang” of *Guanzi* and “Jingshun” 精神 of *Huainanzi*: “Calm and still, sticking to non-action, eliminating wisdom and artifice” 恬愉無為，去智與故; “rest your essence and spirit, and cast aside knowledge and artifice” 休精神而棄知故. See *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 764, , *Huainanzi jishi*, 544. It is listed in parallel with *qiao* in the “Lunren” 論人 of *Lüshi Chunqiu* and “Shuzhen” 淑真 of *Huainanzi*: “abandon schemes and eliminate the human artifice” 釋智謀，去巧故; “When the *dao* is mixed with human schemes, artifices arise” 雜道以偽...而巧故萌生. See *Lüshi Chunqiu xin jiaoshi*, 162, *Huainanzi jishi*, 138.

and effaced, along with the accompanying sensual perceptions. To enhance our understanding of the stages and goals of Zhuangzian self-cultivation, let us continue our discussion with another oft-cited passage from “Da zongshi,” which portrays the attainment of physical rejuvenation as inferior to spiritual merging with the *dao*.

南伯子葵問乎女偶曰：“子之年長矣，而色若孺子，何也？”曰：“吾聞道矣。”南伯子葵曰：“道可得學邪？”曰：“惡！惡可！子非其人也。夫卜梁倚有聖人之才，而無聖人之道，我有聖人之道，而無聖人之才，吾欲以教之，庶幾其果為聖人乎！不然，以聖人之道告聖人之才，亦易矣。參日而後能外天下；已外天下矣，吾又守之，七日而後能外物；已外物矣，吾又守之，九日而後能外生；已外生矣，而後能朝徹；朝徹，而後能見獨；見獨，而後能無古今；無古今，而後能入於不死不生。殺生者不死，生生者不生。...”

Nanbo Zikui said to the Woman Crookback, “You are old in years and yet your complexion is that of a child. Why is this?”

“I have heard the Way!”

“Can the Way be learned?” asked Nanbo Zikui.

“Goodness, how could that be? Anyway, you aren’t the man to do it. Now there’s Buliang Yi—he has the talent of a sage but not the Way of a sage, whereas I have the Way of a sage but not the talent of a sage. I thought I would try to teach him and see if I could really get anywhere near to making him a sage. It’s easier to explain the Way of a sage to someone who has the talent of a sage, you know. So I began explaining and kept at him for three days, and after that he was able to put the world outside himself. When he had put the world outside himself, I kept at him for seven days more, and after that he was able to put things outside himself. After he had put things outside himself, I kept at him for nine days more, and after that he was able to put life outside himself. After he had put life outside himself, he was able to achieve the brightness of dawn, and when he had achieved the brightness of dawn, he could see the unique. After he had managed to see the unique, he could do away with past and present, and after he had done away with past and present, he was able to enter where there is no life and no death. That which kills life does not die; that which gives life to life does not live.⁷⁶⁷

Like the practice of Yan Hui, the teachings of Woman Crookback involve a step-by-step elimination of the external concerns, until one maintains the inner spiritual core only and enters the realm above life and death. In the first stage of cultivation, the political ambition to order the world is put out of one’s mind. The second stage of cultivation is aimed at attaining an equanimity wherein one is freed from the entanglement of all external objects. In the third stage, life itself is put out of one’s mind. When one casts off the concern

⁷⁶⁷ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.235, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 82-83. Translation with modification.

with the preservation of life, he can go beyond the temporal framework of the physical world and enter the realm of no death and no life. That which both engenders life 生生 and kills life 殺生 is interpreted by Wang Shumin to be the *dao*.⁷⁶⁸ Harold Roth also suggests that after series of elimination of the contents of the mind, the adept of *Zhuangzian* cultivation finally achieves a total merging with the *dao*.⁷⁶⁹

The stages of elimination presented in this passage are in line with the levels of achievements described in “Xiaoyao you.” Those who are content with the attainment of worldly fame and success are said to be at the lowest level. Above them is Song Rongzi 宋榮子, who doesn’t allow the common standard of honor and disgrace to impact his inner self. At the third stage is Liezi, who has attained the magical power to ride the wind, yet still has to rely on something 猶有所待者也. On top of the ladder, however, is the *Zhuangzian* sage, who has reached the ultimate level of human perfection: not having to rely on anything 彼且惡乎待哉. One who has attained this level of achievement is described to be able to “ride a true course between heaven and earth, with the changes of the six *qi* for his chariot, and to travel into the infinite” 若夫乘天地之正，而御六氣之辯，以遊無窮者。⁷⁷⁰ At the utmost stage, the sage no longer follows cosmic rule. He manipulates the cosmic rule instead. Relying on nothing, he attains the same self-sustaining status as the *dao* and wanders in the realm of the infinite.⁷⁷¹

⁷⁶⁸ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.237, n. 14.

⁷⁶⁹ Roth, “Bimodal Mystical Experience in the ‘Qiwulun 齊物論’ Chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子,” 19.

⁷⁷⁰ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 1.17, Graham, *Chuang-tzu The Seven Inner Chapters*, 44.

⁷⁷¹ For more on different levels of achievement described in the *Zhuangzi*, See Van Norden, “Competing Interpretations of the Inner Chapters of the ‘Zhuangzi’,” 256

The ultimate stage of human perfection (a complete liberation from the physical form and transcendence of the phenomenal world), however, is possible only for the lucky few. As Woman Crookback suggests, only those who have both “the talent of the sage” and the “Way of the sage” can reach the final stage of merging with the *dao* through a series of self-cultivation practices. Woman Crookback admits that the ultimate goal is not attainable for her, since she lacks “the talent of the sage.” Apparently, her ability to maintain the youthful state at an old age (a signal of *bulao* 不老, the ultimate goal of macrobiotic hygiene) is but a lesser achievement compared to Buliang Yi’s journey into the realm of “neither past nor present” and “neither life and nor death.”

A similar contrast between the ability to resist aging and complete transcendence of the physical world appears in the story of Huangdi 黃帝 learning from Guangchengzi 廣成子 in “Zaiyou” 在宥.⁷⁷² In this anecdote, Guangchengzi teaches Huangdi two stages of self-cultivation. In the first stage, Guangchengzi exemplifies the power to attain longevity and resist physical decadence through persistent practice of self-cultivation. “I have cultivated myself for twelve hundred years, and never has my body suffered any decay” 我修身千二百歲矣，吾形未嘗衰. The key to such cultivation, according to Guangchengzi, is “to enfold the spirit in quietude and the body will right itself” 抱神以靜，形將自正. As a result, “your spirit will protect the body and the body will enjoy long life” 神將守形，形乃長生.⁷⁷³ Huangdi is amazed at Guangchengzi’s achievement and holds him to be like

⁷⁷² See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 11.385-90, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 118-20.

⁷⁷³ See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 11.388, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 119. Note that to maintain the spirit inside the body so that the body can right itself, again, reminds of the inner cultivation described in “Neiye.”

Heaven 廣成子之謂天矣. Yet for Guangchengzi, there is a higher level of achievement, that is, the entry into the realm of the infinite. “So I will take leave of you, to enter the gate of the inexhaustible and wander in the limitless fields” 故余將去女，入無窮之門，以遊無極之野. For Guangchengzi, departure from the phenomenal world and entry into the limitless realm is the only means to transcend the limited human existence and attain true external existence. “All other men may die; I alone will survive!” 人其盡死，而我獨存乎 Words like *wuqiong* 無窮 and *wuji* 無極 (meaning inexhaustible, limitless, endless, or infinite) recur to convey the ultimate pursuit of the Zhuangzian exemplars. The repetition of them in this “Zaiyou” story proves that transcendence of the physical world is a theme emphasized throughout *Zhuangzi*.

The stages of achievement discussed above can help to account for seeming tensions in *Zhuangzi*: parts of the text discuss methods to preserve life in a precarious world; parts support caring for life by following the “Heavenly pattern” 天理.⁷⁷⁴ Yet these are but lesser goals compared to the highest level of human attainment, spiritual roaming in the realm above the physical world.⁷⁷⁵ *Zhuangzi* does advocate for fully complying with Heaven, but following Heaven is better seen as a stage along the ladder to achieve the highest human ideal: transcending the universe and attaining full autonomy (i.e., not relying on anything external) by eternally merging with the *dao*.

⁷⁷⁴ See my discussion on pages 233-236 above.

⁷⁷⁵ This answers the question raised by Michael, that is, why the *yangsheng* practitioners aimed at physical rejuvenation are not preferred as “members of the *Zhuangzi*’s inner and intimate club.” See n. 581 above.

CHAPTER 4 TWO VISIONS OF HUMAN LIFE AND TWO MODELS OF HUMAN EXEMPLARS IN *HUAINANZI*

Huainanzi was written and edited by a group of scholars working under the supervision and patronage of Liu An 劉安, the king of Huainan 淮南, and was presented to Emperor Wu 武 in 139 B.C. Ever since the earliest record of a “Neishu” 內書 in 21 *pian* 篇 in Ban Gu’s 班固 (32-92 C.E.) *Han Shu* 漢書 (History of the Former Han) there have been continuous bibliographical records and commentaries on *Huainanzi* (entitled *Neishu*, *Neipian* 內篇, *Huainan nei*, *Huainan honglie* 淮南鴻烈, etc.), and studies have shown that the text has been somewhat faithfully transmitted for over 2,100 years.⁷⁷⁶ Drawing on all previous intellectual traditions, with contents covering a wide range of topics from cosmogony, cosmology, astronomy and astrology, human self-cultivation, to governance, military strategy, rites and social customs, etc., the compendium is of vital importance to the study of early Chinese intellectual history.⁷⁷⁷

This chapter studies the distinct views of human life and death reflected mainly in the “Jingshen” 精神, “Yuandao” 原道, “Shuzhen” 淑真, and “Quanyan” 詮言 chapters of *Huainanzi*. Against the dominant tradition which holds that *Huainanzi* supports a monistic human life,⁷⁷⁸ this chapter argues that *Huainanzi* has two diametrically opposed visions of

⁷⁷⁶ On the origins and transmission of *Huainanzi*, see Harold Roth, *The Textual History of the Huai-nan Tzu* (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 1992), 9-112.

⁷⁷⁷ For a summary of the historical background, contents and organization, as well as of the disputes on the school affiliation of the book, see the “Introduction” in John S. Major, Sarah Queen, Andrew Meyer, and Harold Roth, trans., *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China*, Translations from the Asian Classics (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 1-39. Thereinafter referred to as Major, et al.

⁷⁷⁸ It is almost unanimously agreed that *Huainanzi* endorses a monistic cosmos in which everything, including human life, is made up of two types of *qi* varying in degrees of refinement. For example, Andrew Meyer writes: “as was true in virtually all early Chinese texts (and as many modern interpreters have noted),

life, each of which fits a special type of human exemplar [i.e., the sage (*shengren* 聖人) and the True Person (*zhenren* 真人)]. Parts of it follow the *Zhuangzi* dualism and hold that the spirit may remain eternally unchanged despite corporeal decay. Parts of it follow the “Neiye” tradition and hold that life is sustained by the union of the spirit and body, both of which are depletable or destructible. Each vision has its cosmogonic underpinning in different sections of *Huainanzi*. The cosmogonic passage in “Quanyan” portrays human life as containing a formless part generated before the differentiation of *qi* into the multifaceted phenomenal world. The “Jingshen” cosmogony, on the other hand, portrays human life as being generated through the combination of the ethereal and turbid *qi*, after the formation of Heaven and Earth. Finally, *Huainanzi* depicts two types of human exemplars: The True Person, as that portrayed in “Quanyan” and parts of “Jingshen” and “Yuandao,” etc., was generated before the differentiation of the material world, possesses a formless spirit and can thus transcend the phenomenal world to return to the Ancestor; The Sage, as that portrayed in parts of “Jingshen,” “Shuzhen” and “Yuandao,” etc., was generated by the union of the Heavenly and Earthly *qi*, has a depletable spirit, and cannot transcend the physical form to reach the Ancestor. With the distinction between them predestined in the cosmogonic process, they diverge fundamentally in their impact on the

the *Huainanzi* does not posit a clear distinction between mind and matter: all thoughts, feelings, and perceptions occur within a matrix of *qi* that, though highly ethereal and dynamic, is not different in kind than that which constitutes the rest of the material universe.” see Andrew Meyer, “Root-Branches Structuralism in the *Huainanzi*,” in *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China*, eds. Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 28; Matthew L. Duperon writes: “in a universe of correlatively resonant *qi*, ...the various *qi* that make up the world and everything in it, including living things like humans, are constantly changing...” See Matthew L. Duperon, “The Role of *Qing* 情 in the *Huainanzi*’s Ethics,” *Early China* 38 (2015): 89.

cosmic order, and the boundaries between them can never be crossed through self-cultivation.

Part I Conflicting Visions of Human Life and their Cosmogonic Underpinnings in *Huainanzi*

As is discussed in chapter 3, in the Zhuangzian dualism, the spirit is seen to be indestructible and the body is subject to the transformation and recycling at the material level. This dualism is also reflected in parts of *Huainanzi*, with the following passage from “Jingshen” 精神 as a typical example.

7.8 且人有戒形而無損於心，有綴宅而無耗精。夫癩者趨不變，狂者形不虧，神將有所遠徙，孰暇知其所為！故形有摩而神未嘗化者，以不化應化，千變萬珍，而未始有極。化者，複歸於無形也；不化者，與天地俱生也。夫木之死也，青青去之也。夫使木生者豈木也？猶充形者之非形也。故生生者未嘗死也，其所生則死矣；化物者未嘗化也，其所化則化矣。 Moreover, there are those who mortify their bodies without harming their minds, and those who cede their dwelling without diminishing their Quintessence. The thinking of the leper is not altered; the body of the madman not impaired. When the spirit makes its far-off journey, who has the leisure to imagine what it is going to do? Thus [for some] even though the body disappears, the spirit is never transformed. This is because they use what does not transform to respond to the transformation, and therefore they will not have begun to reach a limit despite a thousand alterations and ten thousand evolutions. What transforms returns to the formless; What does not transform lives as long as Heaven and Earth. A tree dies because its greenness has departed. But can that which gives life to a tree be a tree itself? Analogously, what fills the body is not the body. Thus, what gives birth to the living never dies, yet that to which it gives birth does die. What transforms things never transforms, yet that which it transforms does transform.⁷⁷⁹

The spirit and body are presented in this passage as two distinct entities, unrelated to each other. Injuries to and even destruction of the physical form do not affect the *xin* and *jing*, which represent the psycho-spiritual components of life, as in the sentence, “there are

⁷⁷⁹ *Huainanzi jishi*, 528-31, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 251. Translation with minor modification. I follow the divisions of sections within chapters by the editors and translators of the complete English Translation of the *Huainanzi* by Major, et al.

those who mortify their bodies without harming their minds, and those who cede their dwelling without diminishing their Quintessence” 有戒形而無損於心，有綴宅而無耗精。⁷⁸⁰ Nor will damage to the psycho-spiritual aspects exert any impact on the status of the physical form, as in the statement, “the body of the madman is not impaired” 狂者形不虧。

Another point that deserves special attention is the tree analogy: “A tree dies because its greenness has departed. But can that which gives life to a tree be a tree itself? Analogously, what fills the body is not the body.” 夫木之死也，青青去之也。夫使木生者豈木也？猶充形者之非形也。 Here the quality of being green is seen as the principle underlying the life of the tree. And it is compared to the human spirit that fills the physical form. This passage adopts the verb *qu* 去, “to leave,” to convey the separation of greenness from the tree, and *xi* 徙, “to migrate,” a synonym of *qu*, to convey the departure of the spirit from the body. This analogy is reminiscent of the piglet anecdote in *Zhuangzi*, which uses “that which animates the form” 使其形者 to stand for what enlivens the mother pig and departs from it upon death.⁷⁸¹ Both the tree and the pig are supported by a life-giving principle, which lasts despite the termination of the life of an individual tree or pig. Admittedly the tree analogy is imperfect, for scarcely anyone would attribute a spirit to a tree. Nonetheless, this analogy somewhat conveys the message that the departure of the

⁷⁸⁰ Note that this sentence is parallel to the statement in *Zhuangzi* “Dazongshi,” which says, “Although he has a startled body, his *xin* is not injured; the house [where the spirit dwells] is destroyed, his essence suffers no death.” 且彼有駭形而無損心，有旦宅而無情死 See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.256; Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 88. Translation with modification.

⁷⁸¹ See chapter 3, n. 633.

spirit, the life-sustaining principle underlying one's physical function, would lead to physical death.⁷⁸² Furthermore, the spirit that departs from the body is given an autonomous status, whose potency and action supposedly lie beyond one's imagination, as in the sentence "When the spirit makes its far-off journey, who has the leisure to imagine what it is going to do?" 神將有所遠徙，孰暇知其所為！

The spirit that separates from the body may even become indestructible. However, the indestructible spirit is not accessible to all: only those who "use what does not transform to respond to the transformation" can attain the status wherein the spirit is never transformed, even though the body disappears 故形有摩而神未嘗化者，以不化應化. Apparently, the principle of using *buhua* 不化 to respond to *hua* 化 is seen as the precondition for the attainment of spiritual indestructibility. In order to understand this principle, a careful analysis of the notions of *hua*, *buhua* and *ying* is needed.

Hua involves death and transformation into other forms. *Buhua*, on the other hand, indicates that which does not go through death and transformation. *Hua* indicates perishability and the eventual recycling into the formless. "What transforms returns to the formless" 化者，複歸於無形也. *Buhua*, on the other hand, indicates an eternal existence. "What does not transform lives as long as Heaven and Earth" 不化者，與天地俱生也. The distinction between that which does not go through transformation and the myriad things that are subject to transformation is reiterated in the following sentence: "Thus, what gives birth to the living never dies, yet that to which it gives birth does die. What transforms

⁷⁸² My discussion here is inspired by Fabrizio Pregadio, "The Notion of 'Form' and the Ways of Liberation in Daoism," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 14. 1 (2004): 101-102.

things never transforms, yet that which it transforms does transform.” 故生生者未嘗死也，其所生則死矣；化物者未嘗化也，其所化則化矣。 The terms *sheng sheng zhe* 生生者 and *hua wu zhe* 化物者 in this sentence are reminiscent of *sheng sheng zhe* 生生者 and *sha sheng zhe* 殺生者 in *Zhuangzi*. “That which kills life does not die; that which gives life to life does not live” 殺生者不死，生生者不生。⁷⁸³ *Hua wu zhe* and *sha sheng zhe* are different terms for the same concept, for that which kills life is exactly that which brings about death and transformation, and along with *sheng sheng zhe*, can be regarded as appellations of the *dao*.

Ying 應, “responding properly,” is a key principle in *Zhuangzi*. As stated in “Qiwu lun,” “A state in which ‘this’ and ‘that’ no longer find their opposites is called the hinge of the Way. When the hinge is fitted into the socket, it can respond endlessly.” 彼是莫得其偶，謂之道樞。樞始得其環中，以應無窮。⁷⁸⁴ By grasping the axis of the *dao*, instead of taking fixed human positions, the Zhuangzian sage attains the power to respond properly to all situations. Similarly, by sticking to the principle of using *buhua* 不化 to respond to *hua* 化, the exemplar in this passage from *Huainanzi* holds fast to the *dao* and responds properly to the endless transformation at the material level.

In the Zhuangzian account, the adept, after going through stages of self-cultivation, is said to enter the realm of “no life, no death” and attains a spiritual merging with the *dao*, which both kills and generates life, whereas in this *Huainanzi* passage, the same phrase

⁷⁸³ See chapter 3, n. 767.

⁷⁸⁴ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 2.58, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 40.

“never transform/be transformed” *wei chang hua* 未嘗化 is adopted to describe both the *dao* and the spirit of those who can “use what does not transform to respond to the transformation,” suggesting that through holding fast to the *dao*, the adept can attain a spirit as indestructible as the *dao* is.

In sum, the main themes reflected in this “Jingshen” passage are 1) The spirit and body are distinct entities unrelated to each other; 2) The spirit, which may depart from the body and travel far-off yet still possess great potency, can attain an eternal existence despite the corporeal decay, provided that one tightly grasps the *dao* and responds properly to the transformation.

Crucially, we can find contradictions to both themes in several other chapters of *Huainanzi*. First, the message conveyed in the following passage from “Yuandao” strongly contradicts the proposition that damage to either the spirit or the body won’t affect the other.

1.20 夫形者，生之所也；氣者，生之元也；神者，生之制也。一失位，則三者傷矣。
The physical body is the abode of vitality; the vital energy is the source of vitality; and the spirit is what regulates vitality. If one of these loses its position, then the other two will be harmed.⁷⁸⁵

Here the physical form, spirit, and *qi* are presented as being interrelated and life is regarded as union of the three, which is a familiar theme in “Neiye.” These three aspects are mutually influential. If one of them loses its position, then all three will be harmed. This vision forms a sharp contrast with the above statement in “Jingshen” that the injury to

⁷⁸⁵ *Huainanzi jishi*, 82, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 74.
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the body won't affect the mind and that for the madman, whose spirit must have lost its position, the body still remains intact.

In the “Taizu” 泰族 chapter, we find further elaboration on the interconnection between the spiritual and physical aspects of life:

20.7 今夫道者，藏精於內，棲神於心，靜漠恬淡，訟繆胸中，邪氣無所留滯，四枝節族，毛蒸理泄，則機樞調利，百脈九竅莫不順比，其所居神者得其位也，豈節拊而毛修之哉！
Now those who possess the Way amass essence inside themselves and lodge spirit within their hearts. [They] are quiet and indifferent, tranquil and undisturbed, with pleasure and profundity in their breasts. Thus the *qi* of depravity has no place to tarry or obstruct. The joints of [their] four limbs are well articulated; their hairs' vapor vents way in an orderly fashion. Thus the main axes of their bodies are harmonious and advantageous, so that none of the hundred channels and the nine apertures fail to flow freely. This is because the spirit dwelling [in the body] has attained its proper place. How could we say that this is just [a matter of] soothing the joints or arranging the hair? ⁷⁸⁶

According to this passage, when the vital essence and the spirit are securely lodged in the body, the limbs, joints, *mai*-channels, apertures, and the hair will all thrive. Like “Neiye,” this passage holds that it is import to secure the essence in the body and that one's physical health is determined by the state of the spiritual essence. Without attending to the spiritual aspect, one could hardly maintain physical wellbeing, no matter how much care is given to such parts as the joints and hair.

Second, in many other contexts, we can find the notion of a perishable spirit that should be securely lodged in the body, which forms a sharp contrast with that of an indestructible spirit separable from the body. The following passage from “Shuzhen” is an illustrative example:

⁷⁸⁶ *Huainanzi jishi*, 1382, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 801. Translation with minor modification.

2.2 是故形傷於寒暑燥濕之虐者，形苑而神壯；神傷乎喜怒思慮之患者，神盡而形有餘。故疲馬之死也，剝之若槁；狡狗之死也，割之猶濡。是故傷死者其鬼媿，時既者其神漠。是皆不得形神俱沒也。夫聖人用心，杖性依神，相扶而得終始。

The body is damaged by the privations of cold, heat, aridity, and dampness: the body weakens, yet the spirit remains strong. The spirit is damaged by the distress of joy, anger, rumination, and worry: the spirit becomes exhausted, yet the body has reserves. Therefore, when you skin a worn-out horse after it dies, it is like desiccated wood; when you skin a young dog after it dies, it still twitches. Thus, those who have been murdered, their ghosts haunt; those who reach their [allotted] time, their spirits go silent. Neither of these has their spirit and form expire simultaneously. In the use of their mind, sages lean on their natures and rely on their spirits. They [nature and spirit] sustain each other, and [so both] attain their ends and beginnings.⁷⁸⁷

In this passage, the verbs of *jin* 盡, “to be exhausted,” and *mo* 沒, “to be destroyed,” are used to describe the spirit, suggesting its depletable nature. Death here entails the depletion or destruction of either the spirit or the physical form. Therefore, the ideal state is to let the spiritual and physical aspects expire simultaneously 形神俱沒, that is, to let them embrace each other until both of them are naturally worn out as one exhausts one’s allotted life span. This is apparently in opposition to the tree analogy, which suggests that death takes place as the spirit departs from the physical form.

The following passage from “Yuandao” also depicts the spirit as being exhaustible.

1.21 貪饕多欲之人，漠昏於勢利，誘慕于名位，冀以過人之智植于高世，則精神日以耗而彌遠，久淫而不還，形閉中距，則神無由入矣。是以天下時有盲妄自失之患。此膏燭之類也，火逾然而消逾亟。夫精神氣志者，靜而日充者以壯，躁而日耗者以老。是故聖人將養其神，和弱其氣，平夷其形，而與道沈浮俯仰。

People who are covetous and filled with desires are blinded by political power and profit and are enticed by their lust for fame and station. If by surpassing the wisdom of others they hope to grow tall in the eyes of the world, then their Quintessential Spirit will daily be squandered and become increasingly distant from them. If they indulge in this for long and do not reverse this pattern when their bodies close down during daily activities, then their spirit will have no way to reenter. Thus throughout the world, there are sometimes the misfortunes of people who lose themselves through blindness and stupidity. This is the same thing as the tallow of a candle: the more the fire burns it, the more it melts and eventually disappears. Now the more that the vital essence, spirit, vital energy, and awareness are tranquil, the more they will be abundant and strong. The more they are agitated, the more they will be depleted and aged. Therefore, sages nourish their spirits, harmonize and

⁷⁸⁷ *Huainanzi jishi*, 101-102, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 87.

soften their vital breath, and pacify their bodies. They sink and float, plunge and soar, through life along with the Way.⁷⁸⁸

This passage discusses how the spirit is consumed and exhausted. According to the previous passage from “Shuzhen,” emotions and thinking 喜怒思慮 can deplete the spirit. This passage further elaborates that the desire for profit and power, lust for fame and worldly esteem will lead one to exert one’s intellectual power so as to surpass others in wisdom (*zhi* 智). The exertion of intellectual power will in turn sap (*hao* 耗) the spirit. Interestingly, when the spirit is sapped, it does not simply dwindle away, but leaks out of the body and travels far 耗而彌遠. What is more, the spirit that leaks out can reenter the body unless the body is blocked because of excessive activity. By this means, the sapped spirit can be recharged (*chong* 充). Unfortunately, though, most people are driven by blind desires and continually involve themselves in worldly businesses to the extent that their bodies become blocked and the spirit can never reenter 神無由入矣. This passage adopts the metaphor of the burning of the candle to convey how the spirit of such people will eventually become exhausted like the tallow of the candle. In the candle metaphor, the spirit is compared to the tallow, a consumable material resource.⁷⁸⁹ Whereas in the tree metaphor, the spirit is compared to greenness, an abstract life-sustaining principle that continues to exist despite the death of an individual tree.

⁷⁸⁸ *Huainanzi jishi*, 87-90, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 76.

⁷⁸⁹ The candle metaphor is elaborated in the first century C.E. text of *Xinlun* 新論 by Huan Tan 桓譚. See *Xinjiben Han Tan Xinlun* 新輯本桓譚新論 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2009), 32. In *Xinlun*, Huan Tan compares the spirit to the fire and the physical form to the candle—When the candle burns out, the fire extinguishes. Thus the spirit terminates upon the death of the physical form.

In sum, unlike the passage in “Jingshen” 7.8, which celebrates the departure of the spirit from the body, the above quoted passages in “Shuzhen” 2.2 and “Yuandao” 1.21 both portray the separation of spirit from the body as being detrimental. Union of the spirit and the body, on the other hand, is praised. Both the spirit and the body should be cherished and well attended to. Although greater emphasis is put on the spiritual aspect in “Yuandao” 1.21, the physical aspect cannot be neglected, for the body is the dwelling place of the spirit, and the spirit won’t be sustained for long once its dwelling place is blocked or damaged. Therefore, as is stated in 1.21, “sages nourish their spirits, harmonize and soften their vital breath, and pacify their bodies.”

In addition to the irreconcilable perceptions of human life, different versions of cosmogony are presented in *Huainanzi*. What is more, we can find cosmogonic underpinnings for both visions of human life discussed above, as will be analyzed below. The cosmogony presented at the beginning of “Quanyan” espouses a dualistic view of human life, and grants human life a unique position in the cosmic generation process.

14.1 洞同天地，渾沌為樸，未造而成物，謂之太一。同出於一，所為各異，有鳥、有魚、有獸，謂之分物。方以類別，物以群分，性命不同，皆形於有。隔而不通，分而為萬物，莫能及宗，故動而謂之生，死而謂之窮。皆為物矣，非不物而物物者也，物物者亡乎萬物之中。稽古太初，人生於無，形於有，有形而制於物。能反其所生，故未有形，謂之真人。真人者，未始分於太一者也。

Cavernous and undifferentiated Heaven and Earth, chaotic and inchoate Uncarved Block, not yet created and fashioned into things: this we call the “Grand One.” Together emerging from this unity, so that each acquired its distinctive qualities, there were birds, there were fish, there were animals: this we call the “differentiation of things.” Regions became distinguished according to their categories, things became differentiated according to their groupings. Their natures and destinies were dissimilar. All acquired their physical forms in the realm of being. Separate and not interconnected, differentiated as the myriad things, None could return to the ancestor. Thus when animated, things are said to be alive; when dead, things are said to be expired. In both cases, they are things. They are not that which does not belong to the category of things but made things into things; rather, what made things into things is not among the myriad things. In Antiquity, at the Grand Beginning, human beings came to life in “Non-being” and acquired a physical form in “Being.” Having a physical form, human beings came under the control of things. But those who

can return to that from which they were born, as if they had not yet acquired a physical form, are called the “True Person.” The True Person are those who have not yet begun to differentiate from the Grand One. ⁷⁹⁰

There are three pairs of distinctions presented in this passage: between union (*yi* 一) and differentiation (*fen* 分); the creator of things (*wu wu zhe* 物物者) and the myriad things (*wanwu* 萬物); non-being (*wu* 無) and being (*you* 有). An analysis of these distinctions will help to clarify the distinct position of human life in this cosmogonic model.

The first pair of contrasts is that between union and differentiation. *Taiyi* 太一 (or sometimes just *Yi* 一)⁷⁹¹ here is described as the undivided unity, uncarved block, and the murky, chaotic primordial state. It is the cosmic origin from which all animate and inanimate beings emerge. Differentiation (*fen* 分) is the crux of the process of cosmic generation. It marks the emergence of the myriad things from their common origin of *Taiyi*/*Yi*. Differentiation entails distinction (*yi* 異) and separation (*ge* 隔). When the myriad things with distinct forms are formed, they are separated not only from each other but also from their common ancestor, *Taiyi* 分而為萬物，莫能及宗. As a result of this permanent separation from their ancestor, the individuated animate beings are all subject to the rule

⁷⁹⁰ *Huainanzi jishi*, 991-92, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 536-37. Translation with minor modification.

⁷⁹¹ *Taiyi* may embody a cosmic deity, or represent an abstract philosophical concept. It is the supreme celestial deity, as reflected in the Baoshan 包山 bamboo slips of divination and the “Jiuge” 九歌 of *Chuci* 楚辭, and the chief deity in the state sacrificial system of Emperor Wu’s 武 court. See Li Ling, “An Archaeological Study of *Taiyi* (Grand One) Worship,” 1–39. From late Warring States onward, *Taiyi* has been adopted as a philosophical idea to convey the ultimate cosmic principle, as well as the ultimate principle for various human affairs and institutions. In the “Lilun” 禮論 chapter of *Xunzi* 荀子, *Taiyi* (大一) represents the root and ultimate principle of sacrificial ritual. See Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 352. In the “Dayue” 大樂 chapter of *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, *Taiyi* is described as the appellation for the *dao*, the root of music, and the ultimate principle that the sage king follows both in the governance of state and in the cultivation of his person. See *Lüshi Chunqiu xin jiaoshi*, 259.

of life and death. “Thus when animated, things are said to be alive; when dead, things are said to be expired” 故動而謂之生，死而謂之窮。

The distinction between that which makes things things (*wu wu zhe* 物物者) and the myriad material things (*wanwu* 萬物), is somewhat parallel to the distinction between union and differentiation. The context indicates that *wu wu zhe* refers to *Taiyi*, the origin of the universe and the initiator of the cosmic generation. By stating that *wu wu zhe* and things with forms are of absolutely different categories 皆為物矣，非不物而物物者也, and that *wu wu zhe* cannot be found among the myriad things with forms 物物者亡乎萬物之中, this passage further explains why the individuated material beings cannot approach *Taiyi* and be merged with it.

The distinction between *you* and *wu* is indicated, but scantily discussed in this passage. From the statements that things are all formed in the realm of *you* 物...皆形於有 and that human beings are formed in the realm of *you* 人...形於有, we can infer that *you* is the realm in which beings with distinct physical forms come into being. *Wu*, by contrast, should refer to the realm wherein things with distinct physical forms have not yet come into being [i.e., the realm of the formless]. A reference to some Warring States period texts, which the compilers of *Huainanzi* may have had in mind, can somewhat help to clarify the distinction between *you* and *wu*. *Laozi*⁷⁹² Chapter 40 says, “The myriad things are born out of *you*, and *you* in turn born out of *wu*” 天下萬物生於有，有生於無。⁷⁹³ *Wu* is thus

⁷⁹² Given the wide spread of *Laozi* among early Han elites, as is shown by the two versions of Mawangdui *Laozi* manuscripts and that *Laozi* is very frequently cited in *Huainanzi*, it is reasonable to infer that the compilers of *Huainanzi* should have the *Laozi* statement on *you* and *wu* as the background knowledge.

⁷⁹³ See *Boshu Laozi Jiaozhu*, 28, Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching*, 104.

cosmogonically anterior to and ontologically more fundamental than *you*.⁷⁹⁴ The Warring States bamboo manuscript “Heng Xian” 恒先 also contains an account of how the category of *you* came into being. “In the primordial state of Constancy, there is no material existence. ...Space arises. Once there is space, there is *qi*; once there is *qi*, there is material existence; once there is material existence, there is a beginning; once there is a beginning, there is the passage of time.” 恒先無有...域作。有域,焉有氣;有氣,焉有有;有有,焉有始;有始, 焉有往者。⁷⁹⁵ In this cosmogony, the category of *you* came into being after the arising of space and occurrence of the primordial *qi*, before the passage of time, indicating that it most likely refers to the realm wherein the primordial *qi* started to differentiate into multiple material beings. The “Heng Xian” vision of *you* is therefore consistent with the “Quanyan” vision of *you* as the stage wherein the multifaceted material world came into being.

Where, then, does human life belong in the cosmogonic framework of union-differentiation, creator-created being, and *you-wu* distinction? The key to this question lies in the statement that human life originates in the realm of *wu* at the primordial stage of cosmic generation 稽古太初, 人生於無. This entails that human life has a formless component, whose existence precedes the formation of the phenomenal world of formed beings.⁷⁹⁶ Owing to this formless component, humans are likely to “return to that from

⁷⁹⁴ That *you*, the realm of beings with physical forms is born out of *wu*, the realm of the formless is also in line with the *Zhuangzi* “Zhibeiyou” cosmogony, which holds differentiation to be produced from the formlessness 有倫生於無形. See chapter 3, n. 664.

⁷⁹⁵ See Erica Brindley, Paul R. Goldin, Esther Klein, trs., “A Philosophical Translation of the Heng Xian,” *Dao* 12 (2013): 146-47.

⁷⁹⁶ It should be noted that the six dynasties Daoist text *Taishang laojun kaitian jing* 太上老君開天經 makes a similar assertion, claiming that the Pristine Lord Lao existed before the formation of the cosmos.

which they were born as if they had not yet acquired a physical form” 能反其所生，故未有形。He who can attain union with *Taiyi*, the ancestor of all formless and formed beings, is considered the paragon for all humans and called the True Person 真人者，未始分於太一者也。Humans are thus distinguished from the myriad things, which are permanently separated from the Ancestor. Yet like the myriad things, humans possess a physical form as well, which is born in the realm of *you*. With the physical form, they are subject to the control of things and can be damaged by them 有形而制於物。The goal of humans, therefore, is to shake off the physical form so as to transcend the material world and return to the *Taiyi*.

In fact, union with the Cosmic Ancestor is persistently evoked in *Huainanzi*. As is shown below, such a union is regarded as the source of great potency and profound perception.

6.1 若乃未始出其宗者，何為而不成！

You will be like one who has not yet begun to emerge from his Ancestor—how can you not succeed in whatever endeavor you are engaged in?⁷⁹⁷

6.4 純濇以淪，鈍悶以終，若未始出其宗，是謂大通。

Simple and mild, he [descends] the vortex; simple and stupefied, he [reaches] his end. He is like one who has not yet begun to emerge from the Ancestor. This is called the Great Penetration.⁷⁹⁸

Yet the reason why human beings can return to the Ancestor, as the “Quanyan” passage shows, is that they possess a formless part that is born directly out of the cosmic origin. So far, we can clearly see a spirit-body dualism revealed in the “Quanyan” cosmogony: humans possess not only a formless spirit, which is born before the formation

⁷⁹⁷ *Huainanzi jishi*, 447, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 215. Translation with modifications.

⁷⁹⁸ *Huainanzi jishi*, 465, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 220.

of the multifaceted phenomenal world and can return to the cosmic Ancestor, but also a physical form, which is produced in the stage of differentiation, eternally separated from the Ancestor, under the control of material objects, and subject to the reign of death.

This is quite in line with the *Zhuangzian* dualism. A passage from “Qiwu lun” describes how, with a physical form, man can hardly avoid “slicing and jostling with things,” which will lead to his eventual destruction.⁷⁹⁹ And a passage from “Dasheng” suggests how transcending the physical world and uniting with the *dao* can make the Ultimate Person impervious to harm posed by other material objects.⁸⁰⁰ *Zhuangzi* prioritizes the formless spirit over the physical form, whose injury or destruction is seen to have no impact on the intactness of one’s core “self,” and sets the spiritual union with the *dao* as the ultimate goal of self-cultivation. Through exalting those who can shake off their forms and attain a union with *Taiyi* as the True Person, “Quanyan,” like *Zhuangzi*, regards the physical form as an encumbrance and the spiritual merging with the *dao* as the highest attainment.

But not all cosmogonic passages in *Huainanzi* support a dualistic view of human life and envision retuning to the cosmic ancestor as an attainable goal for humans. Unlike the above-mentioned “Quanyan” cosmogony, the cosmogony presented at the beginning of “Jingshen” clearly reflects a monistic view of human life.

⁷⁹⁹ See the following statement from “Qiwu lun”, “Once we have received the completed physical form we are aware of it all the time we await extinction. Is it not sad how we and other things go on slicing or jostling each other, in a race ahead like a gallop which nothing can stop?” 一受其成形，不亡以待盡。與物相刃相靡，其行盡如馳，而莫之能止，不亦悲乎！*Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 52-53, Graham, 51. Translation with modifications.

⁸⁰⁰ See Chapter 3, n. 739.

7.1 古未有天地之時，惟像無形，窈窈冥冥，芒芟漠閔，瀕蒙鴻洞，莫知其門。有二神混生，經天營地...於是乃別為陰陽，離為八極，剛柔相成，萬物乃形，煩氣為蟲，精氣為人。是故精神，天之有也；而骨骸者，地之有也。精神入其門，而骨骸反其根，我尚何存？
Of old, in the time before there was Heaven and Earth, there were only images and no forms. All was obscure and dark, vague and unclear, shapeless and formless, and no one knows its gateway. There were two spirits, born in murkiness, one that established Heaven and the other that constructed Earth. ... Thereupon they differentiated into the yin and yang, and separated into the eight cardinal directions. The firm and the yielding formed each other; the myriad things thereupon took shape. The coarse *qi* became creatures; the refined *qi* became humans. Therefore, the Quintessential Spirit is of Heaven; the skeletal system is of Earth. When the Quintessential Spirit enters its gateway, and the skeletal system returns to its root, how I can still survive? ⁸⁰¹

In this cosmogonic model, what came into being at the stage wherein form had not taken shape 惟像無形, which corresponds to the realm of *wu* in the “Quanyan” cosmogony, is presented to be the two Cosmic Spirits 二神.⁸⁰² Human life is seen to be generated at a later stage, after the two Spirits constructed Heaven and earth and laid out the cosmic framework. Unlike the “Quanyan” passage, which distinguishes humans from the myriad things, this passage groups humans and the other creatures in the same category of the myriad things (*wanwu* 萬物). The difference between human beings and other animate beings lies only in that the former were generated from the refined *qi* 精氣, while the latter from the coarse *qi* 煩氣. By tracing the source of humans to the *qi*, this passage clearly endorses a monistic view of human life.

Under the monistic umbrella, however, human life contains the dual parts of spirit and body, which are derived from Heaven and Earth respectively, as is revealed in the following sentence.

7.2 夫精神者，所受於天也；而形體者，所稟於地也。

⁸⁰¹ *Huainanzi jishi*, 503-504, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 240-41.

⁸⁰² For more on the two Cosmic Spirits, see ns. 878-879, 895 and 900 below.

The Quintessential Spirit is what we receive from Heaven. The physical body is what we are given by earth.”⁸⁰³

Heaven and Earth are in turn formed by the pure and bright *qi* 清陽者 and heavy and turbid *qi* 重濁者 respectively, as is shown in the cosmogony at the beginning of the “Tianwen” 天文 chapter.

3.1 天墜未形，馮馮翼翼，洞洞瀾瀾，故曰太昭。道始生虛廓，虛廓生宇宙，宇宙生氣。氣有涯垠，清陽者薄靡而為天，重濁者凝滯而為地。

When Heaven and Earth were yet unformed, all was ascending and flying, diving and delving. Thus it was called the Grand Inception. The Grand Inception produced the Nebulous Void. The Nebulous Void produced space-time. Space-time produced the original *qi*. A boundary [divided] the original *qi*. That which was pure and bright spread out to form heaven. That which was heavy and turbid congealed to form earth.⁸⁰⁴

Therefore, human spirit [i.e., the Heavenly part] can be seen to be derived from the pure and bright *qi*, and the physical body, [i.e., the Earthly part] formed by the heavy and turbid *qi*. By attributing the Quintessential Spirit 精神 and Skeletal System 骨骸 (here standing for the physical form) to Heaven and Earth respectively, these passages all emphasize that both the spiritual and physical aspects of human life are generated out of the material source of *qi*.

What is more, by stating that one’s personhood will be totally destroyed once the spiritual and physical aspects are recycled into Heaven and Earth respectively 精神入其門，而骨骸反其根，我尚何存, the passage in “Jingshen” 7.1 rules out the possibility for human spiritual aspect to transcend the material world and gain eternal existence through

⁸⁰³ *Huainanzi jishi*, 505, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 241.

⁸⁰⁴ *Huainanzi jishi*, 165-66, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 114.

merging with the *dao*. The depiction of human life in this passage, therefore, is consistent with that in the above discussed passages from “Yuandao” 1.21 and “Shuzhen” 2.2, which regard both human spirit and body as exhaustible material.

Part II The Sage and True Person: Two Types of Human Exemplars with Diverging Origins and Fate, Practicing Different Versions of Self-Cultivation

So far, it seems to be beyond question that two irreconcilable visions of human life are presented in *Huainanzi*. But how can we account for them? Does they indicate the text’s lack of unity and coherence, as some scholars have claimed?⁸⁰⁵ Indeed, *Huainanzi* has been identified as one of the representative products of the “encyclopedic epoch,”⁸⁰⁶ and has been noted for its syncretism and its comprehensiveness, i.e., the tendency to draw on materials from all the previous traditions and welding them together under one unifying perspective.⁸⁰⁷ Is it possible that synthesizing all existing knowledge may have caused its compilers to draw on materials from conflicting traditions and put them together under one topical umbrella, without considering the inherent inconsistency among them? At least,

⁸⁰⁵As a matter of fact, the unity and coherence has been questioned by many. For example, the Song dynasty scholar Zhou Bida 周必大 holds that *Huainanzi* contains contradictory passages in different chapters of the book. Zhou’s comments are quoted in *Gu jin tu shu ji cheng* 古今圖書集成, *juan* 444/5a 理學彙編 (Collections on Learning and Scholastic Writings) 經籍卷 (Bibliographic Information). Fung Yu-lan 馮友蘭 claims that “[The *Huainanzi*] is a miscellaneous compilation of all schools, and lacks unity. See Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. Derk Bodde (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 395.

⁸⁰⁶For discussion on the encyclopedic epoch, esp. the encyclopedic trend in *Huainanzi*, see Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 287-336, esp. 302-307.

⁸⁰⁷For discussion on the tension between the incoherence in its contents and its claim of a unifying perspective, see Charles Le Blanc, *Huai-nan tzu: Philosophical Synthesis in Early Han Thought; The Idea of Resonance (Kan-ying 感應), with a Translation and Analysis of Chapter Six* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1985), 190. For more on its syncretic nature and its drawing on disparate sources, see Griet Vankeerbergen, *The Huainanzi and Liu An’s Claim to Moral Authority* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 4.

according to the study of the “Zhushu” 主術 chapter of *Huainanzi* by Paul R. Goldin, this is hardly the case. Goldin’s study indicates that “Zhushu” is not merely “an amalgam of various philosophical schools.” Instead, the authors of *Huainanzi* draw on materials from different and even opposing traditions as “rhetorically convenient” means to make their own distinct arguments. Sometimes they even take materials from the original contexts and twist their meanings in order to serve their own purposes.⁸⁰⁸

What is more, according to the vision of the compilers’ of the book, as is revealed in its postface, the “Yaolüe” 要略 chapter, the unity and coherence of the book are beyond question. As Sarah Queen points out, the vision of the text articulated in its postface is “one of interlinked and overarching coherence built upon a cumulative reading of its individual chapters.”⁸⁰⁹ And as Judson B. Murray puts it, “At least, according to the author of the postface, the *Huainanzi* is original, unified, and pluralist in scope as it strives for comprehensiveness.”⁸¹⁰ According to Murray, the author[s] of the postface not only claims its comprehensiveness and timelessness, but also takes pains to demonstrate the coherence and unity of its contents.⁸¹¹ Nonetheless, the author[s] of the postface cannot escape the suspicion of self-aggrandization. Although Murray admits the difficulty in taking it “seriously” the claims made by the author[s] of the postface, and the difficulty in examining the unity of such a large compendium,⁸¹² he, and Sarah Queen as well, still seem to exhibit

⁸⁰⁸ Goldin, “Insidious Syncretism in the Political Philosophy of *Huainanzi*,” 91, 102-104.

⁸⁰⁹ Sarah A. Queen, “Inventories of the Past: Rethinking the ‘School’ Affiliation of the ‘Huainanzi,’” *Asia Major* 14.1 (2001): 66.

⁸¹⁰ Judson B. Murray, “A Study of ‘Yao Lue’ 要略, ‘A Summary of the Essentials’: The ‘Huainanzi’ 淮南子 from the Point of View of the Postface,” *Early China* 29 (2004): 51.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁸¹² Murray Quotes from Benjamin Wallacker, who states that the problem of unity “must be attacked by one who has mastered the contents of all the essays in the book. Each essay must be controlled individually and

much sympathy toward its author[s] in their study of the “Yaolüe.” Unlike Murray and Queen, however, Martin Kern has cast doubt on the claims of the author[s] of the “Yaolüe.” According to Kern, it is Liu An’s political ambition to act as the *spiritus rector* for his young cousin, the newly-enthroned emperor Wu, that prompts the unifying compilation of originally “disparate texts representing different traditions of learning” written by a group of scholars at the court of Huainan.⁸¹³ Thus the “Yaolüe” functions primarily as a “rhetorical gesture” to tightly unify the originally “wide-ranging, diverse and mutually unrelated essays.”⁸¹⁴

While I agree with Kern that “the principle function [of the “Yaolüe”] must have been to establish the entire text as a single work,” and to convey a message “that the entire *Huainanzi* is tightly unified and cannot be broken apart into isolated essays,”⁸¹⁵ I find it hard to accept his proposition that the diverse writings of *Huainanzi* were probably not composed for a single purpose.⁸¹⁶ It is highly possible that Liu An already had a guiding principle and a blueprint when he initiated the project of *Huainanzi* as a comprehensive guidance for governing the universal empire, as Lü Buwei did when he patronized the composition of the *Annals of Mr. Lü*. Admittedly, it is very hard to prove either side of the argument. Nonetheless, large amounts of modern scholarship on *Huainanzi* also indicate that the originality and structural as well as thematic coherence of the book is not in

then compared with each of the other essays.” See Murray, *ibid.*, 50-1; Benjamin Wallacker, *The Huai-nan-tzu, Book Eleven: Behavior, Culture and the Cosmos* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1962), 2.

⁸¹³ Martin Kern, “Creating a Book and Performing It: The ‘Yao lüe’ Chapter of the *Huainanzi* as a Western Han *fu*,” in *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China*, eds. Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 149.

⁸¹⁴ Kern, “Creating a Book and Performing It,” 150.

⁸¹⁵ Kern, “Creating a Book and Performing It,” 134.

⁸¹⁶ Kern, “Creating a Book and Performing It,” 149.

question.⁸¹⁷ Thus it seems no longer appropriate to dismiss the book as a miscellaneous collection of materials from preexisting intellectual traditions, lacking in unity and coherence.

I propose that *Huainanzi* classifies humans into several tiered groups, and each of the previously discussed visions of human life fits a special group of people. *Huainanzi* repeatedly asserts that humans are tiered according to their powers of perception, wisdom, capability, responsibility, potentiality, moral and social-political status, and so on. Humans are generally divided into three layers: the ordinary, the sage and the True Person (also termed the Great Man, *dazhangfu* 大丈夫 or the Ultimate Person, *zhiren* 至人 in some occasions).

There are numerous cases of the contrast between people of different layers. The following is an example of the contrast between the sage and ordinary people in their perception and ability.

10.118 言無常是，行無常宜者，小人也；察于一事，通於一伎者，中人也；兼覆蓋而並有之，度伎能而裁使之者，聖人也。

Someone whose words are not always true and whose actions are not always appropriate is a petty person. Someone who has examined into one matter and has mastered one skill is a middle type of person. Gaining or losing [the realm] but always having it, skilled and capable but using those [attributes] in a measured way, that is a sage.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁷ For example, in his study on the visions of history in *Huainanzi*, Michael Puett argues that the juxtaposition of “progressive and degenerative visions of history” in *Huainanzi* does not indicate that the book “should be read as a compilation of discrete and unrelated chapters.” He continues to write that, “on this issue, there would appear to be a very consistent play on these seemingly inconsistent visions of history.” See Michael Puett, “Sages, Creation, and the End of History in the *Huainanzi*,” in *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China*, eds. Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 271; In his study on self-cultivation and the structure of *Huainanzi*, Harold Roth concludes that “the ideas and practices of the Daoist inner cultivation tradition constitute the normative foundation into which all these other ideas are integrated in the *Huainanzi*”; See Harold Roth, “Daoist Inner Cultivation Thought and the Textual Structure of the *Huainanzi*,” in *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China*, eds. Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 40-82, esp. 40.

⁸¹⁸ *Huainanzi jishi*, 757, Major, et al., 390.

Below is another example of the difference between the sage and ordinary people in their attitude toward desires.

14. 38 聖人勝心，眾人勝欲。

The sage makes his mind victorious; the ordinary person makes his desires victorious. ⁸¹⁹

Scholars have noticed that *Huainanzi* adopts divergent standards with regard to the sage and ordinary people. Griet Vankeerbergen writes that “the *Huainanzi* thus seems to have two sets of weights and measures” in how to treat emotions: For the ordinary people, “orderly expressions of one’s emotions” is prescribed, whereas the “perspicacious ruler” and “the culture-providing sages” “are encouraged to free themselves entirely from the burden of emotions.”⁸²⁰ That different modes of self-cultivation should be adopted by the rulers and court officials has also been noticed. In a recent article, Tobias Benedikt Zürn convincingly argues that “*Huainanzi* apparently construes two distinct self-cultivational programs depending on the role of the person in question.” If the rulers should embody the *dao*, stick to the principle of non-action (*wuwei*), and maintain a state of formlessness (*wuxing*), then the court officials should be actively involved in the government affairs (*youwei*).⁸²¹

In his study of death in *Huainanzi*, Michael Puett concludes that *Huainanzi* presents a “bifurcated cosmology” and “a two-tiered approach” to the issue of death. The non-sages

⁸¹⁹ *Huainanzi jishi*, 1013, Major, et al., 556.

⁸²⁰ Griet Vankeerbergen, “Emotions and the Actions of the Sage: Recommendations for an Orderly Heart in the ‘*Huainanzi*,’” *Philosophy East and West* 45. 4 (1995): 529.

⁸²¹ Tobias Benedikt Zürn, “Overgrown Courtyards and Tilled Fields: Image-based Debates on Governance and Body Politics in the *Mengzi*, *Zhuangzi* and *Huainanzi*” *Early China* 41 (2018): 318-21. For more on my critique of this article, see n. 907.

fear death and live in a world haunted by ghosts and spirits. They follow the sacrificial rituals instituted by the sages and believe that this is efficacious to domesticate ghosts or propitiate the natural spirits. But the sages view themselves as part of a larger cosmos. They “do not fear death, do not become ghosts [upon death] or fear those who have died previously.”⁸²² Thus the sage institutes the sacrificial system not to transform or domesticate the spiritual forces but to “regulate the life of the nonsages.”⁸²³

Michael Puett’s earlier study of self-divinization in the “Jingshen” chapter also touches upon the difference between the sage and the True Person.⁸²⁴ But he does not hold that divergent standards are applicable to the sage and the True Person. For him, the sage and the True Person differ only in degree of potency and refinement: the True Person, he writes, is “even more refined than the sages.”⁸²⁵ Elsewhere, Puett stresses that the sage and the True Person have several common features. According to him, both the sage and True Person can become spirits⁸²⁶ “by following a particular regimen of self-cultivation.”⁸²⁷ And they both aim at connecting themselves to “the pattern of the universe,” which will grant them great potency. Their difference lies only in that “for the sage, the connection is forged through the form,” whereas the True Person, who “transcends the

⁸²² For more discussions on the sage and death, see Michael Puett, “Sages, the Past, and the Dead: Death in the *Huainanzi*,” in *Mortality in Traditional Chinese Thought*, eds. Amy Olberding and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 228-30.

⁸²³ Puett, “Sages, the Past, and the Dead,” 238

⁸²⁴ For discussion on the difference between the sage and the True Man, See Puett, *To Become a God*, 270-283.

⁸²⁵ Puett, “Sages, the Past, and the Dead,” 237-38.

⁸²⁶ For more on the sage’s claim of self-divinization, see Puett, *To Become a God*, 275-76.

⁸²⁷ Puett, *To Become a God*, 284.

human form,” is “able to accord not just with the patterns that affect the human form but also with the patterns of the entire cosmos.”⁸²⁸

A question remains to be answered if we accept Puett’s suggestions: if the sage and the True Person set themselves the same goals and adopt the same methods of self-cultivation, how come the True Person can manage to “transcend the human form,” yet the sage cannot? Puett suggests that *Huainanzi* “calls on humans to cultivate themselves so as to become increasingly divine”⁸²⁹ and that “anyone can achieve either state [either sagehood or the state of being a True Person] through self-cultivation.”⁸³⁰ Yet as to how the adept can overcome the barrier between the sage and the True Person, he does not give any clue. In fact, more tensions will arise if we compare Puett’s proposition here with the conclusion drawn in his later study on death in *Huainanzi*, in which he writes, “Most humans, of course, are not sages. ... The souls of most humans do not turn to nothingness but rather become ghosts.” Apparently, Puett is suggesting that the souls of the sages will turn to nothingness upon death. This conclusion would somewhat contradict his proposition that the sage is capable of self-divinization, for if the sage can become a spirit [and spirit does not die, as is commonly assumed in early China], he would no longer be subject to death, let alone be reduced to nothingness.

Admittedly, the fate of the spirit is a very complex issue and we need to be aware that there are natural celestial spirits as well as human ancestral spirits in the pantheon of early China. Human ancestral spirits do fall into oblivion or turn into ghosts if they are no

⁸²⁸ Ibid.

⁸²⁹ Puett, *To Become a God*, 283.

⁸³⁰ Puett, *To Become a God*, 285.

longer commemorated or receive sacrifices. However, when he states that the sages can become spirits through self-cultivation, Puett certainly does not mean they become the ancestral spirits upon death, for as he suggests, the sages are beyond the sacrificial system. Thus Puett still cannot escape the suspicion of being self-contradictory by suggesting that the sage may achieve self-divinization in an early book and proposing that the sage would die and be reduced to nothingness upon death in a later article, unless he specifies that by self-divinization he means only the partial attainment of divine insight and potency.⁸³¹ In all, by pointing out these contradictions in Puett's studies, I call attention not only to the complexity of the picture, but also to the division between the sage and the True Person, which is a recurrent theme in *Huainanzi*, but has not received enough scholarly attention.

In fact, the tensions in Puett's studies can be resolved if we push his theory of the bifurcated standard one step further. As has been discussed previously, Puett recognizes there is an insurmountable barrier between the sages and non-sages in *Huainanzi*. He writes, "The goal to cultivate oneself to become ever closer to the One [i.e. to be as refined as the spirits] is true only for the sages—as well as for those such as the True [Person] who are even more refined than the sages. For humans beneath the sages, ...the religious practices of the day [i.e. sacrifices to ancestral and natural spirits] were in fact created by the sages simply to control their behavior."⁸³² Thus, according to this later study by Puett, the attainment of self-divination is reserved only for the sages and the True Person, not for the non-sages.⁸³³

⁸³¹ For more on the sage's attainment of spirit-like insight and potency, see ns. 843-844 below.

⁸³² Puett, "Sages, the Past, and the Dead," 237-38.

⁸³³ In fact, this is a modification of his previous conclusion that "Anyone can achieve either state through self-cultivation." See Puett, *To become a God*, 285.

If we modify Puett's proposition a bit and propose that there is an equally insurmountable barrier between the sage and the True Person and that the difference between them lies not in the degree of refinement, but is rooted in the nature of their life and is predestined in the cosmogonic process, then we can easily explain why the True Person, and not the sage, can "transcend the form" and attain a union with the *dao*. By putting forward this proposition, we can also explain why two bifurcated views of human life are presented in *Huainanzi*: the depiction of human life as containing a formless, indestructible spirit that is born in the realm of *wu* and thus can transcend the physical form and the phenomenal world to return to the cosmic Ancestor [as is revealed in 7.8 and 14.1] is applicable to the True Person. The depiction of human life as formed through the combination of the refined and turbid *qi*, both of which are exhaustible and will be reduced to nothingness upon death [as is revealed in 7.1 and 2.2, etc.], on the other hand, is applicable to the sage. Because of the division in the formation of their life, the sage and the True Person, though both being exemplars practicing self-cultivation aimed at human perfection, exhibit fundamental differences in several key aspects.

To support this proposition, let us examine the "Jingshen" chapter, which contains detailed depiction of the sage and the True Person. The "Jingshen" contains two parts, the first part [sections 7.1-7.7] presents the sage's vision of life and death and describes how the sage practices self-cultivation. The second part delineates the features of the True Person [sometimes called the Ultimate Person] and his version of self-cultivation.

The major characteristics of the sage are 1) He is modeled on Heaven 2) His methods of self-cultivation involve the attending to both physical and spiritual aspects of life 3) He calmly accepts his fate of death, which entails both physical and spiritual

destruction. Immediately following the opening cosmogony that describes human life as taking shape in the stage of differentiation and consisting of a Heavenly part and an Earthly part, section 7.1 presents the sage as one who strictly follows the Heavenly order: “For this reason, the sages model themselves on Heaven, accord with their genuine responses, ...They take Heaven as father, Earth as mother, yin and yang as warp, the four seasons as weft.” 聖人法天順情...以天為父，以地為母，陰陽為綱，四時為紀。⁸³⁴

In fact, the sage’s life is portrayed as a microcosmic representation of Heaven.

7.2 故頭之圓也象天，足之方也象地。天有四時、五行、九解、三百六十六日，人亦有四支、五藏、九竅、三百六十六節。天有風雨寒暑，人亦有取與喜怒。
Therefore, the roundness of the head is the image of Heaven; the squareness of human feet is in the image of Earth. Heaven has four seasons, five phrases, nine regions and 366 days. Humans have four limbs, five orbs, nine apertures, and 366 joints. Heaven has wind, rain, cold, and heat; humans have taking, giving, joy, and anger.⁸³⁵

The correlation between the sage and Heaven, as a recurring theme of *Huainanzi*, also appears in several other chapters.⁸³⁶ The sage not only models himself on Heaven, but also is interconnected with Heaven.

1.18 聖人處之，不為愁悴怨懟，而不失其所以自樂也。是何也？則內有以通於天機，而不以貴賤、貧富、勞役失其志德者也。

Sages live in places like this, but they do not make them worried or angry or make them lose what makes them content on their own. What are the reasons for this? Because they intrinsically have the means to penetrate to the Mechanism of Heaven, and they do not allow honor and debasement, poverty, or wealth to make them weary and lose their awareness of their Potency.⁸³⁷

20.1-20.4 天設日月，列星辰，調陰陽，張四時... 聖人象之... 故聖人懷天氣，抱天心，執中含和。

⁸³⁴ *Huainanzi jishi*, 504, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 241.

⁸³⁵ *Huainanzi jishi*, 507-508, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 242.

⁸³⁶ The implication of the sage’s relationship with Heaven will be further discussed in part 3 of this chapter.

⁸³⁷ *Huainanzi jishi*, 78-79, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 73.

Heaven established the sun and moon, arranged the stars and planets, harmonized the yin and yang, and displaced the four seasons.... Sages take it as their model.... Thus sages embrace the *qi* of Heaven and enfold the heart of Heaven, grasp centrality and embody harmony.⁸³⁸

The sage's methods of self-cultivation are mainly covered in section 7.4: he moderates his sense perceptions, eliminates desires, and does not let the inner viscera be disturbed or the blood and *qi* be agitated, so as to keep his Quintessential Spirit inside his body.⁸³⁹

7.4 使耳目精明玄達而無誘慕，氣志虛靜恬愉而省嗜欲，五藏定寧充盈而不泄，精神內守形骸而不外越...

But if you make your ears and eyes totally clear and profoundly penetrating and not enticed by external things; if your vital energy and attention are empty, tranquil, still, and serene and you eliminate lusts and desires; if the Five Orbs are stable, reposed, replete and full and not leaking [the vital energies]; if your Quintessential Spirit is preserved within your physical frame and does not flow out; ...⁸⁴⁰

The passage below explains why the sage has to attend to his external sense organs, inner viscera, and the blood and *qi* flowing throughout the body.

7.4 夫孔竅者，精神之戶牖也，而氣志者，五藏之使候也。耳目淫于聲色之樂，則五藏搖動而不定矣；五藏搖動而不定，則血氣滔蕩而不休矣；血氣滔蕩而不休，則精神馳騁於外而不守矣；精神馳騁於外而不守，則禍福之至，雖如丘山，無由識之矣。

The apertures of perception are the portals of the Spirit. The *qi* and intention are the emissaries and servants of the Five Orbs. When the eyes and ears are enticed by the joys of sound and color, then the Five Orbs oscillate and are not stable. When the Five Orbs oscillate and are not stable, then the blood and *qi* are agitated and not at rest. When the blood and *qi* are agitated and not at rest, the Spirit courses out [through the eyes and ears] and is not preserved. When the spirit courses out and is not preserved, then when either good fortune or bad fortune arrives, although it would be of the sizes of hills and mountains, one has no way to recognize it.⁸⁴¹

A previously discussed passage from “Yuandao” 1.21 describes how the Quintessential Spirit may leak out of the body and become gradually sapped till it is

⁸³⁸ *Huainanzi jishi*, 1373-78, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 795-98.

⁸³⁹ See *Huainanzi jishi*, 7.509-14; Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 243-45.

⁸⁴⁰ *Huainanzi jishi*, 513, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 244.

⁸⁴¹ *Huainanzi jishi*, 512, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 244.

eventually exhausted.⁸⁴² This passage echoes that “Yuandao” passage and offers a detailed account of how the Quintessential Spirit may course out of the body. It depicts a picture in which several spiritual and physical elements are interconnected and integrated into a seamless web: stimulation of the exterior sense organs will impact the stability of the inner viscera. Oscillation of the inner viscera in turn stirs up the blood and *qi*. Finally, agitation of blood and *qi* will cause the Quintessential Spirit to gallop out of the body 馳騁於外 through its apertures.⁸⁴³ Therefore, the sage should manage to keep all these calm and still so as to securely lodge the Quintessential Spirit inside the body. The reason why the sage cherishes both physical and spiritual components of life, without squandering them in unnecessary physical or mental activities, is stated below.

7.6 形勞而不休則蹶，精用而不已則竭。是故聖人貴而尊之，不敢越也。

When the physical form toils without rest, it becomes exhausted; when the Quintessence is used unceasingly, it runs out. Thus sages honor and esteem them and do not dare to overuse them.⁸⁴⁴

The sage’s vision of life here is exactly the same as that reflected in the “Shuzhen” 2.2, which sees the spirit and the body as depletable resources. Attending to both spiritual and physical aspects of life, the sage’s self-cultivation is reminiscent of the inner cultivation of “Neiye.” The benefits of such cultivation are also similar to the holistic benefits presented in the “Neiye.” As a result of his practice of self-cultivation, the sage is able 1) to maintain physical health and mental equanimity, as seen in the sentence “anxiety and worry cannot

⁸⁴² See n. 788 above.

⁸⁴³ The nine apertures, alternatively translated into orifices, include eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, and the sexual and anal organs.

⁸⁴⁴ *Huainanzi jishi*, 520, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 247. Translation with modifications.

enter, and aberrant vital energy cannot seep in” 憂患不能入也，而邪氣不能襲，⁸⁴⁵ 2) to gain even sharper perception than what is required by the ordinary lore of prognostication to discern fortune and misfortune, and attain profound insight that allows him to “gaze back beyond bygone ages and look further than things that are to come” 望於往世之前，而視於來事之後，⁸⁴⁶ and 3) to attain the spirit-like power that enables him to succeed in all fields of endeavor: “When you are spirit-like, with vision, there is nothing unseen; with hearing, there is nothing unheard; with actions, there is nothing incomplete” 以視無不見，以聽無不聞也，以為無不成也。⁸⁴⁷

Even though the sage has attained spirit-like insight and potency, he still conforms to Heavenly order, surrenders to fate and adapts to the time. “Thus sages adapt to the times and are at peace with their station in life; they conform to their age and so find happiness in their calling” 是故聖人因時以安其位，當世而樂其業。⁸⁴⁸ While *Zhuangzi* adopts the metaphor of the smith’s metal to convey the sage’s readiness to surrender to fate and to be at peace with his time 安時而處順，⁸⁴⁹ *Huainanzi* adopts the metaphor of pottery and water to convey a similar notion:

⁸⁴⁵ *Huainanzi jishi*, 7.511, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 244.

⁸⁴⁶ *Huainanzi jishi*, 7.513, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 244.

⁸⁴⁷ *Huainanzi jishi*, 7.511, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 243.

⁸⁴⁸ *Huainanzi jishi*, 7.519, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 246.

⁸⁴⁹ The metal metaphor occurs in Zilai’s 子來 speech in the “Da zongshi,” “When a skilled smith is casting metal, if the metal should leap up and say, ‘I insist upon being made into a Moye!’ he would surely regard it as very inauspicious metal indeed. Now having had the audacity to take on human form once, if I should say, ‘I don’t want to be anything but a man! Nothing but a man!’, the Creator would surely regard me as a most inauspicious sort of person. So now I think of heaven and earth as a great furnace, and the Creator as a skilled smith. Where could he sned me that would not be all right? 今之大冶鑄金，金踊躍曰“我且必為鑄鏹”，大冶必以為不祥之金。今一犯人之形，而曰“人耳人耳”，夫造化者必以為不祥之人。今一以天地為大鑪，以造化為大冶，惡乎往而不可哉！ See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.245, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 85.

7.5 譬猶陶人之埴埴也，其取之地而已為盆盎也，與其未離於地也無以異，其已成器而破碎漫瀾而復歸其故也，與其為盆盎亦無以異矣。夫臨江之鄉，居人汲水以浸其園，江水弗憎也；苦洿之家，決洿而注之江，洿水弗樂也。是故其在江也，無以異其浸園也；其在洿也，亦無以異其在江也。

The way in which what fashions and transforms us takes hold of things can be compared with the way in which the potter molds his clay. The earth that he has taken hold of and made into bowls and pots is no different from the earth before it had been taken from the ground. The earth that remains after he has made the vessels and then smashed them to pieces and thoroughly soaked them with water so that they return to their cause is no different from the earth that had been in the bowls and pots that had existed earlier. Now the people who live along the banks of a river draw water from it to irrigate their gardens, but the water in the river does not resent it. The families who live near filthy ponds break through their banks and drain them into the river, but the water from these ponds does not rejoice in this. Thus there is no difference between the water in the river and the water irrigating gardens, and there is also no difference between the water in the ponds and the water in the river.⁸⁵⁰

Here the pottery metaphor conveys the sage's vision of life and death. Like the earth being soaked in water and molded into pottery, life is nothing but the material substances assembled together and reshaped into a new form. Like the pottery broken into pieces of earth, death is nothing but the dispersion of material substances. As Michael Puett points out, "humans are of the same substance as the rest of the cosmos, and any one individual is simply a momentary rearrangement of that substance."⁸⁵¹ The water metaphor, on the other hand, conveys the sage's attitude toward death: he neither rejoices in life nor resents death. The text further develops this theme by stating that the sage sees life and death as being equal, subject and objects being the same 然則我亦物也，物亦物也. Neither hankering for life nor resenting death, he willingly flows wherever Heaven leads him.

7.5 夫造化者既以我為坯矣，將無所違之矣.... 其生我也不強求已，殺我也不強求止。欲生而不事，憎死而不辭，賤之而弗憎，貴之而弗喜，隨其天資而安之不極。

Because what fashions and transforms us treats me as an unfired brick, I have no way to defy it.... It gives me life, but not because I intentionally seek it. It takes my life away, but not because I intentionally seek an end. Desire life, but do not strive for it. Detest death, but do not refuse it.

⁸⁵⁰ *Huainanzi jishi*, 518, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 246.

⁸⁵¹ Puett, *To Become a God*, 278.

Honor it, but do not rejoice in it. Follow your heavenly endowment and be at peace until you develop it to the fullest.⁸⁵²

Exactly because he is not attached to life, the sage is able to live out the Heavenly allotted life span.

7.5 夫人之所以不能終其壽命，而中道夭于刑戮者，何也？以其生生之厚。夫惟能無以生為者，則所以修得生也。

Why is it that common people are not able to complete the full course of their lives and, along the way, die in the midway by execution? It is because they set too much store in living. Now only those who are able to not make living their concern are able to maintain life.⁸⁵³

Another reason why the sage can live out his allotted life span, according to the passage below, is that he can have his spirit securely lodged in the body.

7.6 是故聖人...恬愉虛靜，以終其命...魂魄處其宅，而精神守其根，死生無變於己，故曰至神。

“For this reason, sages ... Calm and still, empty and tranquil, by this they reach the end of their life spans. ... Their ethereal and corporeal souls are settled in their dwelling; their Quintessence and spirit are preserved in their root. Death and life do not alter them. Therefore we say they are supremely spirit-like.”⁸⁵⁴

These are all familiar Zhuangzian themes that we have encountered in chapter 3. Therefore, as Michael Puett points out, the authors of “Jingshen” “build on the texts like the ‘Neiye’ and ‘Xinshu’ to develop their understanding of the sage ... but they reinterpret this previous literature within a generally Zhuangzian framework.”⁸⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the sages in “Jingshen” are different from the Zhuangzian exemplars in a very important aspect: Although both conform to Heaven and surrender to fate, the Zhuangzian exemplars,

⁸⁵² *Huainanzi jishi*, 515-16, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 245-46.

⁸⁵³ *Huainanzi jishi*, 514-15, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 245. Translation with modifications.

⁸⁵⁴ *Huainanzi jishi*, 520, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 247.

⁸⁵⁵ Puett, *To Become a God*, 283.

through their persistent practice of spiritual cultivation, are able to transcend the physical form and maintain eternal spiritual existence in union with the Ancestor, whereas the “Jingshen” sages neither aim at nor attain such transcendence. Death for the Zhuangzian exemplars entails the termination of physical life, which does not affect the integrity of the spirit. In contrast, the sage in the “Jingshen” chapter is not depicted as possessing “a never-dying *xin*” as the Zhuangzian sage does. Nor is the “Jingshen” sage able to transcend Heaven and his physical form. In fact, unlike the dualistic life presented in *Zhuangzi*, life for the “Jingshen” sage is monistic, consisting of different material substances [i.e., the light and turbid *qi*] integrated and reshaped into a whole, as is indicated by the pottery metaphor. After all, it is hard to imagine a soul-like being departing from the pottery as it breaks into pieces of earth.

Nonetheless, the sage can calmly accept his fate when confronted with such bleak picture of total destruction. He does not fear death, but can instead accept it with equanimity when his Heavenly allotted life span comes to an end. Thus if “life and death cannot alter him” 死生無變於己 in *Zhuangzi* entails that the exemplar has a spiritual core unaffected by death at the physical level, then the same phrase in the above cited “Jingshen” passage indicates that consideration over life and death, for the sage, can neither bring about joy nor arouse fear, i.e., cannot disturb his peace of mind.

Who truly resembles the Zhuangzian exemplar in *Huainanzi* is the True Person [also termed the Ultimate Person] depicted in the second part of “Jingshen.” Here it should be noted that there are different appellations for the human exemplar in *Zhuangzi*: *shengren*

聖人 (the sage),⁸⁵⁶ *zhenren* 真人 (True Person),⁸⁵⁷ *zhiren* 至人 (Ultimate Person),⁸⁵⁸ or *shenren* 神人 (Spirit Person).⁸⁵⁹ There is no essential difference between the sage and the rest of human exemplars and thus these terms can somewhat be interchangeable in *Zhuangzi*. In *Huainanzi*, however, the True Person is fundamentally different from the sage. The passage below discusses the features of the True Person, and his self-cultivation techniques.

7.7 所謂真人者也，性合於道也。...是故死生亦大矣，而不為變。雖天地覆育，亦不與之掎抱矣。審乎無瑕，而不與物糅；見事之亂，而能守其宗。⁸⁶⁰ 若然者，正肝膽，遺耳目⁸⁶¹，心志專于內，通達耦于一，居不知所為，行不知所之，渾然而往，遽然而來，形若槁木，心若死灰。忘其五藏，損其形骸。

Those whom we call the True Person are people whose inborn nature is merged with the Way.... Therefore, [the demarcation between] death and life is great, but the [alteration between them] cannot not change them. Although Heaven and Earth support and nourish, they are not protected by them. They discern the flawless and do not get mixed up with things. While seeing the chaos of affairs, they are able to preserve their origin. Beings like these correct their liver and bladder and cast aside ears and eyes. Their mental activity is concentrated internally and penetrates through to comport with the one. At rest, they have no objectives; in motion, they set no goals. Artlessly they go forth; peacefully they come back. Their bodies are like withered wood; their minds are like dead ashes. They forget the Five Orbs and lose their physical frames.⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁶ See chapter 3, ns. 614, 663, 677, 704, 767.

⁸⁵⁷ See chapter 3, n. 686.

⁸⁵⁸ See chapter 3, ns. 599, 601, 614, 659, 681, 684, 739.

⁸⁵⁹ See chapter 3, n. 614.

⁸⁶⁰ Compare this with a parallel passage in the “Dechong fu” chapter of *Zhuangzi*: “[The demarcation between] death and life is great, but he would not be changed by them. Though Heaven collapsed and Earth subsided, he would not be lost [in the process]. He sees clearly into that which is self-sustaining and does not change together with things; he names the transformation of things and holds fast to their Ancestor.” 死生亦大矣，而不得與之變，雖天地覆墜，亦將不與之遺。審乎無假，而不與物遷，命物之化，而守其宗也。 See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 5.171. Translation my own.

⁸⁶¹ This is almost a verbatim copy of the phrase “They forget live and gall, cast aside eyes and ears” 忘其肝膽，遺其耳目 in the “Da zongshi” chapter of *Zhuangzi*. See *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 248, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 87.

⁸⁶² *Huainanzi jishi*, 521-22, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 248. Translation with minor modifications.

Holding fast to the Ancestor 守其宗, the True Person attains a status wherein physical death cannot affect him, material objects cannot influence him, and Heaven and Earth cannot confine him. This is achieved through his distinct means of self-cultivation. In contrast to the sage's attendance to both physical and spiritual aspects of life through moderation, self-cultivation for the True Person involves a repudiation of the physical components of life: he casts aside the external sensory organs, forgets the viscera and unifies his mind with the One. Several key phrases in this passage are reminiscent of the Zhuangzian self-cultivation. The practice of sitting-and-effacing (*zuowang* 坐忘) in *Zhuangzi* involves elimination of eyesight and hearing 黜聰明, whereas the True Person here “rejects the use of ears and eyes” 遺耳目. The *zuowang* adept “smashes his own limbs and trunk” 墮肢體 and “casts off form” 離形, whereas the True Person here “loses his physical framework” 損其形骸. The *zuowang* adept “does away with knowledge” 去知, whereas the True Person here “does not know what to do or where to go” 居不知所為, 行不知所之. As a result of these practices, the True Person's body becomes like withered wood and his mind like dead ashes. With their *locus classicus* being the “Qiwulun” chapter of *Zhuangzi*, the image of withered wood and dead ashes further proves that what the True Person practices is essentially the Zhuangzian version of self-cultivation.

Adhering to the principle of non-action,⁸⁶³ extinguishing bodily concerns, and unifying his mind, the True Person attains a higher level of potency than the sage. If the

⁸⁶³ In *Huainanzi* 7.7, the True Person is described as one who “wander aimlessly in their taskless calling” 消搖於無事之業; who “respond only when stimulated; move only when pressed, and go forth only when it is unavoidable” 感而應, 迫而動, 不得已而往; who “are tranquil and have no thoughts or concerns” 清

sage is able to sharpen his senses and succeed in whatever he performs, then the True Person can attain the same perception and achieve the same goal even without employing sense organs or taking any action, for he “knows without studying; sees without looking; completes without acting; and differentiates without judging” 不學而知，不視而見，不為而成，不治而辯。⁸⁶⁴ If the sage treasures both his physical and spiritual components of life and carefully moderates his physical and mental activities so as to live out his Heavenly allotted life span, the True Person, who is not bothered with the preservation of his physical form, possesses the magic power to stay impervious to cosmic transformation and remain unharmed when confronted with natural disasters.⁸⁶⁵ What is more, unlike the sage, who tries to preserve his Quintessential Spirit within the body, the True Person has no need to safeguard his spirit within, for his spirit can be restored even if it is agitated and flows out: “They make the spirit overflow, without losing its fullness” 使神滔蕩而不失其充。⁸⁶⁶ In sum, the True Person can completely do away with his body. He does not rely on his body to perceive the world; his spirit does not need to dwell in the body to be sustained and restored. Shaking off the body, he is no longer subject to the control of anything in the material world.

靖而無思慮; and who “have vital essence but do not expend it and have spirit but do not use it” 有精而不使，有神而不行。See *Huainanzi jishi*, 521-25, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 248-49.

⁸⁶⁴ *Huainanzi jishi*, 522, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 249.

⁸⁶⁵ In the following passage from “Jingshen,” the True Person is described as: “Great marshes may catch fire, but it cannot burn them. Great rivers may freeze over, but it cannot chill them. Great thunder may shake the mountains, but it cannot startle them. Great storms may darken the sun, but it cannot harm them.” 大澤焚而不能熱，河、漢涸而不能寒也。大雷毀山而不能驚也，大風晦日而不能傷也。See *Huainanzi jishi*, 523, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 249. For similar motif in *Zhuangzi*, see chapter 3, ns. 681 and 740.

⁸⁶⁶ *Huainanzi jishi*, 527; Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 250.

The distinction between the sage and the True Person also lies in the different realms they can respectively reach in their roaming, as the following passage indicates.

2.9 是故聖人內修道術，而不外飾仁義，不知耳目之宜，而游於精神之和。若然者，下揆三泉，上尋九天，橫廓六合，揲貫萬物，此聖人之游也。若夫真人，則動溶於至虛，而游於滅亡之野。騎蜚廉而從敦圉。馳於外方，休乎宇內，燭十日而使風雨，臣雷公，役夸父，妾宓妃，妻織女，天地之間何足以留其志！

For this reason, sages inwardly cultivate the techniques of the Way and do not adorn themselves externally with Humaneness and Rightness. They are unaware of the demands of the ears and eyes and wander in the harmony of the Quintessential Spirit. Those who are so, below survey the three springs, above inspect the nine heavens, broadly span the six coordinates, bind and unite the myriad things. Such are the wanderings of the sages. The True Man flow into utmost emptiness and wander in the wilds of extinction; they ride the gryphon and follow the sphinx; they gallop beyond the bounds [of the world]; and rest beneath the roof [of the cosmos]. They use ten suns as a lamp and command the wind and rain. They subjugate the Duke of Thunder, employ Kuafu, take Mi Fei as a concubine, take the Weaver Girl as a wife. What between Heaven and Earth could be worthy of their ambition? ⁸⁶⁷

The sage's journey is limited within the framework of Heaven and Earth. The sage's wandering, though spanning the vast universe, cannot transcend the phenomenal world to reach the realm of the formless. The True Person's wandering, on the other hand, can reach the realm of utmost emptiness 至虛 and the wilds of extinction 滅亡之野. He can thus transcend the cosmos of formed beings and roam beyond the bounds of the phenomenal world. His intent and sphere of influence go far beyond the framework of Heaven and Earth.

A similar account of the True Person's spiritual roaming is given in this passage:

2.12 ...此真人之道也。若然者，陶冶萬物，與造化者為人，天地之間，宇宙之內，莫能夭遏。夫化生者不死，而化物者不化。神經於驪山、太行而不能難，入于四海九江而不能濡，處小隘而不塞，橫扁天地之間而不窳。

...This is the Way of the True Person. Those who are like this shape and forge the myriad things and in their being human are conjoined with what creates and transforms. Amid Heaven and Earth, in space and time, nothing can destroy or impede them. What generates life is not life; what transforms things is not transformation. Their spirit: cross Mount Li or the Taihang [Mountains]

⁸⁶⁷ *Huainanzi jishi*, 129, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 97-98.

and have no difficulty; enter the Four Seas or the Nine Rivers and cannot be trapped, lodge in narrow defines and cannot be obstructed; spread across the realm of Heaven and Earth and are not stretched.⁸⁶⁸

The True Person is said to possess a spirit that can neither be endangered by high mountains nor soaked by deep water. This is reminiscent of the True Person described in the “Da zongshi” chapter of *Zhuangzi* as those who “could climb the high places and not be frightened, could enter the water and not get wet” 登高不慄，入水不濡。⁸⁶⁹ The reason why the True Person’s spirit cannot be affected by anything in the material world is that he is “conjoined with what creates and transforms” 與造化者為人. Union with the *zao hua zhe* [i.e., the *dao*] also grants him the privilege of participating in shaping and forging the myriad things 陶冶萬物.

The second part of the “Jingshen” also contains a depiction of the Ultimate Person (*zhiren* 至人). The essential features of the Ultimate Person are summarized in the following passage.

7.10 夫至人倚不拔之柱，行不關之途，稟不竭之府，學不死之師。... 生不足以掛志，死不足以幽神，屈伸俯仰，抱命而婉轉。禍福利害，千變萬紜，孰足以患心！若此人者，抱素守精，蟬蛻蛇解，游於太清，輕舉獨往，忽然入冥。鳳凰不能與之儷，而況斥鷃乎！

The Ultimate Person lean on the unbudgeable pillar, walk on the unblocked road, draw from the inexhaustible storehouse, and study with the undying Teacher. ... Living is not sufficient to preoccupy their thinking. Dying is not sufficient to occlude their spirit. Crouching and stretching, looking up and down, they embrace their life span and delight in its revolutions. Bad and good fortune, benefit and harm, a thousand alterations and myriad turns: Which of these is sufficient to disturb their minds? People like them embrace simplicity, guard Essence; like cicadas molting and snakes shedding their skin [they leave this world and], they wander in Grand Purity. They lightly rise up and wander alone and suddenly enter the Obscure. Even the phoenix cannot be their match, how much less the barn swallow!⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁸ *Huainanzi jishi*, 149-50, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 103. Translation with minor modifications.

⁸⁶⁹ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, 6.203, Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 78.

⁸⁷⁰ *Huainanzi jishi*, 537, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 252-53. Translation with minor modifications.

The first part of this passage generally builds on the Zhuangzian vision of the perfected person as one who refuses to let concerns of benefit and harm, material transformations, and even life and death, to disturb his spiritual core. The second part of this passage discusses explicitly the attainment of spiritual liberation. The image of the cicada slough 蟬蛻 and snakeskin 蛇解, though being typical metaphors for physical immortality in later Daoist religion, conveys in this context a picture of the spirit being liberated from the body.⁸⁷¹ The liberated spirit then wanders in the realm beyond the phenomenal world: *taiqing* 太清 (Grand Purity), is listed in parallel with *wuxing* 無形 (the formless) in *Zhuangzi*. *Ming* 冥, the dark and obscure, is seen in *Zhuangzi* as that from which the bright and light was born.⁸⁷² They both convey a cosmogonic stage before the physical world took shape. In addition to the terms *taiqing* and *ming*, the account that (even) a phoenix cannot be his match 鳳凰不能與之儷 is indicative of the nature of spiritual roaming: for one's spirit to

⁸⁷¹ Similar notion of spirit being released from the form (*xingjie* 形解) occurs in the early Han Mawangdui medical texts of “Shiwen” 十問. For discussion on *xingjing*, see Donald Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature: The Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts*, (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1997), 398. For discussion on spiritual liberation in the “Shiwen”, see Puett, *To Become a God*, 205-14, esp. 211. The metaphor of cicada sloughing shell are appropriated in later Daoist religion to convey the notion of *shijie* 尸解, corpse deliverance. And mostly likely because of its association with *shijie*, which conveys the attainment of immortality with a transformed, perfected body, some scholars hold that the cicada metaphor here should not be understood as the liberation of the spirit from the body. For example, Ursula Angelika Cedzich writes, “And even if immortality specialists had ever speculated about the liberation of a spirit or soul from the body (which, I believe, is doubtful), we can be sure that the constraints of their own conceptual framework, so eloquently pointed out by Wang Chong, prompted them to refine and reinterpret the cicada motif.” See Ursula Angelika Cedzich, “Corpse Deliverance, Substitute Bodies, Name Change, and Feigned Death,” 17. Given that there is no evidence that the concept of corpse deliverance existed in the second century B.C., and, as previously discussed, the notion that spirit is separable from the body has already been attested in *Zhuangzi* and *Huainanzi*, I insist that the cicada metaphor conveys exactly the liberation of the spirit from the body in this context. For more on *xingjie* and *shijie*, see chapter 1, ns. 187-193.

⁸⁷² See chapter 3, n. 664.

travel beyond the realm of phoenix,⁸⁷³ one should possess a greater potency than that needed to become an immortal within the framework of Heaven and Earth.

The Ultimate Person's spiritual journey recurs in the passage below.

7.15 至人...處大廓之宇，遊無極之野，登太皇，馮太一，玩天地於掌握之中。

The Perfected rest in the vast universe, roam in the country of the limitless, ascend Tai Huang, and ride Tai Yi. They play with Heaven and Earth in the palms of their hands.⁸⁷⁴

A similar description of such spiritual journey made by the Great Man, *dazhangfu* 大丈夫 can be found in “Yuandao.”

1.4 是故大丈夫...以天為蓋，以地為輿，四時為馬，陰陽為御，乘雲陵霄，與造化者俱。縱志舒節，以馳大區。可以步而步，可以驟而驟。令雨師灑道，使風伯掃塵；電以為鞭策，雷以為車輪。上游於霄霓之野，下出於無垠之門，劉覽偏照，複守以全。經營四隅，還反於樞。

Therefore, the Great Man calmly has no worries, and placidly has no anxieties. He takes Heaven as his canopy; Earth as his carriage; the four seasons as his steeds, and yin and yang as his charioteers. He rides the clouds and soars through the sky to become a companion of the power that fashions and transforms things. Letting his imagination soar and relaxing his grip, he gallops through the vast vault [of the heavens]. When appropriate, he canters [his steeds]. When appropriate, he gallops them. He orders the master of rain to moisten the byways, and directs the master of wind to sweep away the dust. He takes lightning as his lash and thunder as his chariot wheels. Above, he roams freely in the misty and murky realms. Below, he emerges from the gateway of the boundless. Having observed all around and illuminated everything, he returns to guarding [the One] in order to remain whole. He superintends the four corners [of Earth], yet always turns back to the central axis.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷³ *Fenghuang* 鳳凰 is a mystic bird conventionally regarded as an animal helper for the spiritual ascension to Heaven. And it should be noted that *feng* 鳳 is originally the wind God. For more on the animal helpers, see the discussion on pages 33-34 in chapter 1.

⁸⁷⁴ *Huainanzi jishi*, 551, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 259.

⁸⁷⁵ *Huainanzi jishi*, 18-22, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 52. Translation with minor modifications.

Unlike the image of *tianmen* 天門 (Gate of Heaven), which represents the gate to the Heavenly realm or the land of immortality in Han tomb art,⁸⁷⁶ “the gateway of the boundless” 無垠之門, together with the phrase “the field of the limitless” 無極之野, suggests that the spiritual journey portrayed here has transcended the limit of Heaven and Earth and entered the realm beyond the phenomenal world.⁸⁷⁷ Unlike the sage described in *Huainanzi* 7.1, who accords with the Heavenly order and succeeds in worldly affairs, the Ultimate Person or the Great Man 大丈夫 described above reigns over Heaven and Earth, controls yin and yang, directs the spirits, and regulates all natural phenomena.

What is more, the Ultimate [or Great Man] is described very similarly to the two Primordial Spirits (*ershen* 二神) who established Heaven and Earth in the cosmogony presented at the beginning of “Yuandao” and “Jingshen.” Both the Great Man and the Primordial Spirits are characterized by their holding fast to the *dao*. The Primordial Spirits “grasped the handles of the way” 得道之柄,⁸⁷⁸ whereas the Great Man is said to “turn back to the central axis” 還反於樞 and “become a companion of the power that fashions

⁸⁷⁶ It should be noted that the characters 天門 also occur on some pictorial representations of the Gate of Heaven. For discussions on *tianman*, see chapter 1, ns. 174-175.

⁸⁷⁷ The spiritual roaming here is preceded by a description of the journey within the framework of Heaven and Earth. “In ancient times when Feng Yi and Da Bing who rode chariots, they rose up in thunder carts and entered the cloudy rainbow. They roamed in the ethereal mists and galloped in the hazy and nebulous. Going farther and farther and higher and higher, they reached the pinnacle. They traversed the frost and snow but left no tracks. Illuminated by the light of the sun, they cast no shadows. Spiraling around, they ascended the whirlwind. Traversing mountains and rivers, they strode over Mount Kunlun. Pushing through the Chang He [gate] they surged through the gateway of Heaven.昔者馮夷、大丙之御也，乘雲車，入雲霓，遊微霧，驚恍惚，歷遠彌高以極往。經霜雪而無跡，照日光而無景。扶搖挾抱羊角而上，經紀山川，蹈騰昆侖，排闥闔，淪天門。” In contrast to the spiritual roaming that transcends Heaven and Earth, the journey of Feng Yi and Da Bing, which traverses the mythical lands and mountains, eventually ends at the gate of Heaven. The description of two types of roaming in parallel in several chapters indicates that the contrast between two types of exemplars are intentionally emphasized by the compilers of *Huainanzi*. See *Huainanzi jishi*, 12-16, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 51.

⁸⁷⁸ *Huainanzi jishi*, 4-5, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 49.

and transforms things” 與造化者俱. Also, same verbs are adopted to describe actions of the two Spirits and the Ultimate Person. The Primordial Spirits are described as “establishing Heaven and constructing Earth” 經天營地⁸⁷⁹ and “pacifying the four directions” 以撫四方,⁸⁸⁰ whereas the Great Person is said to “regulate the four corners” 經營四隅. The verbs *jing* 經 and *ying* 營 describe either the Primordial Spirits’ establishment of Heaven and Earth and arrangement of the cosmic order, or the Ultimate Person’s [or Great Man] regulation of all phenomena below Heaven. The adoption of similar wording to describe the Ultimate Person [or Great Man] and the Primordial Spirits suggests that this type of human exemplar may attain the same potency as the Primordial Spirits.

Referring back to the previously-discussed cosmogony in “Quanyan,” which holds that human spirit was born before the differentiation of *qi* into Heaven and Earth and the multifaceted phenomenal world, we find a cosmogonic grounding for this claim of self-divinization: human spirit [the spirit of the True Person, Ultimate Person or Great Man, to be exact] and the Primordial Spirits are born in parallel, directly out of the cosmic Ancestor, though the former is not seen to be involved in the differentiation that brings into being the

⁸⁷⁹ *Huainan jishi*, 503, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 240. Harold Roth’s translation of the “Jingshen” cosmogonic passage, which says, “one that established Heaven and the other that constructed Earth,” (in Major, et al.) suggests that he sees the two deities as that which created the cosmos. Michael Puett holds that “the cosmos is not actively constructed but emerges spontaneously, ... The spirits are themselves generated spontaneously...These spirits then actively plan and orient the cosmos.” Paul R. Goldin recognizes the ambiguities in this cosmogony and leaves open the possibility that the two deities may come after the existence of Heaven and Earth. He writes that “even if we prefer not to let the two gods create anything, their presence is still required to confer the order on Heaven and Earth that permits all the subsequent stages of cosmogony.” See John Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 240; Puett, *To Become a God*, 271; Paul R. Goldin, “The Myth That China Has No Creation Myth,” *Monumenta Serica* 56 (2008): 8. Truly, even if the two spirits did not create Heaven and Earth out of nothing (i.e., creation ex nihilo), they were still responsible for separating Heaven from Earth and making the universe as it currently is.

⁸⁸⁰ *Huainanzi jishi*, 4-5, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 49.

material world, while the latter is held responsible for laying out the cosmic framework. In fact, the second part of “Jingshen” does repeatedly evoke the theme of returning to the cosmic Ancestor. Building on the previous description of the True Person as one who holds fast to the Ancestor, the following passage sets the state of “not having divided from the Ancestor” 未始出其宗 as the ultimate goal of self-cultivation.

7.12 人大怒破陰，大喜墜陽，大憂內崩，大怖生狂。除穢去累，莫若未始出其宗，乃為大通。清目而不以視，靜耳而不以聽，鉗口而不以言，委心而不以慮。棄聰明而反太素，休精神而棄知故，覺而若昧，以生而若死，終則反本未生之時，而與化為一體。

When someone is extremely angry, it shatters his yin energy, and when someone is extremely happy, it collapses his yang energy. Great sorrow destroys his interior, and great fear drives him mad. If you wish to eliminate the dust [of daily living] and relinquish attachments, there is nothing better than [maintaining the state] as if you had never left your Ancestor. Thereupon you will become grandly pervasive. Purify your eyes and do not look with them; still your ears and do not hear with them; close your mouth and do not speak with it; relax your mind and do not think with it. Cast aside clever brilliance and return to Vast Simplicity; Rest your Quintessential Spirit and cast aside wisdom and artifice. Then, you will be awakened but seem to be obscured, will be [truly] alive but seem to be dead. In the end, you will return to the time before you were born and form one body with transformations.⁸⁸¹

This passage describes some essential techniques of self-cultivation, including complete abandonment of sensual perceptions and mental activities, as well as total elimination of cultural sophistication and human knowledge. Following these practices will help one to enter the state of being “as if asleep while awake” 覺而若昧 and “dead while alive” 生而若死.⁸⁸² The ultimate goal of such self-cultivation, however, is to return to the time before the arising of human life 反本未生之時 and to be united with the Ancestor.

⁸⁸¹ *Huainanzi jishi*, 544-45, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 255-56. Translation with minor modification.

⁸⁸² Note that this state is again reminiscent of the state of trance depicted in the “Quwu lun” chapter of *Zhuangzi*, with the body like withered wood and mind like dead ashes.

In sum, the True Person 真人 and the Ultimate Person 至人 [or Great Man 大丈夫] are portrayed in essentially the same way in *Huainanzi*. If the sage combines the features of the “Neiye” and Zhuangzian adepts, then the True Person and Ultimate Person [or Great Man] are described completely within a Zhuangzian framework. They practice essentially the same methods of self-cultivation. They may both remain unaffected by life and death at the physical level. They can transcend the realm of form to unite with the *dao*, which in turn grant them similar potency as the two Cosmic Spirits.

Finally, let us once again compare the sage and True Person in *Huainanzi* with the Zhuangzian exemplars and recapitulate the distinction between these human paragons in *Huainanzi* and *Zhuangzi*. Zhuangzian exemplars are called the sage, True Person, Ultimate Person, or Spirit Person on different occasions. But humans bearing these appellations in *Zhuangzi* are essentially the same. All of them are characterized by a complete conformity to Heaven, which eventually enables them to transcend Heaven and in turn assist Heaven through their spiritual merging with the *dao*.⁸⁸³ Whereas the sage and True Person [alternatively called Ultimate Person or Great Person] in *Huainanzi* exhibit fundamental differences in their nature of life, potency and methods of self-cultivation. The sage embodies Heavenly order, and, being confined in the realm of the form, cannot transcend Heaven to reach the cosmic Ancestor. He practices self-cultivation to securely lodge his spirit in the body so as to live out his Heavenly allotted life span. The True Person, on the other hand, possesses a spiritual part born directly out of the *dao* and can return to the *dao*.

⁸⁸³ For depiction of the Zhuangzian exemplar as first conforming to the Heavenly order and then being able to return to assist Heaven, see chapter 3, n. 738.

He practices self-cultivation so as to free his spirit from the yoke of the physical form to reach the formless realm of cosmic origin.

Part III The Sage, True Person, and their Relationships with Time and Cosmic Order

The difference between the Sage and True Person's potency in *Huainanzi* is most clearly exhibited in their relationship with time and cosmic order. As will be shown in the following discussion, time/age (*shi* 時 or *shi* 世) in *Huainanzi* is loaded with cosmic connotations: in a good time/age, the entire cosmos is in harmony and prosperity. In a bad time/age, however, Heaven and Earth are perverted and the entire cosmic order is disrupted. The sage cannot change time. When confronted with a perverted age, the sage can only cultivate himself but cannot exert any impact on the world, for he is both modeled on Heaven and confined by the Heavenly order. In contrast, the True Person can revert time and bring the entire cosmos back to order when he is confronted with a perverted age. This is because union with the cosmic Ancestor grants him the potency to directly control Heaven and Earth, and to change their courses.

The theme that the sage cannot change the time but can only adapt to it is repeatedly evoked in *Huainanzi*. The following quote from “Lanming” 覽冥 suggests that the sage should seize the opportune time to make grand achievements and bring order to the world.

6.9 夫聖人者，不能生時，時至而弗失也。

Now a sage cannot create [an opportune moment of] time. [But] when the [opportune] time comes, he does not miss it.⁸⁸⁴

⁸⁸⁴ *Huainanzi jishi*, 497, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 229.

Yet when times are bad, the sage's political ambitions will be thwarted, as is shown in the following sentence from “Renjian” 人間.

18.24 故聖人雖有其志，不遇其世，僅足以容身，何功名之可致也！

Thus even if the sage has ambition, if he does not meet with his era, his efforts will suffice only to preserve his person. What merit or reputation can he achieve?⁸⁸⁵

And as is elaborated in the passage below, whether the sage's way will prevail or not lies in the time he encounters.

2.14 逮至夏桀、殷紂，燔生人，辜諫者...當此之時，嶢山崩，三川涸，飛鳥斃翼，走獸擠腳。當此之時，豈獨無聖人哉？然而不能通其道者，不遇其世。夫鳥飛千仞之上，獸走叢薄之中，禍猶及之，又況編戶齊民乎？由此觀之，體道者不專在於我，亦有系於世矣。...古之聖人，其和愉寧靜，性也；其志得道行，命也。是故性遭命而後能行，命得性而後能明。

Coming to the age of [King] Jie of Xia and [King] Zhou of Yin, they cooked people alive, condemned remonstrators, ...During this time, tall mountains collapsed; three rivers dried up; flying birds snapped their wings; running beasts lost their hooves. How could it be that at this time alone there were no sages? However, they could not fulfill their Way because they did not meet their age. ... Seen from this [perspective], embodying the Way does not rest entirely with us; it is indeed also tied to the era [in which we live]. ...For the ancient sages, their harmony and tranquility were their nature; their achieving their ambition and practicing the Way were their destiny. For this reason, when nature meets destiny, only then can it be effective; when destiny attains nature, only then can it be clarified.⁸⁸⁶

Here we can find the direct link between time and the cosmic order. In the age of Jie and Zhou, the cosmos was so perverted that mountains collapsed and rivers dried up. Actually, similar associations are found throughout *Huainanzi*. In “Lanming,” the time of Jie is described as an age wherein “Spring and autumn recoiled from their [accustomed]

⁸⁸⁵ *Huainanzi jishi*, 1298, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 749.

⁸⁸⁶ *Huainanzi jishi*, 158-60, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 105-107.

harmonies; Heaven and Earth discarded their Potency” 春秋縮其和，天地除其德，⁸⁸⁷ whereas the age of the current Han Emperor is described as an age of great harmony and prosperity, the four seasons yielding their products accordingly.

6.9 逮至當今之時，天子在上位，持以道德，輔以仁義，...拱揖指麾而四海賓服，春秋冬夏皆獻其貢職...

Coming down to the present time, the Son of Heaven occupies his position on high, sustaining [his rule] with the Way and its Potency, supporting [his rule] with Humaneness and Rightness. He folds his hands and bows, gestures with his finger, and [all within] the Four Seas respectfully submit to him. Spring and Autumn, winter and summer, all offer up their goods in tribute to him.”⁸⁸⁸

The notion of good time and bad time is derived from the Confucian tradition, where it is associated mainly with political rather than cosmic order. In Analects 18.6, Confucius uttered the lamentation that the way does not prevail in his age.⁸⁸⁹ *Mencius* 2 B 13 records Mencius’ comments on the time and his fate:

曰：“彼一時，此一時也。五百年必有王者興，其間必有名世者。由周而來，七百有餘歲矣。以其數則過矣，以其時考之則可矣。夫天未欲平治天下也；如欲平治天下，當今之世，舍我其誰也？吾何為不豫哉？”

This is one time; that was another time. Every five hundred years a true King should arise, and in the interval there should arise one from whom an age takes its name. From Zhou to the present, it is over seven hundred years. The five hundred mark is passed; the time seems ripe. It must be that Heaven does not as yet wish to bring peace to the Empire. If it did, who is there in the present time other than myself? Why should I be unhappy?”⁸⁹⁰

According to Mencius, Heaven determines when a good era comes and the entire world is ordered. But Heaven’s will is not known to any human, and the sage can do nothing but wait patiently for the good time. Surely there have been cycles of good time and bad time

⁸⁸⁷ *Huainanzi jishi*, 485, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 227.

⁸⁸⁸ *Huainanzi jishi*, 497, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 229.

⁸⁸⁹ *Lunyu jishi*, 1270-71, Lau, *The Analects*, 184-85.

⁸⁹⁰ *Mengzi Zhengyi*, 309-11, Lau, *Mencius*, 99.

in history. Yet these precedents cannot be applicable to the present age, for the expected period has passed, but the good era has not arrived yet.

Huainanzi draws on the Mencian notion that the sage's way will prevail [i.e., Not only does the sage attain renown and merit, but also the world is in good order.] only if the time is ripe. But unlike *Mencius*, *Huainanzi* envisions the Heavenly order as directly related to the human sphere. In fact, the resonance between Heaven and man is a key concept in *Huainanzi*, especially in "Lanming."⁸⁹¹ Even ordinary people can affect the course of Heaven by concentrating the vital essence and storing up the spirit,⁸⁹² as in the following passage.

6.1 夫瞽師、庶女，位賤尚嚙，權輕飛羽，然而專精厲意，委務積神，上通九天，激厲至精。Now the blind music master and the Commoner Woman were of a [social] rank as lowly as swaying weeds; their [political] weight was as light as windblown feathers; yet by concentrating their essences and disciplining their intentions, abandoning their [mundane] responsibilities and storing up spirit [energy], upward, they penetrated to ninefold Heaven, rousing and putting into action the utmost essence.⁸⁹³

The following passage from "Benjing" 本經 even goes so far as to attribute the proper function of Heaven and Earth, yin and yang to the *qi* generated in the human sphere.

⁸⁹¹ For an excellent discussion on the theory of resonance, *ganying* 感應 in *Huainanzi*, see Charles le Blanc, *Huai-nan tzu: Philosophical Synthesis in Early Han Thought*.

⁸⁹² The theme of resonance between Heaven and man can also be found in other early Han texts such as the *Xinyu* 新語 by Lu Jia 陸賈 and Dong Zhongshu's 董仲舒 memorials to Emperor Wu recorded in the *Hanshu*. However, the power to impact Heaven is limited to the sovereign in the later two texts. See *Xinyu jiaozhu*, 155; *Hanshu* ch. 56, 340-41. See also n. 903 below.

⁸⁹³ *Huainanzi jishi*, 444-45, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 215. For more on a comprehensive discussion of this passage, see Anne Behnke Kinney, "Breaking through Heaven's Glass Ceiling: The Significance of the Commoner Woman of Qi in the 'Lan ming' Chapter of the *Huainanzi*," in *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China*, eds. Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 351-76.

8.2 天地之合和，陰陽之陶化萬物，皆乘人氣者也。是故上下離心，氣乃上蒸，君臣不和，五穀不為。

The concord and harmony of Heaven and Earth, and the yin-yang's transformation of the myriad things all depend on human *qi*. For this reason, when the hearts of high and low become estranged from each other, *qi* rises up like a vapor; when ruler and minister are not in harmony, the five grains do not yield [a harvest].⁸⁹⁴

Here one may wonder why, if even commoners can sometimes change Heaven's course and human *qi* can determine how well Heaven works, the sage cannot change his time and restore the proper Heavenly order. To answer this question, we need to consider the cosmic hierarchy and human hierarchy portrayed in *Huainanzi*.

In the cosmic hierarchy of *Huainanzi*, Heaven is below the *dao*, as is illustrated at the beginning of “Yuandao.”

1.1 夫道者，覆天載地，廓四方，栝八極，高不可際，深不可測，包裹天地，稟授無形。As for the *dao*: It covers Heaven and upholds Earth. It extends the four directions and divides the eight end points. So high, it cannot be reached. So deep, it cannot be fathomed. It embraces and enfolds Heaven and Earth. It endows and bestows the Formless.⁸⁹⁵

This depiction of the *dao* is very similar to that in the “Da zongshi” chapter of *Zhuangzi*. Like *Zhuangzi*, this passage sees the *dao* as the cosmic origin and foundation, greater and more primordial than Heaven and Earth. Unlike *Zhuangzi*, however, in the cosmological hierarchy depicted in the “Yuandao,” Heaven is not only below the *dao* but also below the two Primordial Spirits.

⁸⁹⁴ *Huainanzi jishi*, 565, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 271. Translation with modifications. He Ning 何寧 cites Zhuang Kuiji 莊達吉, who says that human *qi*, *renqi* 人氣 should be replaced by the unitary *qi*, *yiqi* 一氣. John Major adopts *yiqi* in his translation without offering a note on the divergence in different redactions. But seen from the context, especially the word *shigu* 是故, meaning therefore, that precedes the sentence that describes how estranged human relationship will cause human *qi* to go upward and affect the Heavenly order, I conclude that *renqi* fits the context better than *yiqi*. I suspect that *yiqi* might be adopted by later commentators or transmitters who disprove *Huainanzi* tendency to go so far as to grant humans the power to determine the cosmic order.

⁸⁹⁵ *Huainanzi jishi*, 2, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 49, 51.

1.2 泰古二皇，得道之柄，立於中央。神與化遊，以撫四方。是故能天運地滯...已雕已琢，還反于朴，無為為之而合于道，無為言之而通乎德，... 神托於秋豪之末，而大宇宙之總，其德優天地而和陰陽，節四時而調五行...

The two August Lords of high antiquity grasped the handle of the *dao* and stood in the center. Their spirits roamed amid all transformations and thereby pacified the four directions. As a result [of the two August Lords' actions] Heaven moved [upward] and the Earth settled down,...Having carved and having polished [things in the phenomenal world], they returned to the Unhewn. They acted non-actively and were united with the *dao*. They spoke non-actively and were suffused by its Potency. Their spirits could concentrate [on something as small as] the tip of an autumn air and something as vast as the totality of space and time. Their potency coordinated Heaven and Earth and harmonized yin and yang; moderated the four seasons and attuned the Five Phases...⁸⁹⁶

The two Primordial Spirits roam throughout the cosmos, conferring order on the physical world, causing Heaven and Earth to function properly, yin and yang to be in harmony, the four seasons to be moderated and the Five Phases to be attuned. Their potency to order the cosmos lies in their union with the *dao* 合于道. Having shaped the myriad things and put the cosmos in order, they “retreat to the unhewn” 還反于朴. Being able to join in the undifferentiated One thus grants the two spirits the potency to regulate Heaven and Earth.

Most important of all, the representation of Heaven in *Huainanzi* differs from that in *Zhuangzi* in the following respect: Heaven in *Zhuangzi*, which represents the *dao* in the phenomenal world, lays out the normative cosmic order that neither should be violated nor can be altered by human actions. Yet in *Huainanzi*, not only can the course of Heaven be influenced by human *qi*, but also the Heavenly order can, under certain circumstances, be so severely disrupted that it starts to malfunction, as in the following passage from “Lanming”:

⁸⁹⁶ *Huainanzi jishi*, 4-8, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 49-50. Translation with modifications.

6.7 往古之時，四極廢，九州裂，天不兼覆，地不周載，火熾炎而不滅，水浩洋而不息，猛獸食頤民，鷙鳥攫老弱。

Going back to more ancient times, the four pillars were broken; the nine provinces were in tatters. Heaven did not completely cover [the earth]; Earth did not hold up [Heaven] all the way around [its circumference]. Fires blazed out of control and could not be extinguished; water flooded in great expanses and would not recede. Ferocious animals ate blameless people; predatory birds snatched the elderly and the weak.⁸⁹⁷

When Heaven went astray, Fuxi 虛戲 and Nüwa 女媧 brought it back to order.

6.7 於是女媧煉五色石以補蒼天，斷鼇足以立四極。殺黑龍以濟冀州，積蘆灰以止淫水。蒼天補，四極正，淫水涸，冀州平，狡蟲死，頤民生。背方州，抱圓天，和春陽夏，殺秋約冬，...陰陽之所壅沈不通者，竅理之；逆氣戾物，傷民厚積者，絕止之。

Thereupon, Nüwa smelted together five-colored stones in order to patch up the azure sky, cut off the legs of the great turtle to set them up as the four pillars, killed the black dragon to provide relief for Ji Province, and piled up reeds and cinders to stop the surging waters. The azure sky was patched; the four pillars were set up; the surging waters were drained; the province of Ji was tranquil; crafty vermin died off; blameless people [preserved their] lives. Bearing the square [nine] provinces on [her] back and embracing Heaven, [Fuxi and Nüwa established] the harmony of spring and the yang of summer, the slaughtering of autumn and the restraint of winter. ... Wherever yin and yang are deeply blocked up and unable to connect, [Fuxi and Nüwa] thoroughly set in order. The perverse *qi* and perverted things that severely and cumulatively harmed the people; [they] interrupted and stopped them.⁸⁹⁸

The elaboration on Fuxi and Nüwa's grand achievements to realign Heaven and Earth and restore the cosmic order is followed by a description of their cosmic journey, which ended in union with the Grand Ancestor.

6.7 乘雷車，服駕應龍，驂青虯，... 浮游消搖，道鬼神，登九天，朝帝於靈門，宓穆休於太祖之下。然而不彰其功，不揚其聲，隱真人之道，以從天地之固然。

[They] mounted their thunder chariot, with flying long dragons as their inner pair and green *qiu* dragons as the outer pair. ... Aimlessly drifting, rambling at random, leading [a retinue of] ghosts and spirits, they climbed to ninefold Heaven, paid court to the [supreme] Thearch at the Numinous Gate, silent and reverent they ended [their journey] in the presence of the Great Ancestor. Even then, they did not make a great show of their accomplishments, did not heap praise on their own reputation. They concealed [within themselves] the Way of the Genuine and followed the imperatives of Heaven and Earth.⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁷ *Huainanzi jishi*, 479, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 224.

⁸⁹⁸ *Huainanzi jishi*, 479, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 224-25. Translation with modifications.

⁸⁹⁹ *Huainanzi jishi*, 483-85, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 226.

There are two points about Fuxi and Nüwa that demand attention: 1) their identity, and 2) their relationship with the *dao* and Heaven. On the one hand, Fuxi and Nüwa are depicted in “Lanming” as human historical figures. Like Huangdi 黃帝, they are presented as ancient sages. Only, their way is superior even to that of Huangdi, as in the following passage.

6.7 昔者黃帝治天下，而力牧、太山稽輔之，以治日月之行律，治陰陽之氣，節四時之度，正律曆之數...然猶未及處戲氏之道也。

In ancient times, the Yellow Emperor ruled the world. Li Mu and Taishan Ji assisted him in regulating the movements of the sun and the moon, setting in order the qi of yin and yang, delimiting the measure of the four season, correcting the calculations of the pitch pipes and the calendar.... And yet this [the reign of the Yellow Emperor] did not come up to the Way of Lord Fuxi.⁹⁰⁰

What is more, Fuxi and Nüwa are at the top of the ladder in the human hierarchy. Their spiritual journey is described in essentially the same way as that of the True Person. Their identity as equivalent to the True Person is most explicitly revealed in the following sentence “They conceal [in themselves] the way of the True Person and follow what Heaven and Earth should inherently be” 隱真人之道，以從天地之固然. If Heaven and Earth ran smoothly, Fuxi and Nüwa would adopt the principle of non-action and willingly subject themselves to the Heavenly order, as if they did not possess the potency to regulate Heaven and Earth. But this would be possible only after they had rectified the course of Heaven and Earth and adjusted the comic order. Therefore, the True Person, as exemplified by Fuxi and Nüwa, lies above Heaven in the cosmic hierarchy of *Huainanzi*.

⁹⁰⁰ *Huainanzi jishi*, 476-79, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 223-24.

Like the previously discussed Ultimate [or Great] Person, Fuxi and Nüwa resemble the two Primordial Spirits in several respects.⁹⁰¹ They both hold fast to the *dao*, from which their potency derives. They can traverse the universe or spread throughout Heaven and Earth, yet remain in union with the *dao*. They both prefer the principle of non-action and will retreat to the ancestor [i.e., the *dao*] upon finishing their work of regulating the cosmos, leaving the cosmos to run on its own. Their difference lies only in that the two Spirits conferred the original order on the cosmos primordially, whereas Fuxi and Nüwa set the cosmos back in order after its original pattern had been disrupted.

Here arises another question: who disrupted the Heavenly order in the first place? The text does not say. But in the following section it is suggested that, more recently, the tyrannical rule of King Jie 桀 of Xia 夏 perverted the cosmic order.

6.8 逮至夏桀之時，主暗晦而不明，道瀾漫而不修，棄捐五帝之恩刑，推蹶三王之法籍。是以至德滅而不揚，帝道掩而不興，舉事戾蒼天，發號逆四時，春秋縮其和，天地除其德... 西老折勝，黃神嘯吟，飛鳥鏃翼，走獸廢腳，山無峻幹，澤無窟水，狐狸首穴，馬牛放失，田無立禾，路無莎蕕...

Coming down to the time of [the tyrant] Jie of the Xia [dynasty], rulers had become benighted and unenlightened. Their Way was excessive and lacked restraint; they rejected the pardons and punishments of the Five Thearchs and rescinded the laws and ordinances of the Three Kings. As a result, Utmost Potency was obliterated [rather than] publicly promoted; the Thearch's Way was suffocated [rather than being] made to flourish. Their conduct of affairs offended Azure Heaven; their issuing of proclamations contravened [the rhythms of] the four seasons. Spring and autumn recoiled from their [accustomed] harmonies; Heaven and Earth discarded their Potency. ... The Western Elder snapped her hair ornament; the Yellow Thearch sighed and moaned. Flying birds folded their wings; running animals lost their footing. Mountains were without towering trees; marshes were without pooling waters. Foxes and raccoon dogs headed for their burrows; horses

⁹⁰¹ I suspect that this is the reason why John Major and Mark Edward Lewis insist on associating the two Primordial Spirits in the “Yuandao” and “Tianwen” cosmogonies with Fuxi and Nüwa, in spite of the fact that no commentarial tradition has ever made such an association, as Paul R. Goldin points out. See John Major, *Heaven and earth in early Han thought: Chapters three, four, and five of the Huainanzi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 267; Mark Edward Lewis, *The Flood Myths of Early China* SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 120; Paul R. Goldin, “The Myth That China Has No Creation Myth,” 8.

and cattle scattered and were lost. Fields were without standing grain; roadsides were without cattails or sedge....⁹⁰²

Apparently, the impact of the king, who is supposedly the ruler of all under Heaven, is not limited to the human sphere. During the reign of Jie, everything, from Heaven and Earth to the cosmic spirits [i.e. Xiwangmu 西王母 and the Yellow Thearch], from mountains and rivers to animals and plants, was groaning as a result of Jie's tyrannical rule. In fact, the theme that the king of all under Heaven can pervert the cosmic order appears repeatedly in *Huainanzi*.⁹⁰³ The previously cited passage from "Shuzhen" (section 2.14), for example, describes how, during the reign of King Jie of Xia and King Zhou 紂 of Yin 殷, nature malfunctioned and all living creatures on earth suffered as a result.

So far we can conclude that the True Person and the ruler's impact on Heaven differs fundamentally from the rest of the population's possible influence on Heaven. The True Person can fundamentally revert the pattern of Heaven, causing it to run stably for a long period of time (long enough to be called an age), if not permanently. In contrast, the rest of the humans, through concentrating their spiritual essence and forming resonance with Heaven, can only alter the normal course of Heaven temporarily and on a limited scale.

⁹⁰² *Huainanzi jishi*, 485-90, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 226-28. Translation with minor modification.

⁹⁰³ In the "Mingjie" 明誠 (Clear Admonition) chapter of *Xinyu* 新語, Lu Jia 陸賈 makes a similar assertion that the perverted emperors have the power to corrupt the cosmic order. "Therefore the deterioration of the age and the loss of the Way are not due to the acts of Heaven, but lie in what the rulers select [to do]. Perverse policies lead to the perverted *qi*, and the perverted *qi* in turn leads to natural disasters and disorders....If the [proper] ways of governing are lost below, then Heavenly pattern will echo above; If perverse policies are extended to the people, then vermin will be generated in fields." 故世衰道亡，非天之所為也，乃國君者有所取之也。惡政生惡氣，惡氣於災異。... 治道失於下，則天文變於上；惡政流於民，則螟蟲生於野。 See *Xinyu jiaozhu*, 155.

Why do the True Person, the kings and the sages have different impact on the cosmic order? The following passage from “Benjing” provides some clues.

8.7 帝者，體太一；王者，法陰陽；霸者，則四時，君者，用六律。秉太一者，牢籠天地，彈厭山川，含吐陰陽，伸曳四時，紀綱八極，經緯六合，... 陰陽者，承天地之和，形萬殊之體，含氣化物，以成埒類...是故體太一者，明於天地之情，通于道德之倫，聰明耀於日月，精神通於萬物，動靜調於陰陽，喜怒和於四時，德澤施于方外，名聲傳於後世。...

The thearch embodies the Grand One; the king emulates yin and yang; the hegemon follows the four seasons; the prince uses the six pitch pipes. Those who grasp the Grand One⁹⁰⁴ enclose and contain Heaven and Earth, weigh on and crush the mountains and streams, retain or emit yin and yang, stretch out and drag along the four seasons, knot the net of the eight directional end points, and weave the web of the six coordinates. ... Yin and yang uphold the harmony of Heaven and Earth and shape the physical forms of the myriad diversities. [They] retain *qi* and transform things in order to bring to completion the kinds of the myriad categories. ... Therefore one who embodies the Grand One discerns the true responses of Heaven and Earth and penetrates the regularities of the Way and its Potency. His comprehensive brilliance bedazzles like the sun and moon; his essence and spirit penetrate the myriad things. His motion and rest are in tune with yin and yang; his happiness and anger harmonize with the four seasons; his Potency and magnanimity extend to beyond the border of [the cosmos]; and his fame and reputation pass down to later generations. ...⁹⁰⁵

This passage correlates the political hierarchy with the cosmic hierarchy. Each on a particular political ladder—the thearch, the king, the hegemon and the prince—is provided with a cosmic counterpart upon which he should model himself: *Taiyi*, yin and yang, the four seasons, and the six pitch pipes. Holding fast to his cosmic counterpart enables the

⁹⁰⁴ Here my translation differs from that of John Major. In dropping the verb *bing* 秉 and translating “秉太一者” into “the Grand One,” Major seems to have followed Wang Niansun 王念孫, who holds that *bing* 秉 is added by later transmitters. Wang Niansun cites as evidence that the citations of this passage in *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 and *Wenxuan* 文選 does not contain *bing*. He Ning 何寧 disagrees with Wang Niansun and argues that *bing* should be replaced by *ti* 體. His cites as evidence citations in *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 and another section of *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚, which uses *ti* instead of *bing*. For detailed discussions by Wang Niansun and He Ning, see *Huainanzi jishi*, 582-83. I hold that it is unreasonable to drop the verb *bing* 秉, mainly because in the *Huainanzi* cosmology, *Taiyi* is never depicted as the one who actively plans the cosmic order. It should be the two Primordial Spirits or the human exemplary thearchs, not *Taiyi* itself, that regulate Heaven and Earth, yin and yang, etc., through tightly grasping *Taiyi*. Also, I don’t see any reason to change the verb *bing*, to grasp into *ti*, to embody. Therefore I would rather adhere to the Zhuang Kuiji 莊逵吉 redaction, which says “秉太一者.”

⁹⁰⁵ *Huainanzi jishi*, 582-85, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 277-79.

ruler not only to govern the human sphere effectively, but also to exert impact on everything below his counterpart in the cosmic hierarchy. The thearch, as “the one who grasps *Taiyi*” 秉太一者, is described here as being able to “enclose and contain Heaven and Earth, weigh on and crush the mountains and streams, retain or emit yin and yang, stretch out and drag along the four seasons, knot the net of the eight directional end points, and weave the web of the six coordinates.” Thus the thearch, as the embodiment of *Taiyi*, is granted the power to control Heaven and align the cosmic order.⁹⁰⁶ The portrayal of the thearch here is quite consistent with the description of Fuxi and Nüwa, the two legendary human rulers who realigned Heaven and Earth, harmonized yin and yang and regulated the four seasons, in “Lanming.”

The correlation between human rulers and their cosmic counterpart, however, is prescriptive rather than descriptive, as is revealed below.

8.7 帝者體陰陽則侵，王者法四時則削...故小而行大，則滔窳而不親；大而行小，則狹隘而不容。貴賤不失其體，則天下治矣。

If a thearch [merely] embodies yin and yang, [his throne] will be usurped. If a king [merely] models himself on the four seasons, [his territory] will be seized. ... If a person [of small standing] carries out [great affairs], the result will be turbulent, insubstantial and uncongenial. If a great [person] carries out petty [matters], the results will be narrow, cramped, and unpleasing. If honorable and mean do not lose their [proper] embodiments, then the world will be [properly] governed.⁹⁰⁷

Ideally, the thearch should hold fast to *Taiyi*. But in reality, the thearch might “lose his proper embodiment” 失其體 and bring about disasters. The aforementioned Jie and Zhou are exactly such rulers who failed to grasp or embody *Taiyi* and as a result perverted the

⁹⁰⁶ Heaven is missing in this cosmic hierarchy presented here. But it can be inserted below *Taiyi* and above Yin and yang, which rely on the proper order of Heaven and Earth to perform their task of shaping the forms of the physical beings 陰陽者，承天地之和，形萬殊之體。

⁹⁰⁷ *Huainanzi jishi*, 587, Major, et al., *The Huainanzi*, 279.

cosmic order. Apparently, not all thearchs can become the True Person who truly embodies *Taiyi*. But those below the thearch in the human political hierarchy neither should aim at nor could possibly achieve the goal of grasping *Taiyi*.⁹⁰⁸

We can hardly account for such divergences between the thearch and all other humans, including sages, unless we accept the hypothesis that their differences are predestined in the process of cosmic generation. In other words, the thearchs are those described in the “Quanyan” cosmogony, namely, humans possessing a spirit born in parallel with the two Primordial Spirits in the realm of *wu*. Some of them, by modeling themselves on *Taiyi* and following the appropriate routes of self-cultivation, can become the True Person. The rest of them may fail to embody *Taiyi* and as a result abuse their power. Because of their inherent power, they pose more of a threat to the cosmic order, if they become perverse, than the rest of humanity.

Now to return to the contrast between the True Person and the sage: because of the divergences rooted in the nature of their life [the True Person possessing a formless spirit able to return to the cosmic Ancestor, whereas the sage’s spirit is made of the destructible *qi*], the sage and the True Person have not only different scopes of influence but also different responsibilities. The True Person, having not divided from the *dao*, can transcend

⁹⁰⁸ It should be noted here that, unlike the thearch/True Person, the court official (or vassal king)/sage should not embody *Taiyi*, but model himself on the Heavenly pattern instead. Being unaware of the distinction between the sage and the True Person may prevent scholars from fully comprehending the political agenda of *Huainanzi*. For example, without distinguishing between the sage and the True Person, Tobias Benedikt Zürn suggests that “sage rulers should not only mimic the workings of the universe but also embody the Way.” Apparently, to “mimic the workings of the universe” is the sage’s responsibility, but to “embody the Way” should be the prerogative of the top ruler (*dizhe*). Zürn also cites passages from “Jingshen” 7.6 (which describes the sage) and 7.7 (which describes the True Person) to support his vision of the sage ruler’s self-cultivation, rendering his otherwise very enlightening article on the two modes of self-cultivation in *Huainanzi* a bit flawed. See Zürn, “Overgrown Courtyards and Tilled Fields,” 325-26.

Heaven and in turn impact Heaven. The sage, on the other hand, models himself on Heaven and is consequently confined within the framework of Heaven. The True Person is mainly responsible for maintaining the cosmic order. And the sage is responsible for governing and regulating the human sphere. The True Person sets the cosmic order in accordance with the *dao*, whereas the sage creates human institutions and customs in accordance with the Heavenly order laid out by the True Person. Thus there is no wonder that the True Person [or the Ultimate/Great Person] occurs only in the so-called root chapters⁹⁰⁹ and the “cosmogonic root passages,”⁹¹⁰ which are centered on the *dao*, its macrocosmic manifestations in the natural sphere, and microcosmic manifestations in human life. By contrast, the sage appears mainly in the branch chapters, which deal with the application of the *dao* in various aspects of human affairs such as governance, ritual, and social customs.

In his study of the political philosophy of “Zhushu”主術, chapter nine of *Huainanzi*, Paul R. Goldin argues that *Huainanzi* exhibits an “insidious syncretism,” which “takes ideas that sound as though they come from every conceivable corner but melds them into the justification of a body politic that subdues all philosophical disputation” and in which

⁹⁰⁹ The distinction between root and branch chapters in *Huainanzi* was first noticed by Charles Le Blanc and fully elaborated by Harold Roth. Charles Le Blanc holds that chapters 1-8 illustrate the “Basic Principles” and chapters 9-20 contain “Applications and Illustrations”. Roth further explains that the Root Section, namely first eight chapters, contain “all the basic cosmology, cosmogony, epistemology, self-cultivation theory, and theories on history, sagehood, and politics that the authors regard as foundational”, and that the Branch section contains “illustrations of these foundations” and the application of the way in human affairs. See Charles Le Blanc, “Huai nan tzu,” in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China and Institute of East Asian Studies University of California, 1993), 189; Harold Roth, “Daoist Inner Cultivation Thought and the Textual Structure of the *Huainanzi*,” 54-55.

⁹¹⁰ I.e., the opening passage of “Quanyan,” chapter 14 of *Huainanzi*. According to Roth, each chapter in *Huainanzi* contains a root passage. And among all the root passages, those in chapters 2, 3, 7, and 14 all describe cosmogony and are called “cosmogonic root passages.” See Harold Roth, “Daoist Inner Cultivation Thought and the Textual Structure of the *Huainanzi*,” 62-64.

the subjects do not need to have thinking “minds” or “any kind of spiritual life.”⁹¹¹ I would conclude that *Huainanzi* has an equally insidious view of human self-cultivation and the attainment of perfection: it prescribes different courses of action for different groups of people and proposes an insurmountable barrier between humans born with different spiritual existence or into different political hierarchies. Non-sages, who are kept in dark about the truth of life and death, merely follow the routes laid down by the sages and thus never acquire their insight or perspective.⁹¹² The barrier between the sage and the True Person, predestined in the cosmogonic process, is even harder to cross. Born with a destructible spirit, the sage can never reach the top rung of human perfection and attain eternal existence, no matter how hard he tries to climb the ladder of self-cultivation. He should instead aim to live out his Heavenly allotted life span by treasuring his spiritual essence and physical form, and securely lodging his spiritual essence in the physical form. The True Person, on the other hand, possessing a spirit born directly out of the *dao*, should aim to set his spiritual essence free so as to gain an eternal existence in union with the *dao*, which in turn would grant him the power to align the entire cosmos.

⁹¹¹ Goldin, “Insidious Syncretism in the Political Philosophy of *Huainanzi*,” 90-111, esp. 91, 105 and 109-111. In favor of a “convergence model” of truth, Alexis McLeod criticizes Goldin’s position, suggesting that it is “an altogether too cynical view of what is actually said in the *Huainanzi*.” According to McLeod, *Huainanzi* could “have honest theoretical reasons for advancing the convergence position arising from theoretical concerns such as attaining full understanding of the Dao.” Nonetheless, as is shown in the cosmic-political hierarchy of *Huainanzi*, full understanding of the *dao* is not even accessible for the sages (including Confucius and Mozi), let alone for the ignorant ordinary people. Thus McLeod’s position, being highly idealistic, misses the essential ideological and political message conveyed in *Huainanzi*. See Alexis McLeod, *Theories of Truth in Chinese Philosophy: A Comparative Approach* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 130-33.

⁹¹² For excellent discussion of the barrier between the sage and ordinary people, see Puett, “Sages, the Past, and the Dead,” 225-48.

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