

A Source Book in Chinese Longevity



Livia Kohn

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in
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Introduction

People today live longer than in any time in history. In the 20th century, the average life expectancy in industrialized societies has almost doubled, increasing from about forty to close to eighty years of age. This is due to widespread efforts in public health—drastic improvements in sanitation and hygiene—coupled with enhanced nutrition, the conquest of infectious diseases through antibiotics and vaccinations, as well as the advances of medical technology that has made joint replacements, organ transplants, and genetic analysis commonplace.

Not only has life itself been extended, but the quality of life continues to improve, so that now centenarians are the fastest growing segment in industrialized populations. As this trend speeds up, more and more people are likely to grow considerably older without suffering the ill effects traditionally associated with aging. Research in gerontology and detailed studies of the aging process are leading to radical changes in our understanding of why and how we grow older, not only extending life expectancy—the culturally determined age people can be expected to reach at a certain time and place in history—but even placing life span—the biologically determined, species-specific limit of life—into question. Many scientists now believe that humans will soon live routinely beyond a hundred years, getting closer to the traditional life span of 120, and may even reach ages above this, pushing biological limits and altering the very nature of the species (e.g. Couzin 2005).

Modern efforts toward longevity (healthy old age) and prolongevity (radical life extension) that may lead eventually to immortality (freedom from death)¹ work in two main thrusts: personal lifestyle modifications and

¹ The understanding of human aging as an essentially curable disease in the modern age was proposed first by a group known as “the immortalists” (see Ettinger 1964; Harrington 1977). It is increasingly common among research scientists today (see Benecke 2002; Bova 1998; Hall 2003; Shostak 2002). For a study of the religious implications of these developments, see Maher and Mercer 2009.

advanced medical research. The former, as documented in numerous self-help books, works mainly with diet (especially calorie restriction), supplements (vitamins, growth hormones), exercise (aerobics, weight training, stretches), and stress reduction (relaxation, meditation).² The latter, described in more specialized literature, focuses on various forms of bioengineering, such as cloning, genetic modification, xenotransplants, cryonics, and more.³

Both are thoroughly rooted in the Western tradition and work with a model that inherits the Platonic, Biblical, and Cartesian understanding of the body as mere flesh, a material entity different from and opposed to the immortal soul, which alone belongs to God. Conceived as threatening and dangerous, full of unruly, ungovernable, and irrational passions, the body in this understanding has to be controlled in its locations, excretions, and reproduction.

Since the Enlightenment and the industrial revolution, moreover, control of body and world has been a central issue: control of the flesh through conquering sexuality and passions; control of the mind through systematic training, education, and political propaganda; control of nature through agriculture and industry, doing away with wilderness and wild life, allowing them to persist only in parks and zoos; control of the outer world by conquest of alien societies and the establishment of colonies; and control of all otherness though the increasing unification of world culture, the McDonaldisation of society (see Feher 1989; Foucault 1973).

In many ways, modern efforts at life extension are a continuation of this dominant trend which, in the late 20th century, merged with consumerism, an attitude of hedonistic enjoyment that proclaimed the body a vehicle of pleasure and rejected all “unnecessary” suffering and decline. The result is a volatile mix of rules and ascetic propositions of body control—manifest in health clubs, diet fads, low-calorie drinks, nonfat foods, vitamin supplements, and generally visions of athletic beauty—combined with the hedonistic pursuit of bodily desires—through nice meals, spa vacations, fancy clothes, electronic gadgets, sexual attractiveness, and so on.

The body in Western society has thus become a battle ground between asceticism and hedonism, control and suppression versus letting go and unashamed display. It has become an ideal, a vision, a project that has to be pur-

² See, for example, Chopra 1993; Lan et al. 2002; Plasker 2007; Réquena 2010; Robbins 2006; Roizen and Oz 2007; Sawyer 2007; Weil 2005.

³ Works of this type include Bailey 2005; Klein and Sethe 2004; Olshansky and Sethe 2001.

sued and made, refashioned by face-lifts, breast augmentations, diets, jogging, weight-lifting, massages, and so on. Yet despite its new image, the body has remained an object, a firm, solid, separate entity that needs to be shaped and molded. In that respect it has not changed despite social and doctrinal transformations. Life extension, as a result, is still dominantly a mechanical undertaking of manipulating different aspects and parts of the body. It is not, as yet, an integrated enterprise that transforms the entire person toward a new dimension of being. Chinese longevity practices, described in terms of “nourishing life” or “nourishing vitality” (*yangsheng* 養生), “nourishing inner nature” (*yangxing* 養性), “longevity” (*shou* 壽), “long life” (*changsheng* 長生), or “not dying” (*bushi* 不死), are grounded in a process-oriented, energy-based worldview and have a history of several millennia. They go a long way toward realizing this new dimension and help expand the modern perspective of what can and should be done in the quest for longer, healthier, and happier lives.⁴

The Chinese Body

The body in traditional China is not separate from the cosmos, but forms an integral part of Dao, the underlying power of life and root of creation. There is only one Dao; all beings are part of it. It flows naturally along predisposed channels—in body, nature, society, and the universe. Like water, it is steady, fluid, easy, soft, and weak; it never pushes, fights, or controls. Like a mother, it brings forth and nurtures, cares and raises, supports and moves along; whatever people are and do, they are always part of Dao. One way of describing Dao is as “organic order”—organic in the sense that it is part of the world and not a transcendent other as in Western religion, order because it can be felt in the rhythms of the world, in the manifestation of organized patterns (see Schwartz 1985).

Another way to think of Dao is as two concentric circles, a smaller one in the center and a larger on the periphery. The dense, smaller circle in the center is Dao at the root of creation—tight, concentrated, intense, and ultimately unknowable, ineffable, and beyond conscious or sensory human attainment. The looser, larger circle at the periphery is Dao as it appears in the world, the patterned cycle of life and visible nature. Here Dao is manifest: it

⁴ A few modern voices on prolongevity come from the Chinese tradition, but tend to also subscribe to a more Western body system. See Liu 1990; Ni 2006.

comes and goes, rises and sets, rains and shines, lightens and darkens. It is, in fact, the ever changing yet ever lasting alteration of natural patterns, life and death, yin and yang (Kohn 2001, 20).

In both forms, moreover, Dao manifests in a vital energy known as *qi* 氣, which can be described as a bioenergetic potency that causes things to live, grow, develop, and decline. The basic force of all existence, *qi* is the world, nature, society, and the human body—all of which are part of a dynamic cosmos that never stops or ends. This also means that there is no division of body, mind, and nature but that these are only different aspects of *qi*-flow, moving at various vibrational speeds and levels—an understanding that closely matches modern quantum physics.⁵

According to the Chinese vision, human life is the accumulation of *qi*; death is its dispersal. People as much as the planet consist first of all of primordial *qi* that connects them to the greater universe and is given to them at birth. They need to sustain it throughout life by drawing postnatal or external *qi* into the body from air and food as well as from other people through sexual, emotional, and social interaction.

But they also lose *qi* through breathing bad air, living in polluted conditions, overburdening or diminishing their bodies with food and drink, getting involved in negative emotions, engaging in excessive sexual or social interactions, and in general suffering from various forms of stress. Although life expectancy or “destiny” is thus a function of primordial *qi*, the way in which people nurture or dissipate it in their use of postnatal *qi* determines ultimately how well and how long they live. Since *qi* as part of Dao is everlasting, there is moreover no fundamental limit to the life one can attain.

As a result, health and long life in the Chinese vision are defined as the smooth alignment with Dao as it manifests in one’s personal physical and psychological characteristics and opens paths to full self-realization. It means the presence of a strong vital energy and of a harmonious, active *qi*-flow that moves in a steady alteration of yin and yang, two aspects of the continuous flow of creation: the rising and falling, growing and declining, warming and cooling, beginning and ending, expanding and contracting movements that pervade all life and nature. Yin and yang continuously alternate and change from one into the other. They do so in a steady rhythm of rising and falling, visible in nature in the rising and setting of the sun, the warming and cooling of the seasons, the growth and decline of living beings.

⁵ See Bentov 1977; Bohm 1951; Gerber 1988; Gribbin 1984; Zukav 1979.

This flow of *qi* in undulating waves is further systematized into a system of the so-called five phases (*wuxing* 五行) which are in turn symbolized by five material objects:

minor yang	major yang	yin-yang	minor yin	major yin
wood	fire	earth	metal	water

These five continue to produce each other in a harmonious cycle in the presented order. *Qi* that flows in this order and in the right amount is known as proper *qi* (*zhengqi* 正氣). In addition to personal health, this is also manifest by harmony in nature, i.e., regular weather patterns and the absence of disasters, and as health in society, the peaceful coexistence among families, clans, villages, and states. This harmony on all levels, the cosmic presence of a steady and pleasant flow of *qi*, is what the Chinese call the state of Great Peace (*taiping* 太平), venerated by Confucians and Daoists alike.

Qi, on the other hand, that has lost harmonious flow is called wayward (*xieqi* 邪氣). Disorderly and dysfunctional, it creates change that violates the normal order. When it becomes dominant, the *qi*-flow can turn upon itself and deplete the body's resources. Thus, any sick person, decimated forest, or intrusive construction no longer operates as part of a universal system and are not in tune with the basic life force.

Whether proper or wayward, *qi* constitutes all the different systems of the body, which are not classified according to skeletal, muscular, or hormonal, but in terms of yin organs (1) that store *qi* and center the body's functioning, yang organs (2) that move *qi* and take care of digestion and respiration, body fluids that moisturize the body including the lymph and sweat glands, parts that make the body come together, senses that connect it to the outside world, emotions that characterize negative reactions to the world, and virtues that enhance positive attitudes.

phase	organ1	organ2	fluid	body	sense	emotion	virtue
wood	liver	gall	tears	joints	seeing	anger	kindness
fire	heart	small int.	sweat	blood	touch	joy	propriety
earth	spleen	stomach	oral	muscles	taste	worry	honesty
metal	lungs	large int.	nasal	skin	smell	sadness	righteousness
water	kidney	bladder	saliva	bones	hear	fear	wisdom

The same system of the five phases also connects the body to the outside world, to the seasons, directions, colors, and other aspects of nature, creating

a complex network of energetic pathways that work closely together and are intimately interconnected.

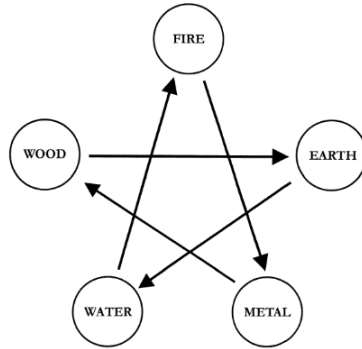


Fig. 1. The five phases

Within the body, moreover, the organs are the key storage and transformation centers of *qi*. They connect to the extremities through a network of energy channels called meridians (*mai* 脈). There are twelve main meridians that run on both sides of the body. They include ten channels centered on the five yin and yang organs, plus two added for symmetry: the Triple Heater (yang), a digestive organ that combines the *qi* from food and from air and transports it to the heart; and the pericardium (yin), supplementing the heart.

There are also eight extraordinary vessels which run only along one line in the body. They are considered primary and more elemental than the twelve meridians, carrying a deeper blueprint of the human being. They include four lines that run along the arms and legs, supporting the basic yin and yang structure of the body, plus two that create a cross inside the torso: the Belt Vessel (*daimai* 帶脈) which encircles the waist horizontally and the Penetrating Vessel (*chongmai* 沖脈) which runs vertically straight through the center from head to pelvic floor. The remaining two are the Governing (*dumai* 督脈; yang) and Conception Vessels (*renmai* 任脈; yin), which run along the back and front of the torso, both originating near the base of the spine and ending around the mouth. They form an essential energy circuit along the torso and are essential in all aspects of life cultivation.

Healing, Longevity, and Immortality

The body being an integrated organism of different forms, levels, and interactions of *qi*, healing, longevity, and immortality are also part of the same structure and form a closely knit continuum of practice. Most basic and best known is medical healing, which is usually administered by someone outside the person in the form of acupuncture, herbs, and massages, as well as dietary, exercise, and lifestyle recommendations. This part of the practice serves to replenish *qi* when people have lost their vitality due to bad habits, stress, infections, accidents, and the like.⁶

Having recovered health, many continue in their old ways and eventually get sick again. Some, and especially older people who have undergone repeated cycles of health and decline, realize just how much conscious lifestyle choices contribute to their well-being. Having attained good health and gained an increased awareness of *qi*-patterns, they may decide to increase their primordial *qi* to the level they had at birth or even above it.

To do so, they follow a variety of preventative medical or longevity techniques—including moderation, diet, exercise, self-massages, breathing, and meditations—to absorb their *qi*-exchange with the environment and cultivate its inner flow (see Kohn 1989). The practice ensures the full realization of people's natural life expectancy in health and vigor. It often leads to an increase in years, a youthful appearance, and continued strength and enjoyment of life. People enhance and empower the natural patterns of life, consciously following the patterns of yin and yang and creating harmony in themselves and their surroundings.

Immortality, third, raises the practices to a higher and transcendent level. Unlike medical healing and longevity, it means moving beyond the natural cycle and applying the techniques in a reverse manner. To attain it, people have to transform all their *qi* into primordial *qi* and proceed to refine it to subtler levels. This finer *qi* will eventually turn into pure spirit (*shen* 神), with which practitioners increasingly identify to become transcendent spirit people.

The path that leads there involves intensive meditation and trance training as well as more radical forms of diet and other longevity practices. It results in a bypassing of death, so that the end of the body has no impact on the continuation of the spirit person. In addition, practitioners attain super-

⁶ On Chinese medicine, see Kaptchuk 1983; Kendall 2002; Kohn 2005; Larre et al. 1986; Liu 1988; Porkert 1974; Sivin 1988.

sensory powers and eventually gain residence in otherworldly realms. Unlike medicine and longevity, immortality thus comes with an extensive, vibrant mythology that describes splendid heavens, fabulous creatures, and a host of divine beings.⁷

The very same kinds of practices may be used on all three levels, albeit in different ways and with caution. Certain practices that are useful in healing may be superfluous in the attainment of longevity, while some applicable for immortality may even be harmful when healing is the main focus. Take breathing as an example. When healing or extending life, natural deep breathing is emphasized, with the diaphragm expanding on the inhalation. When moving on to immortality, however, reversed breathing is advised, which means that the diaphragm contracts on the in-breath. Undertaking this kind of reversed breathing too early or at the wrong stage in one's practice can cause complications, from dizziness to disorientation or worse.⁸

This holds also true for sexual practices. In healing, sexual activity with a partner is encouraged in moderation, with both partners reaching regular climaxes. In longevity practice, sexual activity may still be performed with a partner, but ejaculation as a loss of *qi* is avoided and sexual stimulation is used to increase the positive flow of *qi* in the body. In immortality, finally, sexual practices are undertaken internally and without a partner. They serve the creation of an immortal embryo through the refinement of sexual energy into primordial *qi* and cosmic spirit. Going beyond nature, immortality practitioners are not interested in creating harmony and balance, but strive to overcome the natural tendencies of the bodymind and actively lessen or even relinquish earthly existence in favor of cosmic and heavenly states.⁹

Diets are another case in point. Chinese medical diets use ordinary ingredients and recipes, focusing strongly on rice, beans, and vegetables as well as meats, tofu, and other forms of protein. They require the more conscious adaptation to seasonal patterns and the application of warming or cooling foods, spices, herbs, depending on the patient's condition. Eating for long life uses the same principles and is still grain-based, but involves the abstention

⁷ On the cosmology and mythology of immortality, see Campamy 2002; Despeux and Kohn 2003; Miller 2008.

⁸ There is as yet no good book on Chinese breathing. For a historical study of the Six Healing Breaths or Sounds, see Despeux 2006.

⁹ There are numerous works on Chinese sexual practices, as any Google search will reveal. A good survey of the different kinds and comprehensive translation of texts, most relevant to the longevity tradition, is found in Wile 1992.

from heavy meats and fats as well as from strong substances such as alcohol, garlic, and onions. Practitioners are encouraged to eat lightly and in small portions, matching the seasons and always conscious of their internal *qi*. Contrary to this, immortality practice is to “avoid grain” (*bigu* 辟穀). They eliminate main staples, eat mainly raw food, and increasingly rely on herbal and mineral supplements. Their goal is the refinement of *qi* to a level where food intake is completely replaced by the conscious absorption of *qi* through breath, leading to extended periods of fasting.¹⁰

The Longevity Tradition

Longevity techniques occupy the middle ground between healing and immortality, medicine and religion. The culmination of healing, they form the ultimate of medical practice; serving as the path to perfect health, they are the foundation of Daoist immortality. Placed between two completely different dimensions yet connected to both, they represent a separate tradition that from its very beginning appears as both preventative and anti-aging medicine and also as a way of personal and spiritual self-cultivation. Only a few dedicated scholars have contributed significantly to its understanding.¹¹

As outlined in detail in *Chinese Healing Exercises* (Kohn 2008), longevity practices appear first in manuscripts uncovered at Mawangdui, contained in six of a total of forty-five texts known collectively as the “Chinese medical manuscripts” (trl. Harper 1998). The tomb was closed in 168 BCE, dating the texts to the early Han dynasty (206-6 BCE). Before this time, however, traces of longevity methods appear in inscriptions and philosophical works, such as the “Inward Training” chapter of the *Guanzi*, indicating that awareness of *qi* and methods of its internal circulation and meditational enhancement already formed part of the spiritual and self-cultivation culture of ancient China (see Roth 1999).

Both physicians and philosophers continued to develop the tradition, as documented in the early 3rd century CE in Hua Tuo’s Five Animals Frolic as well as in Xi Kang’s *Yangsheng lun* (On Nourishing Life). More elaborate

¹⁰ On dietary practices of the three levels, see Arthur 2006; Craze and Jay 2001; Lu 1986; Kohn 2010a. For a more comprehensive presentation of various longevity methods, on a popular level and from a medical background, see Reid 1989 and 2003.

¹¹ See Despeux 1987; 1988; Engelhardt 1987; Kohn 1989; 2006; Sakade 1988; 2007a; Stein 1999.

sources that also show the increasing interaction between the two dimensions appear in the 4th century. In 317, the imperial court of the Jin dynasty fled from the invading Huns and moved south, replacing southern aristocrats in government offices. With time at hand and no careers to pursue, they turned to various other endeavors, including the pursuit of health and spiritual advancement. The result was not only the first comprehensive book on longevity practices but also the founding of the Daoist school of Highest Clarity. Based on a combination of traditional cosmology, early Daoist ritual, and operative alchemy, its followers focused on connecting to the gods and starry palaces above and practiced elaborate visualizations and ecstatic excursions as well as the concoction of elixirs that would instantaneously transport them to the otherworld. In preparation for these endeavors, they applied longevity techniques, using them to strengthen their senses, extend their life expectancy, and clear their energy channels. Longevity practices thus formed an active part of both aristocratic and religious culture.

This in turn led to a proliferation of texts in the course of the Six Dynasties (420-589) that outline a plethora of different methods involving ways of internal *qi* manipulation, physical exercises, and dietary control—contained in the Daoist canon as well as recouped in medical literature. The longevity tradition was finding its unique expression while continuing to straddle both realms of medicine and religion.

The Tang dynasty (618-907) was the heyday of Daoism as well as the longevity tradition. It established the first stable rule after many centuries of division, and much of its culture was dedicated to unification and integration. This was obvious not only in the political realm but also in the world of thought and religion, creating integrated organizational structures and worldview systems. In terms of the longevity tradition, it led to three major systematizations: the texts by the physician and Daoist Sun Simiao, a prolific author especially of medical works who was active in the 7th century and is still revered as a grand master of and God of Medicines; the *Yangxing yanming lu* (Record on Nourishing Inner Nature and Extending Life), a comprehensive collection of all sorts of different methods that also includes a collection of references to longevity methods in previous literature; and the medically based outline of *qi*-absorption methods by the Highest Clarity patriarch Sima Chengzhen, court Daoist of the 8th century and best known for his work on Daoist meditation, “Sitting in Oblivion” (trl. Kohn 2010b).

In the wake of this explosion of techniques, which were also transmitted to Japan and recorded systematically in the *Ishinpō* (Essential Medical Methods; trl. Hsia et al. 1986) of 974, the longevity tradition its active pres-

ence in both medical and religious sources, including Daoist texts as well as technical compendia from the Song (960-1260), Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties.

A major medical source is the *Chifeng sui* (Marrow of the Red Phoenix; trl. Despeux 1988), a collection of longevity methods by Zhou Lüjing, dated to 1578. Reflecting the typical career of a longevity master, Zhou was the son of an aristocratic family, trained for office and married. Then, however, he contracted tuberculosis and could not find help among the medical establishment. Concerned with his health, he made survival his first priority and left the family to reside in a Daoist temple. He got well, but found the world of long life and spiritual cultivation so enticing that he remained a recluse, developing numerous skills, such as sword fighting, paper making, painting, calligraphy, and long life techniques.¹² He collected prescriptions for healing, including herbs, talismans, rituals, exorcisms, and spells, which he wrote up variously (Despeux 1988, 12-13). Integrating many earlier methods, his book consists of three sections: techniques of breathing and guiding *qi*, exercise sequences including the Five Animals Frolic, and meditative exercises based on internal alchemy. It is comprehensive and has remained a key resource for practitioners today.

Within the Daoist tradition, longevity techniques have continued to be initiatory and supplementary, ensuring that practitioners are energetically open for the more advanced spiritual transformations of *qi*. Works on internal alchemy, as a result, mention the methods only in passing, taking them for granted as a prerequisite. However, their take on the human body and its internal powers is different enough to have made an impact on the longevity tradition, especially when it comes to practices specifically geared toward women. Known as women's alchemy, they are recorded from the late 18th century onward, reflecting an increase in women's literacy as well as a greater awareness of the unique features of the female body.

¹² Sun Simiao has a similar background story (Sivin 1967; Kohn 2008, 129-31); Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維橋(1872-1955), the author of the *Yinshizi jingzuo fa* 因是子靜坐法 (Quiet Sitting with Master Yinshi) and major forerunner of qigong in modern China, too, was stricken by tuberculosis and dedicated himself to healing full-time (Kohn 2002; Liu Guizhen 劉貴珍(1920-1983), the initiator of qigong in the Communist Party, suffered from numerous ailments that medicine could not heal but Daoist-preserved longevity techniques could (Palmer 2007); and Hu Fuchen 胡孚琛 (b. 1945), a Western-trained pharmacologist, came to longevity fasting in the 1990 after being diagnosed with multiple serious diseases (Arthur 2006b, 113).

Today longevity pervades Chinese culture in the form of qigong and taiji quan, practiced widely among the general populace and a mainstay of Daoist cultivation (see Cohen 1997). The exercises described in the literature over the millennia are still actively used, recreated, enhanced, and transformed. They are also increasingly brought into a Western scientific context, notably in energy medicine and psychology (see Feinstein et al. 2005; Gallo 2004; Oschman 2000; Shealy 2011; Carlson and Kohn 2012). However, to date there are only few translations of relevant texts, preventing the proper appreciation of the tradition.¹³

This volume hopes to remedy this lack. It presents translations of numerous sources on longevity practice from a variety of periods, including comprehensive guidelines on lifestyle moderation as well as the major compendia of the Tang. It offers materials on specific practices, such as diets, exercise, self-massages, breathing, and the guiding of *qi*, in each case selecting the most representative and most widely cited works. It does not repeat translations already available, such as of the Han-dynasty manuscripts (Harper 1998) and texts on sexual (Ishihara and Levy 1970) and women's practices (Wile 1992). It does, however, cover the main periods of the longevity tradition, beginning with the 4th century BCE, when the earliest materials appear, and systematically moves through Chinese history, all the way to late Qing period and its development of special techniques for women.

Opening the traditional Chinese texts, their worldview, body vision, and concrete methods, to a wider Western audience, the book hopes to contribute not only to the better understanding of Chinese culture but also to aid the contemporary search for a way to enable more people to live longer and healthier lives.

¹³ Translations in French and German include Despeux 1988; Engelhardt 1987; Stein 1999. In English there are only four: Harper 1998 translates the manuscripts found in the Mawangdui tomb of the Han dynasty; Hsia et al. 1986 has the longevity chapters of the Japanese collection *Ishinpō* (dat. 984); Huang and Wurmbrand 1987 offers a collection of texts on breathing from the Daoist canon, albeit with no annotation; and Berk 1986 presents an illustrated Qing-dynasty work on healing exercises.

Chapter One

Nourishing Body and Self

The earliest records on how best to enhance vitality by nourishing body and self come from the late Warring States through early Han, dating from the 4th to the 2nd centuries BCE. They divide clearly into two groups, transmitted philosophical texts connected to certain “masters” (*zi* 子) and excavated technical manuscripts containing “methods” (*fang* 方). Philosophical texts are mainly pre-Han and only hint at concrete practices, yet their later commentaries attach new explanations and practice instructions to their verses. Excavated manuscripts tend to come from Han tombs, but there are also earlier finds that outline practices. The overall tendency is, as Donald Harper points out, that while pre-Han texts present “a theoretical exposition on the physiology of the sage, the excavated texts are meant to teach how to do it—whether it be breath cultivation, exercise, sexual cultivation, or dietetics” (1998, 125). These two kinds of sources are thus representative for the two-fold thrust of the tradition: theoretical and practical, spiritual and physical.

As the two kinds of sources go back to different historical periods, their fundamentally distinct nature also signals a shift in overall accessibility and spread of the methods. “One is inclined to think of Warring States cultivation practice as an arcane matter with few actual practitioners,” Donald Harper notes. In contrast, early Han sources “paint a rather different picture of the popularity of macrobiotic hygiene among the elite in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE,” the literature being widely available and consisting almost entirely of practice instructions (Harper 1998, 126).

At the same time, the two kinds of sources already point to the integration of the two dimensions, the ultimate goal combining physical perfection with spiritual transcendence. They agree that harmony of spirit and peace of mind have a profound effect on the body, while physical control and a mod-

erate lifestyle open the self to spiritual cultivation. Thus the medical manuscript *Shiwen* 十問 (Ten Questions) says about “fullness of life”: “Above it spans Heaven and below it spreads over Earth. Who succeeds in attaining it becomes a spirit and as such can release his bodily form” (Harper 1998, 398).

This attitude is also fundamental in the philosophical text *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang), whose materials were compiled in the mid-3rd century BCE and in part go back to the 4th.¹ Rather impatient with purely physical cultivation, Zhuangzi ridicules those who merely “huff and puff, exhale and inhale, blow out the old and draw in the new, do the ‘bear-hang’ and the ‘bird-stretch’” as “Pengzu’s oldsters” (ch. 15; Graham 1986, 265). On the other hand, the text contains several sets of meditation instructions important in the later tradition, such as “sitting in oblivion” (*zuowang* 坐忘) and “mind-fasting” (*xinzhai* 心齋) (see Kohn 2010b; Saso 2010; Santee 2008). While emphasizing the centrality of *qi*—rather than using the mind or senses to perceive, practitioners should attune themselves to the subtler level of energy perception—the text’s key focus is on mental disengagement and spiritual cultivation, noting the connection to the body only in some passages.

An early text that also provides meditation instructions but focuses more strongly on the mind-body connection in terms of *qi* is the “*Neiye*” 內業 (Inward Training) chapter of the *Guanzi* 管子 (Works of Master Guan; trl. Roth 1999). According to this, adepts refine their *qi* through physical control and moderation in lifestyle and diet, withdrawal from sensory stimulation, and sitting in meditation. They pursue the fourfold alignment of body, limbs, breath, and mind. First they take a proper upright posture and align their limbs, then breathe deeply and consciously, regulating the breath and creating a sense of quietude within. From there they practice single-minded focus for the attainment of a tranquil mind, also described as the “cultivated,” “stable,” “excellent,” and “well-ordered” mind. This well-ordered mind then creates an open space within, a lodging place where *qi* can come to stay and flow about freely.

Once filled with the potency of *qi*, adepts achieve complete balance in body and mind. They reach a level of simplicity that allows them to let go of things and be free from sensory overloads. Finding a state of serenity and repose in detachment from emotions that resembles the state of clarity and stillness proposed in the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Book of the Way and Its Power),

¹ The original text with the pioneering translation by James Legge can be found at <http://ctext.org/Zhuangzi>. Other prominent translations include Watson 1968a; Graham 1981; 1986; Mair 1994; Kohn 2011. For a complete list, see Mair 2010, 228-32.

they walk through life in harmony with all, free from danger and harm. At peace within and in alignment with the world, they attain a level of physical health that keeps them fit and active well into old age. Reaching beyond ordinary life, they gain a sense of cosmic freedom that allows them to “hold up the Great Circle [of the heavens] and tread firmly over the Great Square [of the earth]” (Roth 1999, 112-13).

Another combination physical practices and spiritual attainment appears in the Han-dynasty commentary to the *Daode jing* attributed to Heshang gong 河上公, the Master on the River. A Daoist sage of some renown, he is said to have lived near the Yellow River under Emperor Wen (r. 179-156 BCE), studying the *Daode jing*. The emperor was a great devotee of Laozi and his teachings. He had the text recited at court, but had difficulties understanding certain passages. He learns about Heshang gong and summons him to court, but the master refuses. Impatient, the emperor goes to see him, scolding him for his lack of respect. Instead of groveling before the ruler, the master rises in levitation to hover between Heaven and Earth, thus making it clear that he is beyond all civil authority. Deeply awed, the emperor apologizes and begs to receive his teachings, upon which Heshang gong hands over the manuscript of his commentary.²

Now contained in the Daoist Canon under the title *Heshang gong zhangju* 河上公章句 (Verses and Sayings of the Master on the River, DZ 682),³ it focuses mainly on the link between personal cultivation and the perfection of rulership. It explains the rather abstract philosophical verses of the *Daode jing* in terms of *qi* control through breathing, dietetics, and the visualization of psychological agents or “spirits” in the five central organs of the body, thus linking longevity and transcendence (see Sakade 2007b).

As far as concrete methods go, the earliest practice instructions on specifically physical techniques appear in an inscription on a dodecagonal jade block that dates from the 4th century B.C.E. and is entitled *Xingqi* 行氣 (Guiding Qi). The original function of the block remains uncertain (see Chen 1982),

² The Heshang gong legend is detailed in the *Laozi daode jing xujue* 道德經序訣 (Introductory Explanation to the Perfect Scripture of the Dao and Its Inherent Potency) which dates from the about the 5th century CE and survives in several Dunhuang manuscripts (S. 75, P. 2370). For a detailed study of the figure and the text, see Chan 1991.

³ Numbers in the Daoist Canon refer to the extensive annotated catalog by Schipper and Verellen (2004). A full translation of the commentary appears in Erkes 1958; sections on inner cultivation are also rendered in Needham 1983, 130-35.

but its forty-five characters describe a fundamental *qi* practice that reappears in the first section of the *Shiwen* (Harper 1998, 386-87), forms an important part of longevity practice throughout the middle ages, and is still central to internal alchemy and qigong today under the name Microcosmic Orbit (*xiao zhoutian* 小周天; see Chia and Chia 1993).⁴

To perform the practice, people inhale deeply, allow the breath to enter both the chest and the mouth, and in the latter mix it with saliva, another potent form of *qi* in the body. Moving their tongue around their mouth, they gather the saliva and gain a sense of fullness, then swallow, allowing the *qi* to sink down. They feel it moving deep into their abdomen, where they let it settle in the central area of gravity, known in Chinese medicine as the Ocean of *Qi* (*qihai* 氣海) and in Daoism as the cinnabar or elixir field (*dantian* 丹田). There the *qi* rests and becomes stable, growing stronger as it accumulates. Eventually it does not remain in the lower abdomen but begins to spread through the body or, as the text says, it “sprouts.” Once this is felt, adepts can consciously guide it upwards, in close coordination with deep breathing pushing it down to the pelvic floor and then moving it up along the spine. The goal of the practice is to open the body to *qi* while harmonizing its flow, and thus ensuring inner focus and physical health.

More extensive and detailed *qi* practices are outlined in six medical manuscripts unearthed at Mawangdui 馬王堆 (168 BCE). Two texts deal almost solely with sexual cultivation, discussing the best times and frequency of sexual intercourse as well as herbal remedies for impotence and weakness. They are the *He yinyang* 和陰陽 (Harmonizing Yin and Yang) and the *Tianxia zhidao tan* 天下至道談 (The Perfect Dao in the World). Two texts focus on breathing, dietetics, and herbal drugs: the *Yangsheng fang* 養生方 (Recipes for Nourishing Life;) and the *Shiwen*. Two further works focus on breathing and exercises. The *Quegu shiqi* 卻穀食氣 (Eliminating Grains and Eating *Qi*) covers ways of fasting by means of controlled breathing, repeatedly contrasting “those who ingest *qi*” with “those who ingest grain,” while the *Daoyintu* 導引圖 (Exercise Chart) presents forty-four color illustrations of human figures performing healing exercises.⁵

⁴ The original of the block is reprinted in Li 1993, 320-23. Discussions appear in Engelhardt 1996, 19; Harper 1998, 126; Wilhelm 1948.

⁵ All these texts are translated with extensive annotation and detailed explanations in Harper 1998. Those on sexual practices also appear in Wile 1992, 77-83. They are not included in this anthology.



Fig. 2. The “Exercise Chart” from Mawangdui

Another set of early cultivation texts was unearthed at Zhangjiashan 張家山 and dated to 186 BCE: the *Maishu* 脈書 (Channel Book), a compilation of several texts with lists of ailments and descriptions of eleven *qi*-conduits (Harper 1998, 31-33; Ikai 1995, 29); and the *Yinshu* 引書 (Stretch Book), a short text presents seasonal health regimens, a series of about a hundred exercises in three sections, and a brief discussion on the etiology of disease and ways of prevention. The *Yinshu* is the earliest text to outline specific exercises and their medical application in great detail; it also prescribes certain breaths to use for the balancing of *qi*, curing of diseases, and extension of life. Unlike the earlier texts but very much like the Mawangdui manuscripts, it is very clearly a medical work, representing the physical dimension of Chinese longevity.⁶

⁶ The original text of the *Yinshu* is reprinted in modern characters Wenwu 1990, 84-85; Li 1993, 340; Ikai 2004, 27-28. The first section also translated in Harper 1998, 110-11; other parts appear in Harper 1998, 132-33. The various exercises are translated and discussed in Engelhardt 1996; Kohn 2008, 41-61.

Translation

Everlasting Life ⁷

The Yellow Emperor retired, left the world, set up a solitary hut, spread a plain mat, and went on retreat for three months. After that he went to see Guangchengzi, the Master of Wide Accomplishments. He found him lying down with his head to the south. In abject submission, the Yellow Emperor approached him on his knees, knocked his head to ground twice, and asked: “I have heard that you have attained utmost Dao. May I ask what self-cultivation I should practice to reach extended longevity?”

The Master got up quickly: “What a great question! Come and I will tell you all about utmost Dao. Its innermost essence is serene and obscure; its highest ultimate is murky and silent.

“Practice being unseeing and unhearing, guard your spirit in stillness, and your body will automatically right itself.

“Practice clarity and stillness, never labor your body, never agitate your essence, and you can reach long life.

“With your eyes unseeing, your ears unhearing, and your mind unknowing, your spirit will keep your body whole, and it will live forever. Protect your inner being, close off outside contacts: much knowledge leads to defeat.

“I will take you to the Heights of Great Radiance, the source of Utmost Yang. I will guide you through the Gate of Serene Obscurity, the source of Utmost Yin. This is where Heaven and Earth are administered, where yin and yang are being kept.

“Protect your physical self, and things will naturally be vigorous. I constantly guard the One and rest in its deepest harmony. I have cultivated myself for 1,200 years, and my body has yet to decay.”

Deeply impressed, the Yellow Emperor again knocked his head to ground: “You really are like Heaven!”

“Come and I will tell you,” the Master said. “That thing I have been talking about is limitless, yet people all think it has a limit. It is immeasurable, yet people all think its can be measured.

⁷ From *Zhuangzi* 11. The rendition here follows Kohn 2011, 129-31.

“Attaining Dao will make you a sovereign above and a king below. Losing Dao, you may see the light above but you’ll remain mere dust below—like all the flourishing creatures that arise from dust and return to dust.

“For this reason, I leave all that behind, go through the gate to the limitless, and frolic in the fields of infinity. I join my light with that of the sun and moon, extend my life span to that of Heaven and Earth. Things come near me—I remain with chaos. Things move away from me—I stay in oblivion. All others may well die—I alone survive!”

Inward Training ⁸

People’s vitality always comes from being straight and upright. It is always lost due to joy, anger, worry, and resentment. To stop anger, nothing beats poetry; to stop worry, nothing beats music. To choose the right music, the best way is by propriety; to maintain propriety, the best way to through respect; to cultivate respect, the best way is in stillness.

Being still within and respectful without, you can recover your true inner nature; by resting in your inner nature, you find great stability.

Eating the right way. Fill up greatly and your *qi* suffers, causing the body to decline; restrict your intake greatly and your bones dry up, causing the blood to clot. The median between filling and restricting is called “harmony complete.” Here vital essence lodges and awareness springs forth.

If ever you lose the right measure of hunger and satiation, make a plan: when full, exercise vigorously; when hungry, empty your thoughts [of food]; when feeling old and tired, let go of worries.

If you don’t exercise vigorously when full, your *qi* cannot flow to your four limbs. If you don’t empty your thoughts when hungry, you won’t be able to stop when you next eat. If you don’t let go of worries when you feel old and tired, your inner resources will quickly be depleted.

Expand your mind and let it run free; open you *qi* and let it be wide. Keep your body still and don’t move; guard the One and release all vexations.

Look upon profit without attraction, look upon potential harm without fear. At ease with others, you can be benevolent to all. Happy alone, you can delight in yourself.

This is what we call letting the *qi* circulate freely: in intention and action always modeling Heaven.

⁸ From the *Neiye* chapter of the *Guanzi*, sects. 22-25.

People's vitality always comes from inner joy. The moment you worry, you lose your core thread; the moment you get angry, you lose your stabilizing ends. As long as you are given to worry, sadness, joy, or anger, Dao has no place to stay!

Thus immediately still all cravings and desires; straighten out all foolish [assumptions] and upsetting [thoughts]. Never pull, never push—good fortune arrives of itself, Dao naturally comes to roost.

Yes, make your lists and plans, but know this: Keep still and you will succeed, get nervous and you will fail.

Controlling *Qi* ⁹

Image Complete

Nourish the spirits and you will not die. [The spirit of the valley does not die.]

“Valley” means “nourish.” If one can nourish the spirits, one does not die. The “spirits” are the spirits of the five organs: the spirit soul in the liver, the material soul in the lungs, the spirit in the heart, the intention in the spleen, and the essence in the kidneys. If the five organs are exhausted or harmed, the five spirits will leave and one dies.

This is called the mysterious and the female. [It is called the mysterious female.]

This means that the Dao of no-death lies in the mysterious and the female. The mysterious is heaven; in the human body it is the nose. The female is earth; in the human body it is the mouth.

Heaven feeds people with the five *qi*, which enter the organs through the nose and settle in the heart. The five *qi* are pure and subtle; they cause people to have sentience and spirituality, intelligence and perception, sound and voice, as well as the five kinds of inner nature. They are represented in the spirit soul, which is male and leaves and enters the human body through the nose in order to interact with heaven. Therefore, the nose is the mysterious.

⁹ From *Heshang gong zhangju*, chs. 6, 50, and 10. Chapters 6 and 50 also appear in *Yangxing yanming lu* 1.1b-2b. The translation of the original verses reflects the commentary's interpretation. The standard rendition is added in brackets. For a searchable online text of the *Daode jing*, see <http://ctext.org/dao-de-jing>.

Earth feeds people with the five flavors, which enter the organs through the mouth and settle in the stomach. The five flavors are turbid and heavy; they cause people to have body and skeleton, bones and flesh, blood and pulses, and the six kinds of emotional passions. They are represented in the material soul, which is female and leaves and enters the human body through the mouth in order to interact with earth. Therefore the mouth is the female.

The gates of the mysterious and the female are called the root of Heaven and Earth.

“Root” means “prime.” This means that the gates of the nose and the mouth are whereby the primordial *qi* that pervades Heaven and Earth comes and goes.

It goes on forever. [It is an endless flow of inexhaustible qi.]

Breathe through nose and mouth softly or hard. In either case, do so without interruption and very subtly, hardly knowing whether the breath is coming or going, is there or not there.

Use it and never be strained. [Use it, and it will never be exhausted.]

In using the breath you should be open and relaxed, never rushing or straining.

Honoring Life

Coming into life,

This means that as emotions and passions issue from the five inner organs, the spirit soul is stable and the material soul still. Then there is life.

We enter into death.

This means that as emotions and passions enter into chest and intention, essence scatters and spirit is confused. Then there is death.

Following life: there are ten and three; following death, there are ten and three.

This passage speaks about the different aspects of life and death. Each of them has thirteen. To wit, there are nine orifices and four passes. They are alive when the eyes do not see wantonly, the ears do not hear wantonly, the nose does not smell wantonly, the mouth does not speak wantonly, the hands

do not point wantonly, the feet do not walk wantonly, and when essence does not move wantonly. They die when the opposite occurs.

Alive, yet moving toward death: there are also ten and three.

People wish to pursue life and activity, yet they act contrary to that and move toward death in thirteen ways.

Why is that? It is because they pursue the intensity of life.

The reason why people move toward death is that they pursue life's activities and great intensity. Thereby they get farther away from Dao and go against heaven, acting wantonly in all they do.

Now, I have heard that someone who is good at supporting life when walking on dry land will not encounter rhinos or tigers, when joining the army will not be exposed to shields and weapons. At such a person rhinoceroses do not butt their horns, tigers do not point their claws, soldiers do not thrust their knives. Why is this? It is because there is no death in him.

It is because he does not violate any of the thirteen points above that there is no death in such a person.

Can You?

Sustaining qi and the material soul, and thereby embracing the One, can you prevent it from leaving? [Can you balance your life force and embrace the One without separation?]

“Qi and material soul” are the same as “spirit and material souls.” People sustain the two kinds of souls and thereby obtain life. They should love and nurture them, realizing that joy and hatred cause the spirit soul to vanish while haste and alarm make the material soul leave. The spirit soul resides in the liver, the material soul in the lungs. Indulging in wine and sweet delicacies harms the liver and lungs. Instead people should keep the spirit soul tranquil so that their will can be set on the Dao, and they will be free from trouble. They should maintain the material soul in a state of peace so that they attain long life and can extend their years.

The second part says: if one can embrace the One and cause it to remain in the body, one will live forever. The one is the first product of Dao and virtue or inherent potency, the essential energy of Great Harmony. Therefore it is called the One. The One pervades everything in the world. Heaven attains it to become clear; Earth attains it to become solid; princes and kings

attain it to become upright and just. Entering people, it forms their mind; emerging from people, it forms their activities; spreading through people, it forms their inherent potency [virtue]. All this is simply called the One. What it ultimately means in practice is that one makes the will one and not two.

Concentrating on the breath and attaining softness, can you be like an infant? [Can you control your breath, quietly, like a baby?]

Concentrating firmly on essence and breath without letting it be disturbed, your whole physical being will adapt to it and become soft and pliant. On the inside be without yearnings and worries, on the outside without ambitions and affairs: then the spirits will not leave.

Purifying and cleansing your mysterious perception, can you be without error? [Can you clarify your dark vision without blemish?]

You should purify your mind and make it clean and pure. With the mind resting in mysterious union, perception can know everything. Therefore the text speaks of mysterious perception.

Then you will be free from lasciviousness and wrongdoing.

Nurturing the people, governing the country, can you be without action? Regulating the body means nourishing *qi* and breath; this will make the body whole. Governing the country means nurturing the people; this will put the land at peace.

Regulating the body means inhaling and exhaling essence and breath without allowing the ears to hear it. Governing the country means spreading inherent potency [virtue] and compassion without letting the people know it.

As the Gate of Heaven opens and shuts, can you be like the female? [Can you open and close the Gate of Heaven without clinging to earth?]

The Gate of Heaven is the constellation Purple Tenuity in the North Culmen. It opens and shuts, begins and ends in accordance with the five phases. In regulating the body, the Gate of Heaven is the nostrils. To open it, breathe hard; to shut it, breathe softly.

In regulating the body, you should be like the female, quiet and tranquil, soft and weak. In governing the country, you should be in accordance with the world's transformations and never take the lead.

Brightly penetrating the four quarters, can you be without knowledge? [Can you brighten the four directions without knowledge?]

This means that Dao is as bright as the sun and the moon, penetrates all directions, and fills the world even beyond its eight ultimate poles. Therefore it is said: “Look for it and do not see it; listen for it and do not hear it” [*Daode jing* 14]. Manifest everywhere in the ten directions, it is radiant and shines brilliantly. Yet nobody knows how Dao fills the world.

It generates and nurtures them. [*Give birth and cultivate.*]

Dao gives birth to the myriad beings and nurtures them.

It generates but does not possess. [*Give birth and do not possess.*]

Dao gives birth to the myriad beings but it does not take possession of them.

It acts but does not depend on them. [*Act without dependence.*]

Dao acts widely everywhere but never depends on or expects any reward.

It raises them but does not control them. [*Excel but do not rule.*]

Dao raises and nurtures the myriad beings but it does not control them or hold them back, thereby turning them into mere tools.

This is called mysterious potency.

This means that Dao and its inherent potency in their mysterious union cannot be seen, yet they wish to make people know Dao.

Guiding *Qi* ¹⁰

To guide the *qi*, allow it to enter deeply [by inhaling] and collect it [in the mouth]. As it collects, it will expand. Once expanded, it will sink down. When it sinks down, it comes to rest. After it has come to rest, it becomes stable.

When the *qi* is stable, it begins to sprout. From sprouting, it begins to grow. As it grows, it can be pulled back upwards. When it is pulled upwards, it reaches the crown of the head.

It then touches above at the crown of the head and below at the base of the spine. Practice this and attain long life. Go against this and die.

¹⁰ From the Dodecagonal Jade Block.

The Stretch Book ¹¹

Spring: generate; summer: grow; fall: collect; winter: store—such is the way of Pengzu.

Spring days. After rising in the morning, pass water, wash and rinse, clean and click the teeth. Loosen the hair, stroll to the lower end of the hall to meet the purest of dew and receive the essence of Heaven, and drink one cup of water. These are the means to increase long life. Enter the chamber [for sex] between evening and late midnight [1 a.m.]. More would harm the *qi*.

Summer days. Wash the hair frequently, but bathe rarely. Do not rise late and eat many greens. After rising in the morning and passing water, wash and rinse the mouth, then clean the teeth. Loosen the hair, walk to the lower end of the hall and after a while drink a cup of water. Enter the chamber between evening and midnight. More would harm the *qi*.

Fall days. Bathe and wash the hair frequently. As regards food and drink, let hunger or satiation be whatever the body desires. Enter the chamber however often the body finds it beneficial and comfortable—this is the way to greatest benefit.

Winter days. Bathe and wash the hair frequently. The hands should be cold and the feet warm; the face cold and the body warm. Rise from sleep late; while lying down, stretch out straight. Enter the chamber between evening and early midnight [11 p.m.]. More would harm the *qi*.

1. Lifting one shin across the opposite thigh, moving it up and down thirty times is called Crossing Thighs.

2. Extending the shin, then pointing and flexing the toes thirty times is called Measuring Worm.

3. Placing the feet parallel, then rocking back and forth thirty times is called Shifting Toes.

4. Extending the shin, straightening the heel and rocking thirty times is called The Parapet.

5. Stretching the toes, then raising and rocking them thirty times is called Stretch Move.

6. Bending the shins, alternating right and left, forward and back thirty times is called Forward Push.

¹¹ From *Yinshu*.

7. Rubbing the shin with the opposite foot, moving along its front and back thirty times is called [unnamed].

8. Extending the feet straight forward thirty times is called Stretching Yang.

9. Rubbing the backs of the feet thirty times on each side is called [unnamed].

10. Hamstring Stretch: interlace the fingers [lit. “join the hands”] at the back and bend forward.

11. Upward Gaze: interlace the fingers at the back, then look up and turn the head.

12. Bend and Gaze: interlace the fingers at the back and bend forward, then turn the head to look at your heels.

13. Side and Back: interlace the fingers at the back, then lean sideways and turn [the head] toward the [opposite] shoulder.

14. Duck in Water: interlace the fingers at the back and move the head back and forth.

15. Rotating Stretch: interlace the fingers, raise the arms, and twist backward.

16. Upright Swivel: interlace the fingers at the back, contract the neck, and turn the head.

17. Snapping Yin: place one foot forward [with bent knee], interlace the fingers, bend forward, and hook them around [the knee].

18. Reverse Rotation: interlace the fingers, bend forward, and look up, moving the arms from side to side.

19. Dragon Flourish: step one leg forward with bent knee while stretching the other leg back, then interlace the fingers, place them on the knee, and look up.

20. Lower Back Stretch: step one leg forward with bent knee while stretching the other leg back, then interlace the fingers, twist, and revolve backwards.

21. Snake Wriggle: interlace the fingers at the back, click the teeth and swivel the head around.

22. Twisting the Tail Bone: with both hands [text missing].

23. Great Spread: place both hands on the floor with vigor, then step the feet back and forth between them.

24. [Forward Hold]: spread the legs wide and bend to hold the left foot with the right hand; alternate right and left.

25. Limbs Dropping: place the hands on the hips, then twist one arm forward toward the feet and bend.

26. **Gibbon Hold:** hold the left foot with the right hand and twist the left hand back as you bend to the right and left.

27. **Triple [Stretch]:** raise both arms high and [while bending] extend them forward, then out to the sides.

28. **Hanging Forward:** bend forward, raise both hands and look up as if looking for something.

29. **Arm Punch:** propel both arms forward as if hitting someone.

30. **Pointing Back:** interlace the fingers, raise them overhead and bend back as far as possible.

31. **[Reaching] Below:** step one leg forward with bent knee while stretching the other leg back, then lift one arm and stretch it with vigor.

32. **Tiger Stretch:** place one foot forward, raise one arm and bend.

33. **Yin Stretch:** interlace the fingers with palms facing out and lift them, then bend forward as far as you can.

34. **Yang Stretch:** interlace the fingers, stretch the arms forward, and look up as far as you can.

35. **Double Deer:** raise both arms, push up, then bend forward as far as you can.

36. **Tiger Crouch:** with arms parallel, rotate the shoulders up and back, alternating on the right and left.

37. **Leaping Toad:** with arms parallel, swing them to the right and left, up and down.

38. **Cart Cover:** with arms parallel, swing them outward to the right and left, then lower them straight down and swing them back and forth.

39. **Nose to Belly:** bend forward and lift both arms to the right and left.

40. **Calculating Wolf:** place the hands beneath their respective armpits and rotate the chest.

41. **Warrior Pointing:** with the left foot forward, use the left hand to point the fingers forward, stretching the arm.

42. **To relieve inner tension:** Sit in dignified kneel with the tailbone supported. With the left hand stroke the neck and with the right hand stroke the left hand. Now, bend forward as far as you can, then very slowly let go as you exhale with *xu*. Sit up straight and look up. Repeat five times, then change sides in the handhold, for a total of ten repetitions.

43. **To relieve neck pain and difficulties in turning the neck:** Lie down flat, stretch the hands and feet [*next five characters illegible*]. Then lift the head from front to back as far as you can. Very slowly come back to a straight position and rest. Repeat ten times. Afterwards cover the mouth and hold the breath. Wait until you sweat and you will feel better.

44. To relieve fatigue at the onset of a disease, when you note that your mind wanders restlessly and your body aches all over: practice Eight Meridians Stretch and quickly exhale with *hu* and *xu*, thereby releasing yang. Also, soak the face with cold water for the time it takes to eat a bowl of rice, then discard the water. Take a bamboo cloth in both hands and rub it over your face, moving it up and down. All the while continue to exhale *hu*, *hu*. Repeat ten times.

45. To relieve the onset of an intestinal ailment: The first sign is swelling. When you notice the swelling, place your intention on the lower abdomen and exhale with *chui*. Repeat a hundred times.

46. Grasp a pole with the right hand, face the wall, hold the breath, and place the left foot forward and up against the wall. Rest when you get tired. Similarly, take the pole in the left hand and step forward with the right foot against the wall. Again stop when tired. This makes the *qi* flow down from the head.

47. To relieve tense muscles: Stand with legs hip-width apart and hold both thighs. Then bend the left leg while stretching the right thigh back, reaching the knee to the floor. Once done, [change legs and] bend the right leg while stretching the left leg back and reaching that knee to the floor. Repeat three times.

48. Get a piece of wood that can be easily carved, about a fist in circumference and four feet long. Cover its ends [with cloth] and hang it about four feet above the floor with a new rope. Sit on the piece of wood, hold the rope with both hands and kick out with your feet. Do a thousand repetitions each in the morning, at noon, in the evening, and at midnight, and within ten days you will be fine.

49. To relieve ankle pain: Put your weight on [lit. “stand on”] the inner ankle of the right foot and stretch the right inner calf. Then put your weight on the outer ankle and stretch the right outer calf. After this, put your weight on the inner ankle of the left foot and stretch the left inner calf. Then put your weight on the outer ankle and stretch the left outer calf. Repeat this three times on each side.

50. If the right knee hurts, hold on to a staff with the left hand, then turn the right foot in and out a thousand times. If the left knee hurts, hold on to a staff with the right hand, then turn the left foot in and out a thousand times. Next, grab the left toes with the left hand and pull them backwards ten times, while the right hand still holds the staff. Then grab the right toes with the right hand and pull them back ten times while holding the staff with the left hand. . . .

Holding the Breath is good for stretching the muscles.
Hall Dropping is good for balancing the meridians.
Snake Wriggle is good for enhancing the brain.
Duck in Water is good for opening the neck.
Flushing Flesh along the meridians is good for all from heel to head.
Side and Back is good for the ears.
Upward Gaze is good for the eyes.
Opening the Mouth and looking up is good for the nose.
Spitting without Emitting is good for the mouth.
Rubbing the Heart and lifting the head is good for the throat.
Upright Swivel is good for the base of the neck.
Tiger Turn is good for the neck.
Triple Stretch is good for the shoulder muscles.
Limbs Dropping is good for the armpits.
Bird Stretch is good for the shoulder joints.
Turn and Shake is good for abdomen and belly.
Turn and Twist is good for the sides.
Bear Amble is good for the lower back.
Repeated Hold is good for the hips.
Step of Yu is good for the thighs.
Forward Loosening is good for the knees.
Turn and Push is good for feet and heels.
Shifting Toes is good for the *qi* of the feet.
Stomping Heels is good for the chest.
All these should be done with three repetitions.

Chapter Two

Moderation and Self-Control

In the early middle ages, during the Three Kingdoms (220-265), Western and Eastern Jin dynasties (265-419), documents on nourishing life come dominantly from aristocrats who, either by choice or because they were deprived of official careers due to political circumstances, had time on their hands to think and write about lifestyle and self-cultivation. Their primary concern is the balancing of *qi* through various measures that involve time, space, nature, and human interaction. Their advice ranges from the very general—structure of the body and nature of mind and life—to the highly particular. Applying common household knowledge of Chinese medicine, they provide specific guidelines for dressing, sleeping, bathing, eating, sexual relations, mental attitudes, social behavior, and more, always indicating which organs will suffer. Under their impact and reflecting their key concerns, longevity literature mushrooms into a massive hodgepodge of suggestions, combining deep insights with detailed instructions, petty limitations, and abstruse taboos.

The first and best known among longevity writers of this period is Xi Kang 稽康 (223-262), born into a clan of officials under the Wei Kingdom (in modern Anhui) and married to a princess of its royal Cao family around 245. When the Sima clan of the future Jin rulers took over the government in 249, he was made redundant and retired to his country estate where he headed a group of similarly placed men known as the “Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove” (Nienhauser 1986, 410-11).

They pursued various leisure activities, engaged in spirited philosophical debates, dabbled in longevity practices, and wrote beautiful poems and intellectual essays. Although they held a firm belief in immortality and sought contact with the higher spheres, their practice was less religious than

escapist (see Balasz 1948; Holzman 1956). It involved consuming wine in large quantities and taking narcotic and psychedelic drugs, notably the notorious Cold Food Powder (*hanshi san* 寒食散), which caused great visions and made the body feel very hot. This in turn inspired the “sages” to remove their clothing and jump into the cooling waters of nearby ponds and rivers, giving them a reputation of wild eccentricity and reckless abandon (Wagner 1973).

Their main contribution to the longevity tradition centers on Xi Kang’s essay, *Yangsheng lun* 養生論 (On Nourishing Life). In this work, he professes a strong belief in immortality yet claims that not everyone can attain it because it requires a special gift that manifests itself in the presence of an extraordinary *qi*. Yet even without this special *qi*, by practicing various longevity techniques and controlling all excesses one can extend one’s life to several hundred years.

His position was criticized severely by his fellow sage Xiang Xiu 向秀 in the *Nan Yangsheng lun* 難養生論 (Criticizing “On Nourishing Life”). A hedonist, he proposes to experience life as intensely as possible, to pursue all the happiness that can be afforded by the senses. For him, realization means to appreciate and savor all the feelings of being alive. He criticizes the efforts of longevity-seekers who deny themselves all sensual gratification in order to prolong a merely physical existence. He asks: What good is a life I cannot enjoy? His attitude differs from the classic ideals of perfection, which claimed that the only life worth enjoying was the purified and tranquil sojourn on earth in as much alignment and contact with Dao, gods, and the virtue of Heaven and Earth, bringing a more hedonistic and ecstatic dimension of fullness of life into the foreground.¹

Another aristocrat who turned away from politics to engage in life-extension was the would-be alchemist and scholar Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343), who called himself Baopuzi 抱朴子 (Master Who Embraces Simplicity). Born into the southern aristocracy, he grew up in a small town near Jiankang 建康 (modern Nanjing). Rather than being motivated by a lack of opportunities, he was inspired by a family interest for otherworldly pursuits and became a disciple of the hermit and alchemist Zheng Yin 鄭陰 at the age of fourteen, studying with him for five years. After serving in the imperial administration in various minor capacities, he resigned his position to study longevity and immortality full time (Pregadio 2000, 167). He wandered around the country

¹ Complete translations and detailed discussions of these works can be found in Henricks 1983; Holzman 1957. They are not translated here.

in search of ancient manuscripts and learned masters, then came home to write down his findings.

In his autobiography—the first of its kind in Chinese literature (see Wells 2009)—he describes how he eschewed official positions and even avoided social interaction with his peers because his one aim in life was to become immortal, i.e., reach a state of perfect health and extended longevity that would allow the concoction of an alchemical elixir and ascension to the heavens (Ware 1966, 6-21). The foundation of this state were the longevity techniques—exercises, breathing, dietetics, and meditations—followed by the great alchemical endeavor, which alone could lead to ultimate immortality (Pregadio 2006, 125).



Fig. 3. Ge Hong

His most important work is the *Baopuzi neipian* 抱朴子內篇 (Inner Chapters of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity, DZ 1185; trl. Ware 1966), which was first completed in 317, the very year when Central Asian invaders forced the Chinese court to take refuge in the south, leading to the change from the Western to the Eastern Jin dynasty. A twenty-chapter compendium on the techniques and practices of the immortals, it provides an overview of the various esoteric practices prevalent at the time, including much material on longevity practices (Robinet 1997, 78-113).

Two short texts that focus on this aspect of Ge Hong's work survive in the Daoist Canon. One, the *Baopuzi yangsheng lun* 抱朴子養生論 (Baopuzi on Nourishing Life, DZ 842), is associated specifically with him; the other, the *Pengzu shesheng yangxing lun* 彭祖攝生養性論 (Pengzu on Preserving Life and Nourishing Inner Nature, DZ 840), connects to the immortal Pengzu often called the "Chinese Methuselah" since he supposedly lived for 800 years.² They prescribe moderation in all things, physical, emotional, and

² He has a biography in the *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 (Immortals' Biographies, DZ 294), see Kaltenmark 1953, 60) as well as in Ge Hong's *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biog-

mental, emphasizing control of the senses and balance of food and clothing in accordance with the seasons. Their list of twelve things to do “little” is cited widely in longevity materials throughout the middle ages and their emphasis on spirit and *qi* is essential in the literature. The two dimensions of longevity—spiritual and medical—are thoroughly merged at this time, and there are increasingly detailed instructions on daily living, food consumption, and mental attitudes.

Another important document of the same period is the *Yangsheng yaoji* 養生要集 (Long Life Compendium) by the aristocrat and official Zhang Zhan 張湛 (fl. 370). He is best known as the first and most important commentator to the Daoist philosophical text *Liezi* 列子 (Book of Master Lie; trl. Graham 1960), which supports a similar view of the body as the *Yangsheng yaoji* (see Sakade 1986, 10; Kohn 2009).³ Zhang Zhan, also called Chudu 處度, does not have a biography in the dynastic histories despite the fact that he wrote several philosophical commentaries in the Profound Learning (Xuanxue 玄學) tradition of Daoism, authored two compendia on longevity practices, served as imperial secretary under the Eastern Jin, and was born into a family of senior officials under the Western Jin (Despeux 1989, 228). Rather, information about him is anecdotal, some found in the story collection *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (A New Account of Tales of the World; trl. Mather 1976), some in the biographies of contemporary officials and later descendants.

According to these sources, Zhang Zhan was philosophically minded and a follower of Dark Learning thinkers such as the *Zhuangzi* commentator Guo Xiang 郭象 (d. 312), whom he frequently cites in his *Liezi* commentary. He also had medical knowledge and was eager to improve the *qi* in his residence by planting various kinds of pine trees. The *Jinshu* 晉書 (History of the Jin Dynasty) biography of Fan Ning 范寧 further mentions that he was susceptible to eyestrain, for which he took a longevity recipe consisting of six ingredients: read less, think less, focus inward, scan outward, sleep late, and go to bed early. He was to mix these ingredients with *qi* and take them to

ographies of Spirit Immortals, JHL 89) (Campany 2002, 194-204). The abbreviation JHL stands for *Daozang jinghua lu*. The numbering refers to Komjathy 2002.

³ The first mention of authorship of the commentary is in the bibliographic section of the *Suishu* 隨書 (History of the Sui Dynasty) of the 7th century (Despeux 1989, 228). Zhang Zhan is a common name, and it is also remotely possible that the author was an official in northern China, known as Zhang Ziran 張自然 (Zhu 1986, 102).

heart for seven days. This would enhance his vision and extend his life (Stein 1999, 101).

An imperial official and well-educated thinker with time on his hands, Zhang Zhan engaged in wide reading and practiced long life techniques. Like other aristocratic authors on the subject, he had the material cushion necessary to indulge his interest in medical learning and was well connected to the literati. The practices he mentions were probably well known and widely used at the time, and he may well have put together the *Yangsheng yaoji* to help his fellow aristocrats stay healthy and live moderately despite their riches and newly found leisure, thus using long life practices predominantly for this-worldly advancement.

The *Yangsheng yaoji* has not survived as an independent text, being lost probably after the rebellion of An Lushan 安祿山 in 755 (Barrett 1980, 172). It survives in fragments, notably in Tang medical and longevity works, recently collated and translated by Stephan Stein (1999). The earliest among its sources is the *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 諸病源候論 (Origins and Symptoms of Medical Disorders), a medical compendium in 50 *juan*. Compiled by a committee under the guidance of the court physician Chao Yuanfang 巢元方, it was presented to Emperor Yang of the Sui in 610 (see Despeux and Obringer 1997). Its selections tend to emphasize the more medical dimensions of longevity practice.

Another important source is the *Yangxing yanming lu* 養性延命錄 (Record on Nourishing Inner Nature and Extending Life, DZ 838), a Daoist collection of meditative, breathing, and physical practices in two *juan*, ascribed alternatively to the Highest Clarity master, alchemist, and naturalist Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536) and to the master physician and Daoist Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581-682). It includes many passages close to Sun's other works and goes back to at least the mid-seventh century (see Mugitani 1987; Despeux in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 345) (see ch. 7 below).

The most extensive source of *Yangsheng yaoji* citations is the *Ishinpō* 醫心方 (Essential Medical Methods; trl. Hsia et al. 1986), an extensive Japanese medical collection by the court physician Tamba no Yasuyori 丹波瀨康 (912-995), presented to the emperor in 984 (Sakade 1989, 3-9). It consists of thirty chapters and cites 204 largely Chinese sources that were partially lost in China itself and thus only survive here. Chapter 28, for example, provides the foundation of much information we now have on medieval Chinese sexual cultivation (see Ishihara and Levy 1970; Wile 1992), while chapter 26 discusses the theory of life extension and 27 presents a thorough outline of vari-

ous longevity practices. Passages from the *Yangsheng yaoji* appear here as well as in several other chapters, notably such as ch. 29 on nutrition and ch. 30 on medical substances (Stein 1999, 122).

As outlined in the *Yangxing yanming lu*, the text has ten sections:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Endowed with Spirit 稟神 | 6. Eating and Drinking 飲食 |
| 2. Caring for <i>Qi</i> 愛氣 | 7. The Bedchamber 房室 |
| 3. Nourishing the Body 養形 | 8. Rejecting Habits 反俗 |
| 4. Guiding and Stretching 導引 | 9. Medicinal Supplements 醫藥 |
| 5. Speaking and Talking 言語 | 10. Various Taboos 雜忌 |

The text thus begins with an outline of practices that support the spirit and *qi*, focusing on establishing a moderate lifestyle and harmonious balance of worldly activities and personal cultivation as well as setting up a daily routine of *qi*-absorption. It then moves on to more mundane matters of sleep, baths, and hair care to continue with recommendations for exercises, the proper use of speech, and dietary and herbal suggestions, including monthly taboos and food combinations. Sexual practices tend to focus on temporal and physical constraints, while “Various Taboos” involve warnings against doing things in excess. It is not clear what “Rejecting Habits” (*fansu* 反俗) means and there are no fragments under this heading.

Translation

Nourishing Life ¹

[1a] The Master Who Embraces Simplicity said:

The human body resembles a country. The role of the belly and stomach is like that of the central palace. The position of the limbs and skeleton is like that of the outer regions. The arrangement of bones and joints is like that of the hundred officials. The arrangement of the connective tissue is like the four imperial highways. The spirit is like the ruler. The blood is like the ministers. The *qi* is like the people. Thus the accomplished person governs himself just as an enlightened ruler governs his country.

¹ *Baopuzi yangsheng lun*. Some parts of this also appear in *Baopuzi* 13 and 18.

Loving the people is a prime way to stabilize the country. Loving the *qi* is a key method to make the body whole. If the people are distressed, the country will perish. If the *qi* declines, the body fails. Thus, all accomplished people and superior gentlemen take medicines before the onset of illness and do not pursue a cure after it has been defeated. Know therefore: Life is hard to preserve and easy to disperse. *Qi* is hard to keep pure and easy to get turbid. If you can always seize opportunities and manage to control your lusts and desires, you can preserve and maintain inner nature and destiny. [1b]

To be good at nourishing life, first of all eliminate the six harms [of the senses and emotions]. Then you can extend your years to a hundred. What to do?

1. Let go of fame and profit!
2. Limit sights and sounds!
3. Disregard goods and wealth!
4. Lessen smells and tastes!
5. Eliminate lies and falsehood!
6. Avoid all hate and envy!

Without eliminating the six harms, how can longevity cultivation be pursued?

Now, if you have not seen the benefit of the practice yet, even though your heart is attuned to the wondrous Dao, your mouth recites perfect scriptures, you suck and chew on bright florescence, and you inhale and exhale the luminants and heavenly signs, you still cannot supplement your life's shortcomings. Thus be very careful not to throw away the practice at the root and forget its branches. Be deeply aware of this!

To preserve harmony and complete perfection: think little, reflect little, laugh little, speak little, enjoy little, anger little, delight little, grieve little, like little, dislike little, engage little, deal little.

If you think much, the spirit disperses.

If you reflect much, the heart is labored.

If you laugh much, the organs and viscera soar [get excited].

If you speak much, the Ocean of *Qi* is empty and vacant.

If you enjoy much, the gall bladder and bladder take in outside wind.

If you anger much, the connective tissue pushes the blood around. [2a]

If you delight much, spirit and heart is wayward and unsettled.

If you grieve much, hair and whiskers dry and wither.

If you like much, will and *qi* is one-sided and overloaded.

If you dislike much, essence and power race off and soar away.

If you engage much, muscles and meridians tense and get nervous.
If you deal much, wisdom and worry are confused.

These attack life more than axes and spears; they diminish destiny worse than wolves and wolverines.

Also, do not sit for long, walk for long, watch for long, or listen for long. Do not force yourself to eat unless hungry; do not push yourself to drink unless thirsty. If you force yourself to eat without being hungry, your spleen will be labored; if you push to drink without being thirsty, your stomach will become swollen. The body should always be exercised; food should always be minimal. Yet even in exercise do not go to extremes; in minimizing food do not go to emaciation.

On winter mornings do not empty your mind; on summer nights do not eat your fill. Rise early but not before cock crow; rise late but not after sunrise. Keep your mind pure so that perfected spirits maintain their position; keep your *qi* stable so that deviant entities leave your body.

If you practice cheating and treachery, the spirit grieves; if you practice competition and strife, it is harmed. [2b] If you despise and insult people, your destiny is reduced; if you kill and harm living beings, your longevity suffers. Thus, if you perform even one good deed, the spirit souls rejoice; if you perform even one bad deed, the material souls are glad. [Note: The material souls like death; the spirit souls love life.]

Always reside in openness and generosity and preserve deep inner serenity. Then body and self will be calm and at peace, disasters and harm will not dare to come close. Your name will be entered in the registers of life while your record will be expunged from the ledgers of death. The entire principle of nourishing life rests on this.

As for refining reverted cinnabar to nourish the brain, transforming the golden fluid to maintain the spirit: this is the wondrous Dao of the highest perfected. These methods cannot be pursued and cultivated while still eating grain and taking blood [meat]. Among ten thousand people, only very few can attain it. Pay due attention!

Lord Lao said: "As for actualizing this Dao of mine: the highest practitioners will completely cultivate it and extend their years and life; medium practitioners will half cultivate it and be free from sickness and disasters; lesser practitioners will occasionally cultivate it and avoid untimely death; the ignorant, finally, will lose it utterly and forfeit their inner nature!" (*Daode jing* 41). This is just it.

Preserving Life and Nourishing Inner Nature ²

[1a] When spirit is strong, you live long. When *qi* is strong, you easily perish. Soft and weak, in awe of greatness—that means the spirit is strong. Burning with anger, the will proud—that means the *qi* is strong.

When ordinary people see that they do not have the determination to attain a certain goal and think about it compulsively, their will is injured. When they see that they do not have the strength to overcome a certain obstacle and push against it violently, their body is injured. Constantly sad without end, the spirit souls are harmed. Accumulating laments without end, the material souls disperse. [1b]

Indulging in excessive joy and anger, spirit leaves its residence.
Hating and loving without constancy, spirit exits the body.
Being full of anxieties and desires, spirit is troubled.
Worrying and panicking, spirit is defeated.

Talking and laughing for a long time, the inner organs and viscera suffer.
Sitting and standing for a long time, the muscles and bones suffer.
Sleeping and resting losing track of time, the liver suffers.
Moving and panting to fatigue and exhaustion, the spleen suffers.

Holding the bow and pulling the string, the muscles suffer.
Floating high and wading low, the kidneys suffer.
Getting drunk and throwing up, the lungs suffer.
Eating to fullness and sleeping on the side, the *qi* suffers.

Galloping like a horse and running around wildly, the stomach suffers.
Shouting and cursing with vile language, the gall bladder suffers.
Failing to keep yin and yang in proper exchange, ulcers develop.
Failing to balance bedchamber activities, fatigue and exhaustion result.

People in every generation hope to live for a long time, but even a long life does not normally go beyond 30,000 days [82 years]. If you cannot be even one day without lessening or harming one aspect [of yourself]—if you

² *Pengzu shesheng yangxing lun*. The second half of the text is identical with *Baopuzi* 13.8ab.

cannot have even one day of cultivation and supplementation [of *qi*]*—*the spirit will not stay and the body will not be healthy. Is this not deplorable? [2a]

For this reason, the method of nourishing life involves not spitting far and not walking hastily. Let the ears not listen to excess; let the eyes not look around extensively. Do not sit until tired; do not sleep beyond your needs. Wait until it is cold before you put on more clothes; wait until it is hot before you take them off. Do not get too hungry, because hunger harms the *qi*, and when you eat beware of overindulging. Do not get too thirsty before you drink and do not drink too deeply at a time. If you overeat, your bowels will be blocked and obstructed to the point of illness; if you drink too deeply, phlegm will accumulate into lumps.

Also, do not allow any outside *qi* or wind to impact your body too much, but do not try too hard to evade it either. Avoid breaking a sweat; avoid running around madly when intoxicated; and never walk fast after eating your fill. Do not talk too much and do not enter severe cold. Do not eat lots of fatty meats and fancy foods and do not expose your head after washing your hair.

In winter, do not desire being very warm; in summer, do not strive to be very cool. If you are very warm in winter, in spring you will suffer from violent attacks. If you are very cool in summer, in fall you will suffer from recurring fevers. Do not sleep out in the open, exposed to sun and moon; and never allow yourself to approach the dirty leftovers of others, even if very hungry.

Do not toss and turn while sleeping; do not expose your head soon after a meal. When hot, avoid drinking ice-cold water; when cold, avoid getting close to the burning stove. [2b] After a bath, do not get out into a fierce wind; after breaking a sweat, do not immediately take off your clothes.

To combat heat, do not jump into cold water and immerse your whole body; to urinate or defecate, avoid facing the sun and moon or straight north and south. Never expose your body to the stars and planets; never try to push away natural events like frost and fog, storm and wind. All these will cause harm to the inner organs and viscera, create defeat for the spirit and spirit souls.

Make sure to eat selectively of the five flavors. Too much sour food [wood] harms the spleen [earth]; too much bitter [fire] harms the lungs [metal]; too much pungent [metal] harms the liver [wood]; too much sweet [earth] harms the kidneys [water]; and too much salty [water] harms the heart [fire]. All these follow the system of the five phases as they invisibly

underlie the four limbs. Following this, you can understand and penetrate the patterns.

A person of strong will and high valor will be careful about all of this! Also, if you happen to violate one, take care not to diminish them all, because the effect accumulates over long periods of time and creates defeat and decay.

Remember: the heart is the ultimate master of the five organs and the *qi* is the supervisor of the hundred bones. Using them with proper movement to create harmony is the horse; following along in mysterious serenity is the cart. When the limbs and joints are troubled and exhausted, do healing exercises. [3a]

If you do not practice the arts of long life or follow the Dao of harmony, your *qi* will decline more and more, and your body will wither before your eyes. Exercise your perfect body, maintain our serene thinking. Listen to this Dao and way of nourishing life, and be very careful about it.

Thus the perfected are serene day in and day out and never come even close to being rushed or hectic. The ignorant, on the other hand, are loose and unsettled in intention. They diminish their bodies and defeat their spirits and spirit souls, harming even their material souls. Deplorable indeed!

Life's Essentials ³

1. Endowed with Spirit

For the eyes, avoid seeing irregular sights; for the ears, avoid listening to ugly and distressing sounds; for the nose, avoid smelling offensive, stinking odors; for the mouth, avoid tasting harsh, poisonous flavors; for the mind, avoid all planning, scheming, and cheating. All these put the spirit to shame and reduce longevity.

There is no point sitting around and sighing deeply, all day and night whistling for good things to come. Yes, while still immersed in ordinary life it is impossible to be completely free from desires or let go of affairs, but you can make a constant effort to balance your mind, control your thoughts, calm

³ Representative selections from several chapters of the *Yangsheng yaoji*, avoiding passages identical with those in the *Yangxing yanming lu*, which is translated in full below (ch. 7). Those found in the *Ishinpō* are also available in Hsia et al. 1986. Most passages translated here are from the *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, reprinted in Stein 1999, 285-92 and translated in Stein 1999, 233-46. I abbreviate it *Zhubing*.

your body, and reduce possessions. Begin simply by removing all that disturbs your spirit and harms your inner nature: this is the key practice to realize full endowment with spirit. (50; *Ishinpō* 23)

2. Caring for Qi

Master Luo states: People are in *qi* like fish are in water. If the water is polluted, fish die; if the *qi* is turbid, people get sick. Turbidity, moreover, does not only refer to the natural *qi* being dark or cloudy. It also occurs when thoughts and worries trouble the mind, when gain and loss keep alternating in your life, and when you get stuck in continuous push-pull—all these we call “turbid.” (71; *Ishinpō* 23)

The three months of spring are the time of unfolding and alignment. Heaven and Earth join to generate new life and the myriad beings flourish. Go to bed late and rise early, then walk vigorously around the yard, loosen your hair, and relax the body—thus you allow the power of spring to arise. Nurture life and abstain from killing, give freely and avoid taking, reward generously and avoid punishing. In this manner you match the *qi* of spring. This is the way of nourishing life. Going against it, you harm your liver and are likely to suffer from a cold disorder in the summer, reducing your chances at long life.

The three months of summer are the time of luxurious, even excessive growth. The energies of Heaven and Earth mingle, and the myriad beings flourish and ripen. Go to bed late and rise early, avoid all resentment during the day, and make sure not to let anger enter your mind. Allow your florescence to flourish in its full expression and let the *qi* spread widely, as if all you love was outside. In this manner you match the *qi* of summer. This is the way of nurturing longevity. Going against it, you harm your heart and are likely to suffer from fevers in the fall.

The three months of fall are the time of maturation and regulation. The *qi* of Heaven is stormy, that of Earth is bright. Go to bed early and rise early, matching the daily rhythm of the chickens. Make sure your mind is calm and peaceful to alleviate the disturbing influences of fall. Contain your spirit and *qi*, so you can regulate the *qi* of fall. Avoid directing your mind toward outward affairs and keep the *qi* of your lungs clear. In this manner you match the *qi* of fall. This is the way of nurturing the harvest. Going against it, you harm your lungs and are likely to suffer from obstructions and colds in the winter.

The three months of winter are the time of closing and storing. Water freezes, and the Earth develops cracks. Avoid disturbing your inner yang. Go to bed early and rise late, waiting until the sun has risen. Keep your mind contained within, as if you were harboring selfish intentions and had already achieved all you want. Avoid the cold and keep yourself warm. Make sure nothing leaks out through your skin, lest your *qi* is reduced. In this manner you match the *qi* of winter. This is the way of nurturing preservation. Going against it, you harm your kidneys and are likely to suffer from reduced virility in the spring. (35-40; *Zhubing* 15)

3. Nourishing the Body ⁴

Getting drunk and falling asleep in a position where you are exposed to wind causes sudden loss of voice. (1)

If you see a straight wall about ten yards long, don't lie down to sleep in the direction it is running. This will expose you to wind that can cause seizures and feelings of heaviness. (15)

Eating to satiation and going to sleep on your back, if done habitually, makes you prone to *qi* ailments and head wind. (7)

After eating, don't immediately lie down to sleep. Over a prolonged period this can cause *qi* ailments and hip pain. (26)

After breaking a sweat, don't sleep without covers or take a cold bath. This can cause chills, hot and cold flashes, as well as wind-based eczema. (19)

When you go to bed at night, make sure to cover your ears, not leaving even a small opening. If wind enters the ears, the mouth can be affected. (2)

Don't sleep with your mouth open, since this leads to extreme thirst and sallow complexion. (30)

During sleep, don't let your feet hang down from a raised platform. This will soon lead to excessive water in the kidneys. (51)

After waking, don't drink cold water and go back to sleep. This causes water stagnation. (46)

4. Guiding and Stretching

Every morning, ingest the Jade Spring and click the teeth. This strengthens the body, lightens the complexion, eliminates parasites, and stabilizes the teeth. The Jade Spring is the saliva in the mouth. Before getting up in the morning, rinse the entire mouth with saliva. Allow it to fill up, then swallow

⁴ Passages on sleeping as found in fragments from the *Zhubing yuanhou lun*.

it. Click your teeth twenty-seven times. Repeat this process three times, then stop. This is called “refining essence.” (23; *Zhubing 3*)

The *Yuanyang jing* [Scripture of Primordial Yang] has: Always pull the *qi* in through the nose, hold it in the mouth and mix it with saliva, swishing it around the tongue and teeth, then swallow it. Doing this a thousand times in the course of a day and night is excellent.

Also make sure to eat and drink little. If you eat a lot, the *qi*-flow goes awry and the hundred arteries are clogged. Once they are clogged, the *qi* cannot flow, and no *qi*-flow causes disease. (76; *Ishinpō 23*)

Always practice after midnight, during the hours of rising *qi*. Hold the breath in for a certain period while counting mentally. Make sure there are no pauses in the count, lest you give rise to error and confusion. Or you can count with your fingers. If you make it to a thousand, you’re getting close to immortality. Exhale. Always make sure to take in much and expel little. Breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. (82; *Ishinpō 23*)

5. Speaking and Talking

Always strive to regulate the breath and nourish the spirit. Hold the breath in as long as possible, then let it out as subtly as you can. Also, avoid excessive talking or loud yelling. They cause the spirit to be labored and diminished. (20; *Zhubing 3*)

Excessive laughter causes the kidneys to twist and leads to pain in the hips (28; *Zhubing 4*)

People should talk and laugh sparingly and never raise their voice. Raising the voice comes when you argue about theories and principles, debate about right and wrong, get involved in shouting matches, or use rude and abusive language.

Whenever you are faced with a situation like this, immediately empty your mind and lower your *qi*, avoiding any form of conflict. Excessive talking and laughter injure the lungs, harm the kidneys, and cause agitation in essence and spirit. (98; *Ishinpō 27*)

6. Eating and Drinking

Prohibition: Do not eat too much—the hundred arteries will be clogged.

Prohibition: Do not eat too little—the gall bladder will be agitated.

Prohibition: Do not eat too hot—it harms the five energies.

Prohibition: Do not eat too cold—it causes congestive ailments.

Prohibition: Do not eat raw—it hurts the stomach.

Prohibition: Do not get intoxicated—it harms vital *qi*. (115; *Ishinpō* 27)

Eating meat that has been dried in the sun rather than over a fire leads to pain and agitation. (45; *Zhubing* 20)

Eating poultry together with seal meat leads to chronic infections (56; *Zhubing* 24)

Blackened chicken eaten together with carp can cause abscesses. (95; *Zhubing* 33)

Eating sweet yogurt and vinegar together may cause blood in the urine. (59; *Zhubing* 27)

If any of the six domestic animals dies suddenly during an epidemic or after getting sick during the summer, don't eat their brain. This causes abscesses in the digestive tract. (100; *Zhubing* 33)

In the 6th month do not eat the five kinds of fruit after they have already dropped to the ground and been chewed on by ants, grasshoppers, or beetles. This leads to the nine kinds of ulcers. (104; *Zhubing* 34)

Sitting around after a meal and not going for a walk or doing something else active is not only useless for the body but can cause congestion of *qi* and digestive issues. It can also lead to paralysis in the arms and legs as well as cause dark yellow spots in the face. (71; *Zhubing* 27)

7. The Bedchamber

Essence is stored in the Jade Chamber [elixir field]. Excessive sexual intercourse leads to a loss of essence. This in turn causes depression, fear, and accelerated heart beat. (7; *Zhubing* 1)

The husband should not sleep with his head pointing north, since this agitates the spirit and the spirit soul, which may lead to depression and forgetfulness (88; *Zhubing* 31)

Engaging in sexual intercourse when intoxicated can lead to aggressive infections (109; *Zhubing* 35)

If you suffer from sadness or anger and cry frequently, you will be likely to fail in establishing the proper harmony for the union of yin and yang. This can cause irregular menstruation: sometimes heavy, sometimes scant. It can also lead to internal heat and pathological thirst. The complexion becomes sullen, the muscles dry out, and the body feels heavy. (115; *Zhubing* 35)

If husband and wife have an argument and the husband forces the wife to submit to his sexual advances without having first resolved their issues, this can cause a closing of the uterus and a pathogenic accumulation of *qi*.

This in turn may lead to a wax-like vaginal discharge of a yellow or white coloring. (117; *Zhubing* 38)

Engaging in yin-yang before menstruation has ceased causes essence and *qi* to flow inward. This may cause irregular menstruation and on the inside give rise to *qi* accumulations, which in turn may lead to infertility. (119; *Zhubing* 39)

9. Medicinal Supplements

In taking medicinal supplements, pick those that are beneficial for your inner nature and carefully examine whether their warming and cooling tendencies are appropriate for you. There is no point taking an herb just because you notice that someone else is benefiting from it. When you first take medicinal supplements, begin with herbs, then move on to roots, and finally to minerals. In all cases balance the various supplements with each other. As we say, “Subtle and gross each take their turn.” And, “Move from the gross to the subtle.” (2; *Ishinpō* 1)

On the 1st day of the 1st month, pick herbs of the five fragrances and boil them into a decoction. Wash your hair with this to prevent graying. (65; *Zhubing* 27)

10. Various Taboos

If someone moans or shouts while having a nightmare, and you call him loudly, he is likely to die soon. It is much better to wake him with a soft, calm voice. Also, do this from a distance and don't get too close to the person, lest he lose his spirit or material soul. (53; *Zhubing* 23)

Do not look upon a decaying corpse on an empty stomach. Its putrid *qi* will enter your spleen, causing your tongue to show white and yellow discoloration and creating a nasty taste in your mouth. (84; *Zhubing* 30)

If you have been crying heavily due to a case of mourning, don't eat immediately after you stop. This will, over a period of time, lead to *qi* ailments. (34; *Zhubing* 13)

If there are old wells or ditches in your area, don't fill them in, lest this causes people to go deaf and blind. (73; *Zhubing* 28)

Chapter Three

Chants, Visualizations, and Self-Massages

The longevity tradition first actively connected with Daoism in the 4th century, in a transcendent self-cultivation movement called Highest Clarity (Shangqing 上清), whose followers used stretches and self-massages to ready themselves for contact with the divine, then entered visualizations to connect to the gods and invoked them with sacred chants. Their organization and practices integrate the magical and alchemical traditions but in terms of Daoism they follow upon the earliest organized Daoist school of Orthodox Unity (Zhengyi 正一), also known as the Celestial Masters (Tianshi 天師).¹ Centered in Sichuan, they surrendered to Cao Cao 曹操 in 215, and soon after were made to leave the area, moving across country and settling in different parts of China. In each new location, they mingled with local cults and influenced the development of new forms of religion.

The Highest Clarity movement was one result of this mixture. It began with the popular practice to establish communication with one's ancestors with the help of a spirit-medium, mainly to find causes for unexplained illness and misfortune, but also to learn of their destiny in the otherworld and to obtain advice on current affairs. In the 360s, two brothers of the aristocratic Xu family who lived in a village near Maoshan 茅山 southeast of Jinkang hired the medium Yang Xi 楊羲 (330–386?) to establish contact with a deceased wife. She appeared and told them about her status in the otherworld, explained the overall organization of the heavens, and introduced the

¹ On the Celestial Masters, their organization, worldview, and practices, see Hendrischke 2000; Kleeman 1998; Kobayashi 1992; Stein 1963; Tsuchiya 2002.

medium to various other spirit figures. In a series of revelations, which continued well over a decade, these divine guides provided the medium with a detailed description of the organization and population of the otherworld, and especially of the top heaven of Highest Clarity. They also revealed specific methods of personal transformation, meditations, visualizations, and alchemical concoctions, including longevity practices—thus not only bringing the longevity tradition into Daoism but also expanding its repertoire with various Daoist methods.

The gods' instructions resulted in an extensive corpus of texts that was carefully transmitted for about fifty years while local aristocrats continued to follow the practices it prescribed. In the 5th century they were scattered throughout the country while Buddhism and other Daoist schools, notably that of Numinous Treasure (Lingbao 靈寶), rose to the foreground. Around the year 500, the ritual master and alchemist Tao Hongjing reassembled the corpus in his masterful work *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected, DZ 1016) and propelled the school to the leading position in medieval Daoism.²

Revealing deities included various figures prominent in the Highest Clarity pantheon, pure cosmic powers of Dao as well as human beings turned perfected immortals. High among them is the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwang mu 西王母), who represents the cosmic power of yin and governs the paradise of Mount Kunlun in the west, where she grows the peaches of immortality and maintains the registers of the immortals. Her major attendants, who accompany her on her revelatory jaunts to earth include Lady Wang (Wang Furen 王夫人) as well as the Mysterious Woman of the Nine Heavens (Jiutian xuannü 九天玄女), a powerful goddess who “ruled war, sexuality, and everlasting life” (Cahill 2006, 70).

The Queen Mother's yang counterpart is the Lord King of the East (Dongwang gong 東王公) who in Highest Clarity appears as the Green Lad (Qingtong 青童), ruler over the paradise realm of Fangzhu 方諸 in the east and strongly associated with longevity practices that harness the regenerative forces of spring and newly rising yang. He manages particularly the registers of earth immortals, beings that have reached perfection but continue to live

² On the history and texts of Highest Clarity, see Bokenkamp 2007; Miller 2008; Robinet 1984; 2000; Strickmann 1978; 1981.

on earth for many centuries and serves as a manager in the office of the Ruler of Destiny (Siming 司命), another major revelatory deity.³



Fig. 4. The Queen Mother of the West

The Ruler of Destiny is more of a divine official than a particular deity. Already mentioned in a bronze inscription of the 6th century BCE, he is in charge of the section in the otherworldly administration that keeps records of human deeds and metes out punishments, aka the Department of Destiny. He appears prominently in a manuscript unearthed at Fangmatan, which describes the resurrection of a man named Dan in 297 BCE. Having killed another, he committed suicide and was buried after three days of public exposure, only to reappear, alive but not quite hale, after three years.

His resurrection was effected through the workings of an otherworld bureaucracy, to whom a surviving friend petitioned on the grounds that Dan had been taken before his allotted time had run out. Accordingly, “he made a

³ For details on Xiwangmu, see Cahill 1993; 2006; Despeux and Kohn 2003; Yoshikawa in Pregadio 2008, 1119-20. One of her most celebrated revelations, according to Shangqing legend, was to Emperor Wu of the Han. See Schipper 1965; Smith 1992. For more on the Azure Lad, see Kroll 1985; Smith in Pregadio 2008, 803.

declaration to the senior scribe of the Ruler of Destiny, who then had a white dog dig up the pit to let Dan out.” Reporting on his experiences in the other-world, the wronged man explains that “the dead do not want many clothes” and people “sacrificing at tombs should not spit” (Harper 1994, 14).⁴ Under the Han, the Ruler of Destiny came to be associated with a star in the constellation Literary Glory (Wenchang 文昌), located above the Northern Dipper (Beidou 北斗), another major deity in charge of the destiny of both the world at large and of individual people.

His underlings include the Three Deathbringers or Three Corpses (*sanshi* 三尸), a mixture of demons and parasites residing in the head, chest, and abdomen. Assisted by the Nine Worms (*jiuchong* 九蟲), they benefit from their host’s death and incite the individual to engage in excessive emotions and commit bad deeds. They ascend to Heaven on every *gengshen* day, the 57th day of the sixty-day cycle, to report the person’s violations to their supervisor who not only records everything in the ledgers of life and death but also orders the Deathbringers to make the person sick and cause misfortune.⁵ To attain long life, it is absolutely essential that one gains control over the Deathbringers and replaces them with the Three Ones, deities of pure Dao that open celestial connections and preserve integrity.



Fig. 5. The Three Deathbringers

Among humans who attained immortality and rose to high rank in Highest Clarity, the most important is the former leader of the Celestial Mas-

⁴ Similar reports have recurred over the ages and are still current today. See Teiser 1988, 1994; Pas 1989.

⁵ For Siming, see Yamada in Pregadio 2008, 914-15. On underworld officers in Warring States stories, see Harper 1994. The Three Deathbringers are described first in Ge Hong’s *Baopuzi* (Ware 1966, 115-16). For a study, see Kohn 1995a.

ters, Wei Huacun 魏華存 (251–334), known also as the Lady of the Southern Peak (Nanyue furen 南嶽夫人). One of the first to connect to the medium, she revealed numerous texts and provided detailed practice information; she has been vigorously venerated ever since.

Another prominent figure is Lord Pei 裴君 who allegedly lived under the Han and originally followed Buddhism. On his wanderings he once met a Daoist master who transmitted alchemical recipes to him. After taking the elixir, he went on an ecstatic excursion around the polar mountains where he met various divinities who gave him food of the immortals and sacred books, enabling him to journey to Highest Clarity where he took up an official position. Methods associated with him include a technique to make various immortals and planetary spirits descend into the adept's body; a way to expel the Three Deathbringers; and a method of ingesting solar and lunar energies to enhance vitality and attain long life.⁶

These various methods are typical of Highest Clarity followers, who used longevity techniques less to transform the body than to develop and enhance their relation to various deities, both outside in the greater universe and deep within the body. To activate this divine connection, they used physical moves and various forms of *qi*-manipulation to enhance vitality and the keenness of their senses as part of their daily routine, especially after getting up in the morning. In addition, they integrated religious and ritual activities, such as specific guided visualizations of divine manifestations as well as talismans and incantations—sacred strips of paper covered with celestial script in red ink that tallied with the divine powers of the otherworld and lengthy chants that invoked specific deities and expressed the seeker's immortality aspirations.

A key text that outlines these techniques is the *Xiwang mu baoshen qiju jing* 西王母寶神起居經 (The Queen Mother of the West's Scripture on Treasuring the Spirit in Daily Living, DZ 1319), fully translated here. Dating from the 5th century, it consists of materials from the original revelations and in content closely echoes the *Zhen'gao* (chs. 9, 10) as well as Tao Hongjing's *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 (Secret Instructions on the Ascent to the Perfected, DZ 421) (Robinet 1984, 2:359–62). It also refers to various other Highest Clarity scriptures, mostly associated with the Queen Mother and often now known otherwise.

⁶ On Wei Huacun, see Schafer 1977; Valussi in Pregadio 2008, 1131–32. For her role on the Southern Peak and its development, see Robson 2009. For more on Lord Pei, see Robinet 1984, 2:375–84; 2000, 115.

One of the better known texts is the *Dadong zhenjing* 大洞真經 (Perfect Scripture of Great Pervasion, DZ 6) in thirty-nine sections, the most fundamental of all Highest Clarity texts. Transmitted by the highest deity of the pantheon to the Queen Mother before the creation of the world, each section centers on a celestial divinity, providing a description and visualization instructions for specific body gods. Its recitation, accompanied by a complete liturgy, formed another core practice of the school.⁷

Other texts used here include fundamental works on exorcism and alchemical elixirs, such as the *Xiaomo jing* 消魔經 (Scripture on Dissolving Demonic Influences, DZ 1344), which contains spells for commanding demons (Robinet 1984, 2:179-86); the *Taisu danjing* 太素丹經 (Elixir Scripture of Great Simplicity, DZ 1359), which in content predates the Highest Clarity revelations and describes methods for escaping imminent physical dangers; as well as the *Taiji jing* 太極經 (Scripture of the Great Ultimate), possibly connected to a text associated with the Perfected of Great Ultimate that spelled out how to concoct and use the elixir of nine cycles (see Pregadio 2000, 174). Other works the text refers to have not survived independently.

In terms of methods, Highest Clarity most strongly impacted the longevity tradition in its vision of the body as a miniature version of the universe, constituting its own inner landscape inhabited by numerous body gods. Deities in the body as mentioned in the text include the Three Primes (Sanyuan 三元), originally rulers of the Celestial Masters pantheon; the Great One in the abdomen who represents the center of the cosmos; the deities of the head and hair known as Niwan 泥丸 and Xuanhua 玄華; as well as the spirit and material souls (*hun* 魂, *po* 魄), now grown to three and seven in number and given specific names and tasks (see Robinet 1993, 100).

The different parts of the body, moreover, especially those activated in self-massages and visualizations, now have new, colorful, and vibrant names, including Jade Pond (mouth), Spirit Terrace (heart), Cassia Bridge (lungs), Heavenly Perfection (corner of eyes), Mountain Spring (nostrils), Flowery Court (third eye), and so forth. The body, from being merely a vehicle of health and long life, in its Daoist dimension has thus become the residence and playground of the gods—just as enhancing vitality has transformed into a stepping stone to immortality.

⁷ For more on this text, see Robinet 1984: 1:A2; 1993, 97-119; 2000, 201; in Pregadio 2008, 295-97.

Translation

Treasuring the Spirit in Daily Living ⁸

[1a] When you wake up at dawn after a good night's sleep and are about to rise, always once more close your eyes completely, click your teeth nine times, and swallow the saliva three times. Once done with this, curl your tongue back toward the throat, then shake your head and move your neck seven times. With both hands rub the sides of your nostrils to the right and left, up and down for several sets of ten. Once done, chant softly:

Highest Emperor of the Nine Heavens,
[in my] Three Primes preserve infancy.
Highest Connected Florescence,
[in my] Jade Chamber bring forth essence.
Let my seven gates [orifices] summon the gods,
My nine chambers [organs] receive brilliance.
Allow my ears to be keen, and my eyes to be bright,
So I can penetrate perfection and reach utmost numen.

Oh, Holy Peaks of Heaven,
Harmonize my *qi* to perfect evenness.
Proud Maid of Cloudy Rectitude,
Eye Lad of Radiance and Brilliance,
Your mysterious windows shining forth,
Hundred pavilions crisp and cold,
Protect and harmonize my Highest Prime
And let me wander to the Golden Court.

My five organs brilliant and florescent,
My ears and eyes always alive,
My Spirit Terrace dense and strong,
My Cassia Bridge never bent,
Let my seven material souls be fresh and pure,
My three spirit souls yellow and at peace,
The Highest Lord reaches out his hand

⁸ *Xiwangmu baoshen qiju jing*.

To journey along with me. [1b]
The Five Elders merge together,
Wuying supplements my defensive *qi*.
The myriad misfortunes dissolve,
Whatever I desire comes to pass.
Sun and moon guard my gates,
My heart matches luminants and stars.
Whatever the immortal sovereign's orders,
The myriad spirits respectfully obey.

Upon waking up from sleep, once you have done the massage, always chant this chant without fail. Even when the Dao of perfection is complete, still continue this practice.

The *Xiwang mu baoshen jing* centers on the above method. It helps people make their ears keen and eyes bright, strongly aware and vastly clear. Their nostrils harmonized to perfect balance, they no longer produce discharge or foulness. The four ministers and eight subordinates [firmly in place], their faces have a youthful appearance. They control the spirit souls and order the material souls, exorcising and dispelling the myriad demons.

This, then, is the wondrous way in which the perfected rise and rest. The reason why we speak of “rise and rest” is that the practice should always be undertaken at all times of rise and rest.

Also, with both hands rub the face and eyes, creating a low heat and always using a set number of strokes. The Old Mother [Amu] says: “When people get older, the wrinkles in their faces always start from beneath the eyes. [2a] When people's bodies decline, the decrease in *qi* always begins with the two nostrils.” These two areas are accordingly the gates to all wrinkles and decline, the passages and fords of *qi* and vigor. For this reason, at all times of rise and rest always practice this method. Doing so, you can avoid wrinkles and decline and have strong *qi* and vigor to maintain perfect health and harmony.

The *Xiwang mu baosheng wusi yujing* (Queen Mother's Jade Scripture on Treasuring Life and Being Free from Death) says: With your hands spread over the sides of the Flowery Court, roll [the fingers] and extend harmony to Heavenly Perfection. Moving upward, enter with spirit into the Luscious Chamber [third eye], where the Jade Valley [nose] meets the Heavenly Mountains [forehead]. Further inward, the [Mountain] Spring is mysterious to behold. The myriad demons naturally find destruction, and you live forever without dying, your jade registers filed among those of emperors and

lords. All this from harmonizing Heavenly Perfection and rubbing the dark Mountain Spring.

“Heavenly Perfection” is located between the eyebrows at the two corners of the inner eyebrows. Heavenly Perfection is one millimeter beneath them. This is the upper chamber to attract the numinous spirits. [2b]

“Mountain Spring” is beneath the nose and above the human center. Originally located sideways beneath the nostrils, it is the small opening into the Inner Valley [nose]. It is the gate that blocks and destroys the myriad demons.

“Flowery Court” is beneath the two eyebrows, the central area beneath the point where the eyebrows face each other. This is the ford and bridge of penetrating vision.

In the morning before rising and in the evening before lying down, close the eyes completely and curl the tongue back toward the throat. Swallow the saliva three times, then quickly with your hands rub the three places just listed nine times each. Rub them continuously and do not lift the hands. Doing this will always make people live long and be free from death, make the numinous forces descend and the vision perspicacious, as well as block and destroy the way of the myriad demons. When done with the hand rubbing, chant:

The Highest Sovereign of Emptiness opens and spreads the Jade Court:
 Golden chambers clear and resplendent, turquoise terraces shimmering green.
 I cultivate the threefold way, destroy all demons, and give rise to numen;
 I am free from death and equally free from life. [3a]
 I live long in eternal spontaneity, reverse aging and return to youth.
 My spirit and material souls receiving purity,
 My five spirits [of the organs] are restful and at peace.
 I return in a flying carriage to go north and visit Jade Clarity,
 Ascend to Great Nonbeing, and journey with the sun.
 Becoming a perfected, I merge in mystery with emperors and lords.
 Whatever the Three Primes now order
 The myriad spirits respectfully obey.

In the old days, in the times of Lord Zhuang of Chu, there was a city mayor called Song Yuanfu. He had a kind heart and often in person went out to sweep the city streets. After a long time, one day a beggar entered the city.

Throughout the year, every morning he would beg while singing loudly. His song was:

The Heavenly Court gives rise to the Golden Flower,
The Inner Source blocks off all things dark and bad.
The Jade Valley joins the mysterious leaders,
The Jasper *Qi* supports the celestial network.
Heavenly Perfection stands right above the sun,
Flying Buds emit numinous powders.
At clear dawn rub the Heavenly Horse,
Then ride the spirit back to the home of mystery,
Where immortals enter the inner chamber.

He also had a song on how to destroy and remove the hundred demons and one that he posted on the city gates. Although confronted with all this information, the people of Chu city did not understand, but Yuanfu in his intention had some awakening and wondered if the beggar was not in fact an immortal. However, he did not understand the song or other pointers. [3b]

So he kowtowed to him and humbly asked for an explanation. For a long time, the beggar did not respond, but eventually he said: "I am indeed a perfected. My song consists of verses from the Queen Mother of the West, who resides on Mt. Kunlun, on how to treasure life and be free from death. Who follows them will not die."

Then he gave Yuanfu the key methods. He practiced them for twenty years and then ascended to Heaven in broad daylight to become an immortal minister in the Mystery Prefecture. There he discovered that the beggar was in fact Master Redpine, the Perfected of the Southern Peak. He had divided his form and spread out his shadow, entered the world of dust and grime and wandered all over to invite an auspicious meeting with a potential perfected.

The Perfected of Clarity and Emptiness, Lord Pei, revealed the *Shenbao jing* (Scripture on Treasuring Spirit). To pursue Dao, it is of utmost importance that one first makes the eyes bright and the ears keen. The ears and eyes are the key stages and ladders in the pursuit of perfection; they are the gateway to pervasive numen. All success and failure are established through them, all life and death are examined with their help. Today I offer this scripture to show all of you how this can be achieved.

First, to eliminate demons: Rub the ears many times on the right and left, even uncountable times. This is called "Supervising the City Wall." You will have your name entered into the records of emperors.

Similarly rub the nose many times on the right and left, but only for a certain number. This is called “Infusing the Central Peak.” You will have your name entered into the register of emperors. NOTE: These two items were revealed by Lady Li at midnight on the 12th day of the 9th month.

The Dao said: Every day rub the small hollow outside the eyebrows three times. Also, using your palms and fingers rub underneath the eyes and above the cheek bones, after which you massage the ears thirty times.

Next, massage all the way up to the forehead, three sets of nine repetitions each. For this, begin at the center of the eyebrows, then move up all the way to the hairline. While swallowing the saliva, rub as many times as possible along the sides of the mouth. [4b] This daily practice will allow your eyes to get brighter and improve your vision. After one year you can write at night and discern people’s secrets.

The small hollow outside the eyebrows is Upper Prime. It is also the Prefecture of the Six Harmonies, which presides over birth and transformation as well as over the brilliance of the eyes. It is important that you protect the gods of the eyes—this is the primary method of the perfected undertaken whether sitting or standing. It is also described in the *Changju neijing* (Inner Scripture of the Perfected on Constant Presence). If you want to write at night, practice constant presence. It will also give you the ability to see sideways to the four extremes and into the eight far reaches.

Underneath the eyes and above the cheeks is Open Brightness. It protects the inner chambers and leads the person back to the perfect Dao of infancy. To activate it, hold the ears with the hands and perform the practice of increasing radiance. Thereby the blood and joints will be straightened and all wrinkles and discoloration will be prevented. The eyes will shine with mysterious brilliance, and you will harmonize essence and be filled with spirit. [5a]

To stay young and live long, you have to start with eyes and ears. All aging begins with the area to the right and left of the eyes. To prevent this, with both hands hold the forehead while visualizing an infant in your eyes, shining with the doubled radiance of the sun and the moon and filling your Upper Prime with tremendous joy. Do this for three sets of nine repetitions, which make one cycle. After completing this, speak in audience with the Three Primes and ask them to stabilize your health and enhance your hair.

Next, hold the four sides of the head with your hands, stroke the hair but not roughly, as if you were grooming and combing it. This will make the blood flow in the head and have it spread smoothly everywhere, preventing

any congestion or wind-induced problems. After this, rub the four corners of the eyes for two sets of nine repetitions and notice how you begin to see the light more brightly. This activates the gods of the eyes. Over a long time, you will be able to see the hundred numinous forces.

The *Shijingzi jing* (Scripture of Master Stone Radiance) says: Always use your hands to rub the areas around the mouth and nose to activate the subtle *qi* at the four corners of the eyes. Soon you will feel moisture developing in the hands. Spread this over your face and eyes. It will make you smell nice.

The *Taishang santian guan yujing* (Highest Jade Scripture of the Three Heavenly Passes) says: Always rub the sides of the nose and the corners of the eyes, holding the breath to create greater openness in *qi*-flow. Stop abruptly and exhale, then begin again. [5b] NOTE: The above two practices were revealed by Lady Wei of the Southern Peak.

The *Danzi zishu sanwu xunxing jing* (Scripture on Appropriate Practice in Cinnabar Characters and Purple Script) says: Sit and close your eyes, internally envision the five organs, intestines, and stomach. Do this for a long time, and you will attain discernment and brightness.

The *Taisu danjing jing* (Scripture of Great Simplicity on Cinnabar Radiance) says: Rub both hands together to generate *qi* and heat, then rub your face with them. This opens the body and makes people look radiant and glossy. It prevents wrinkles and discolorations. Over five years you will gain a complexion like a young girl.

It also says: Rub both hands together to generate heat, then rub your face and eyes. [6a] Guide the hands to stroke the hair like grooming or combing it, also crossing the arms and using the hands on opposite sides. This will prevent the hair from getting white.

The chapter on “Essential Radiance Massage” in the *Dadong zhenjing* (Perfect Scripture of Great Pervasion) says: When you get up in the morning, always calm your breath and sit up straight, then interlace the fingers and massage the nape of your neck. Next, lift the face and look up, press the hands against the neck while moving the head back. Do this three or four times, then stop. This will cause essence to be in harmony, the blood to flow well, and prevent the entering of wind or bad *qi*. Over a long time it will keep you free from disease and death.

Next: bend and straighten the body; extend the hands to the four extremes [up, down, right, left]; bend backward and stretch out the sides; shake out the hundred joints. Do each of these three times.

Also, when first getting up, take a cloth and rub the forehead, the four sides of the head, and the area behind the ears. Let all these places get warm

and moist. Then stroke the hair like grooming it and, finally, massage the face and eyes. [6b] This makes people's eyes bright and prevents wayward *qi* from arising. Also, the body will never be dirty or defiled. At the end of the practice, swallow the saliva thirty times to guide your internal fluids. NOTE: The previous item comes from the *Dadong jingjing jing* (Scripture of the Essential Luminants of Great Pervasion).

The *Xiwang mu fantai anmo yujing* (Queen Mother's Jade Scripture on Massages for Returning to the Womb) says: In the Dao of nourishing life, the cultivation of eyes and ears is foremost. If you keep seeing mixed things, your eyes will darken; if you keep listening to things widely, your ears will close up. These are diseases that come from the inside of the body and are not unwanted guests brought in from without.

People say how hard it is to hear of Dao. But is not hard to hear of Dao, it is only hard to practice it. No, it is not hard to practice Dao; it is only hard to follow through with it.

If the eyes and ears are disturbed and confused, your imagination cannot let go of difficulties and problems, then, even if your feet step into an immortals' pavilion and your hands take hold of a dragon's porch, it will do no good.

Rather, always practice the massage of returning to the womb on yang days. The first of the month is a yang day; the second is a yin day. [7a] On every such yang day, in the morning and evening, before you go to sleep at night and when you first wake up in the morning, quickly close your eyes, face your birth direction, then rub the hands together to generate some heat. Using the palms, rub the eyes to the right and left, as well as the ears under their opening. Brush the hands back to the center of the next. Repeat this nine times. Now, visualize a cloudy vapor in the eyes in three colors: purple, red, and yellow. Each sinks down and enters the ears. After some time, chant:

Oh, Eye Lads of the Three Clouds,
 Perfected Lords of Both Eyes:
 Be radiant and light in bringing forth essence,
 Open and pervasive as imperial gods.
 Oh, Great Mystery of Cloudy Righteousness,
 Jade Numen of the Expanded Chapters:
 Preserve and enhance my two towers [ears],
 Open and spread my nine gates [orifices].
 Let my hundred joints respond and echo
 And my various fluids return to the Niwan Palace.

Allow my body to ascend to the jade palaces above
And let me rank among the highest perfected.

Finish chanting and swallow the saliva three times. This concludes it.
You may now open your eyes.

Practice like this on every yang day in the morning. There is no need to also do it in the evening. If you continue to do this for three years, your ears will be keen and your eyes bright. [7b] Also, groom your hair facing your birth direction and chant:

To the Great Emperors spreading numen,
Five Elders reverting spirit,
The gods Niwan and Xuanhua:
Preserve my essence and let me live long.
As my left holds the shadow of the moon
And my right pulls the root of the sun,
May the Six Harmonies become clear and pure
And the hundred deities deliver their grace.

Doing this regularly will keep the head free from all aches and ailments.

The *Taiji jing* (Scripture of the Great Ultimate) says: To groom the hair, face the Jade Pond. Begin your care and softly recite:

The gods Niwan and Xuanhua:
Preserve my essence and let me live long.
As my left holds the shadow of the moon
And my right pulls the root of the sun,
May the Six Harmonies become clear and pure
And the hundred deities deliver their grace.

After this, swallow the saliva three times. If you do this always, your hair will not fall out but grow anew every day. But frequently change the hold and direction of the comb, because moving in different ways will help prevent pain. You can also have a servant comb your hair for you, but have him or her change pressure and direction every so often. This prevents blood stagnation and will strengthen the roots. [8a] NOTE: The above two items were revealed by Jiuhua.

In sitting and sleeping always have your nostrils face your birth direction. Do this also when eating and drinking. If you cannot face your birth direction, use the northeast or northwest. They are also good, because they are the gates and passages of the spirit and material souls.

Also, when rising from sleep, always begin by rocking the body to the right and left and by rotating the neck, twelve times each. After this, sit up straight and raise both hands to support heaven. Hold this for a while, then use your palms to massage your cheeks up to the ears. Do this for some time and chant:

As I roll forwards and point backwards,
Let me become the honored guest of the Heavenly Emperor.
As I rub my left ear and right cheek,
Let me life long and reach great transcendence.
As I raise my head and swallow my *qi*,
Let the Great One reach its ultimate.
As I bend into a hanging moon or dragon form,
Let the Ruler of Destiny climb in his carriage. [8b]
As I drink and ingest the embryonic prime,
Let the Double Towers of Kunlun appear.
As I bend and drop to both knees,
Let the perfected join my will.

Conclude this chant, then inhale deeply and hold the breath. Visualize red *qi* in your navel the size of an egg. Allow it to emerge from the navel and enter into your nostrils. Repeat this three times. Doing this concludes the sequence of self-massages. It allows people's hundred passes to be open and flourishing and helps them live long without getting sick.

You can also visualize a purple *qi* in the center. To do so every day, close your eyes and lie down to rest your body and calm your breath. Lie as if asleep, so that other people won't even know you're not sleeping. Then in inner vision reach out to the four directions. Let your eyes and ears penetrate beyond ten thousand miles. If you do this for a long time, you can even see yourself as far out as ten thousand miles. If done powerfully, using essence and mind, you can even see as far as a million miles. As you do this, you hear the music of gold and jade in your ears together with the soft rustling of leafy bamboo. It is wondrous indeed.

As for the four directions, listen carefully to these words. First work with one direction, until you see and hear it clearly within. [9a] When you