

## Lu Xiujing (406–477) on Daoist Practice: Ten Lessons in *The Way and its Virtue*

Franciscus Verellen

### Abstract

This study is centered on a set of ten sermons explaining the practice of the Lingbao Retreat 靈寶齋 in the light of the *Daode jing*. Transmitted in Lu Xiujing's *The Illumination of Ritual* 太上洞玄靈寶法燭經, they provide a unique insight into the patriarch's religious convictions and vocation. The pastoral and pedagogical side of Lu's mission, revealed in sermons and exhortations addressed to his disciples, has received relatively little attention. His public reflections on the Retreat are particularly significant in the context of the far-reaching reform of Daoist ritual launched under his leadership and the challenge its assimilation of Buddhist practices posed for Daoist communities.

**Keywords:** Lu Xiujing, *Taishang dongxuan lingbao fazhu jing*, Lingbao zhai, *Daode jing*, sermon

---

Franciscus Verellen is professor in the History of Daoism at the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), head of the EFEO Hong Kong Centre, and senior research fellow in the Institute of Chinese Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. He served as director of the EFEO from 2004 to 2014 and was elected a member of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres in 2008. Co-editor with Kristofer Schipper of *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* in 2004, he is currently writing a book about medieval Daoism in which a major section is devoted to Lu Xiujing.

The medieval patriarch Lu Xiuqing substantially redefined the boundaries and content of a Daoist life in his time by devising the first canon of Daoist scriptures, reforming Daoist ritual, and orchestrating the Daoist community's response to the spread of Buddhist practices and doctrine in China. Lu Xiuqing's integrating vision also merged the Daoist currents of southern China with the institutions of the ancient Heavenly Master movement and established the ritual and textual corpus known as Lingbao 靈寶. His impact on the history of Daoism has been widely recognized and is the subject of a growing number of studies.<sup>1</sup>

The present article examines an aspect of Lu's religious leadership that has received comparatively less attention: the "pastoral" side of his vocation. It is revealed especially in sermons and exhortations that Lu addressed to his disciples, in preparation for or during performances of the *zhai* 齋 Retreat, on the function and practice of ritual, on spiritual advancement, liberation, and return. His instruction encompasses ritual comportment, mental attitudes and moral precepts, acts of purification, as well as exegeses of mystical concepts and philosophical terms from scriptural passages, especially the *Way and its Virtue* or *Daode jing* 道德經 ascribed to the sage Laozi 老子. The sermons lay out Lu Xiuqing's vision of personal preservation and transcendence, besides offering precepts for escaping the snares of mundane, everyday existence. In historical perspective, they provide a guide to the moral universe and the code of conduct envisaged by Lu Xiuqing for reforming Daoism in an age of turbulent change.

Lu Xiuqing spent much of his life in the southern capital city of Jiankang 建康 (Nanjing) and on Mount Lu 廬山 near Jiujiang 九江 (Jiangxi), two of the main conduits for the transfer of Buddhist ideas, institutions, and practices to China. Born of an aristocratic

---

<sup>1</sup> See in particular Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "Lu Xiuqing, Buddhism, and the first Daoist canon," in *Culture and power in the reconstitution of the Chinese realm, 200–600*, ed. Scott Pearce et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 181–99; John Lagerwey, "Canonical fasts according to Lu Xiuqing," in *Affiliation and Transmission in Daoism: A Berlin Symposium*, edited by Florian C. Reiter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 41–79.

family in eastern Wuxing 吳興 (Zhejiang),<sup>2</sup> he underwent Daoist ordination at the age of fifteen *sui*<sup>3</sup> and soon thereafter left his wife, child, and incipient official career. Escaping the turmoil of the reign of Liu Yu 劉裕 (420–422), founder of the Liu Song 劉宋 dynasty, Lu spent the following years as a hermit, traveler, and seeker of medicinal herbs. Above all, he devoted himself to the systematic collection of the Lingbao corpus, with a view to separating the authentic texts from proliferating contemporary forgeries. In 437, Lu presented the fruit of this labor, the *Catalog of Lingbao scriptures*, to Emperor Wendi 文帝 (r. 424–453).<sup>4</sup> Around the year 451, he accepted Wendi's summons to the court in Jiankang. But shortly after his arrival there, in the spring of 453, the emperor fell victim to an assassination plot and Lu Xiujing left the court again. Gradually drifting south, he settled at Mount Lu, home half a century earlier to the eminent Buddhist monk Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416) and his flourishing community. The Temple of Detached Stillness, Jianji guan 簡寂觀, was built there for Lu in 461, as attested in an inscription, dated to 515, by Shen Xuan 沈旋, son of the poet and historian Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513).<sup>5</sup> This temple contained the largest library of Daoist books at the time.<sup>6</sup> Lu remained on the mountain until a new summons in 467 called him to the court of

<sup>2</sup> The earliest sources on Lu Xiujing's life are fragments from the lost *Daoxue zhuan* 道學傳 by Ma Shu 馬樞 (522–581); see Stephan Bumbacher, *The Fragments of the Daoxue zhuan: Critical Edition, Translation and Analysis of a Medieval Collection of Daoist Biographies* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2000), 204–19. Cf. Michel Strickmann, "The Mao Shan revelations: Taoism and the Chinese aristocracy," *T'oung Pao* 63 (1977), 38.

<sup>3</sup> According to his *Taishang dongxuan lingbao shoudu yi* 太上洞玄靈寶授度儀, *Daozang* 528, 1a, Lu Xiujing was ordained in 420, i.e., 17 years prior to his compilation of the Lingbao canon, of which the catalog is dated 437.

<sup>4</sup> *Lingbao jingmu* 靈寶經目, Dunhuang mss P. 2256, 2861. See Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-pao scriptures," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein*, ed. Michel Strickmann (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1983), vol. 2, 479–85.

<sup>5</sup> "Lushan Jianji guan zhi bei 廬山簡寂觀之碑," in *Lushan shiwen jinshi guangcun* 廬山詩文金石廣存, ed. Wu Zongci 吳宗慈 (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 1996), 551.

<sup>6</sup> See Xu Xiangyang 徐向陽, "Lu Xiujing yu Jianji guan 陸修靜與簡寂觀," *Shanghai daojiao* 上海道教 (1999.2), 24.

the emperor Mingdi 明帝 (r. 465–472), a fervent patron of both Daoism and Buddhism. Lu reached the capital in 468 where Mingdi had ordered the construction of the Chongxu temple 崇虛觀 for him in the northern outskirts.<sup>7</sup> In 471, he presented the emperor with the catalog *Sandong jingshu mulu* 三洞經書目錄, an inventory of the first Daoist canon comprising 1,228 scrolls.<sup>8</sup> Lu Xiuqing remained in Jiankang for the rest of his life, a spirited debater in the public confrontations of Buddhism and Daoism sponsored by the emperor, and as head of a growing community of lay and clerical disciples.<sup>9</sup>

This study is centered on a set of ten sermons explaining the practice of the Lingbao Retreat 靈寶齋 in the light of the *Daode jing*. It is offered as a tribute to Kristofer Schipper, a scholar whose path-breaking insights have transformed our understanding of Daoist texts and ritual and inspired a generation of students of Chinese religion.

To readers of Schipper's seminal work *The Daoist Body*<sup>10</sup> it will come as no surprise that for Lu Xiuqing the seeds of both perdition and salvation were implanted in the human body:

All under Heaven, noble and lowly, men and women, receive a human body and the burden of caring for body and mouth. In food, humans prize the five flavors; in clothing, the five-colored silks. When already sated and warm, they still can't restrain themselves. Extravagant with clothing and precious objects, they delight in the pursuit of schemes and ventures. Never satisfied, they harm the spirit and hurt the body without even becoming aware of it. With their vitality already withering and their bodies decrepit, what good will a lifetime of dealings do them in the end? The orphaned soul dies alone and undergoes manifold sufferings. Truly benighted, the world does not

<sup>7</sup> *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (1269), by Zhi Pan 志磐, T. 2035, 36.346b.

<sup>8</sup> See Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 14–17; Chen Guofu 陳國符, *Daozang yuanliu kao* 道藏源流考 (rev. ed., Beijing: Zhonghua, 1963), 282–83.

<sup>9</sup> *Daoxue zhuan*, cited in *Sandong zhunang* 三洞珠囊, comp. Wang Xuanhe 王懸河 (fl. 683), *Daozang* 1139, 2.6b (Bumbacher, *Fragments*, 209, 214).

<sup>10</sup> Kristofer Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, trans. Karen C. Duval (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

realize this!<sup>11</sup>

Charting the path to immortality, Lu Xiuqing placed human destiny and the body in a cosmological model that was shaped by interpretations of the *Way and its Virtue* and the *Book of Changes* in the writings of Han scholiasts and the adepts of Mystery Learning 玄學. Consonant with the medical philosophy of the ancient *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經, this worldview mapped the universe onto human physiology. The body was endowed with vitality, animated by spirits, and subject to the correlative and transformative mechanisms governing the Five Phases 五行. Through the combined action of endowment and correlation the body acquired individuating characteristics. An individual's personality was "fixed" accordingly (see Sermon 7 below). The body was capable of sensation, perception, cognition, and moral discrimination. In short, it constituted a "person," an object of lively theoretical speculation among adepts of the Pure Conversation 清談 persuasion whose fascination with character appraisal 人倫鑒識 translated, among others, into attempts to make the individuating spirit "transpire" 傳神 from a person's features, postures, expressions, or responses to situations.<sup>12</sup> Combining such pursuits of current literati culture with his own essentially religious and redemptive purpose, Lu Xiuqing's objective could be described as fashioning a Daoist "self," through ritual and meditative practice. Significantly, this endeavor falls at a time where Chinese conceptions about the afterlife and the ancestral cult were undergoing profound change.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, a crisis of competing visions of man and destiny, along with diverging redemptive prospects held out by religious currents, can be discerned through the blurred and

<sup>11</sup> *Dongxuan lingbao wugan wen* 洞玄靈寶五感文, by Lu Xiuqing, *Daozang* 1278, 3a, cited as *Wugan wen* below. Cf. the warning in Laozi 12 against the deleterious effects of such pursuits, *Laozi jiaoshi* 老子校釋, ed. Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1984), 46, and Sermons 4 and 5 below.

<sup>12</sup> See *Shishuo xinyu jianshu* 世說新語箋疏, by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), ed. Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫 et al. (Shanghai: Guji, 1993) and Qian Nanxiu, *Spirit and self in medieval China: the Shih-shuo hsün-yü and its legacy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), especially ch. 5, "Using body to depict spirit: the *Shih-shuo* characterization of 'persons'."

<sup>13</sup> See Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety: Daoism and the Birth of Rebirth in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

sometimes conflicting beliefs expressed in ritual documents.<sup>14</sup> Extensively integrating newly translated Indian concepts with an evolving Chinese tradition, Lu Xiujing's instructions helped precipitate this crisis and contributed to the emergence of a medieval "Chinese religion" that drew on sources both indigenous and foreign, yet was proper to China in its unique formation.

The ten sermons are transmitted in Lu Xiujing's *The Illumination of Ritual*,<sup>15</sup> a work that provides a unique insight into the patriarch's religious thought and vocation. The sermons constitute a sustained teaching on the meaning and practice of the Retreat (*zhai* 齋). Frequently translated as "fast," the *zhai* ritual was also at the heart of Buddhist communal life in centers such as Lushan, where Huiyuan instituted regular sessions of "*zhai* predication 齋講" as part of the service. The liturgical sermon was an adaptation of the technique of oral *sūtra* explication practiced by the eminent translators Daoan 道安 (312–385) and Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (334–413),<sup>16</sup> a development suggesting that the pastoral objective pursued by religious leaders like Huiyuan and Lu Xiujing was to elucidate the meaning and method of a spiritual exercise new to China and evolving separately in the Buddhist and Daoist communities. Taking his inspiration for each text from a phrase in the *Daode jing*, Lu's intention was to situate the Retreat—its Buddhist overtones notwithstanding—in the intellectual universe of classical Daoism: the mystical regimen of the Laozi, with its physiological and political dimensions, and the Fast of the Heart 心齋 of the Zhuangzi 莊子.<sup>17</sup>

The Warring States (475–221 BC) classic *Daode jing* dates in its earliest known exemplar—the bamboo slips manuscript from Guodian 郭店 in Hubei—to the mid-fourth century BC. For Six

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Franciscus Verellen, "The Heavenly Master liturgical agenda according to *Chisong zi's Petition Almanac*," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 14 (2004), 339–43.

<sup>15</sup> *Taishang dongxuan lingbao fazhu jing* 太上洞玄靈寶法燭經, *Daozang* 349, cited as *Fazhu jing* below.

<sup>16</sup> Sylvie Hureau, "Buddhist ritual" in *Early Chinese Religion. Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1222–25.

<sup>17</sup> On the latter, see Schipper, *Taoist Body*, 195–208.

Dynasties (AD 220–589) Daoists it was a fundamental scripture that played an important role in Heavenly Master ritual.<sup>18</sup> The transmission of the *Daode jing*, accompanied by a rubric of associated texts in the scriptural canon, corresponded to the conferral of an initiatory ordination rank.<sup>19</sup> In the bibliography of the dynastic history of the Song (960–1279), Lu Xiujing features as one of five Laozi scholiasts of the Han to early Tang period, in the company of Heshang gong 河上公, Yan Zun 莊遵, Wang Bi 王弼, and Fu Yi 傅奕. His *Miscellaneous Explications of the Laozi Daode jing*, as extant in libraries of the Song,<sup>20</sup> was manifestly accorded a prominent place at that time among the large corpus of early *Daode jing* exegesis. Although the *Miscellaneous Explications* are lost today, we may imagine them to have been a more systematic commentary along the lines of our sermons, which elucidate selected passages. The contemporary setting for Lu's work was the vogue of Mystery Learning 玄風, embracing Laozi, Zhuangzi, and *Changes* studies, that held sway in southern China since the Eastern Jin (317–420).<sup>21</sup> Together with Lu Xiujing, this intellectual current prominently included Gu Huan 顧歡 (420–483), another southern aristocrat and specialist of Huang-Lao philosophy, alchemy, and Daoist ritual, who pioneered the text-critical study of the Shangqing 上清 scriptural canon and also made his mark as a commentator on the *Daode jing*.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> On the ritual practice of reciting the *Daode jing*, see Ōfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾, *Shoki no dōkyō: dōkyōshi no kenkyū* 1 初期の道教——道教史の研究・其の一 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1991), 170–74.

<sup>19</sup> See Kristofer Schipper, “Taoist ordination ranks in the Tunhuang manuscripts,” in *Religion und Philosophie in Ostasien: Festschrift für Hans Steininger*, ed. Gert Naundorf et al. (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1985), 137–42.

<sup>20</sup> *Laozi daode jing zashuo* 老子道德經雜說; see *Song shi* 宋史 (1346), by Toghto 脫脫 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1977), 205.5177; Piet van der Loon, *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period: A Critical Study and Index* (London: Ithaca Press, 1984), 153.

<sup>21</sup> See *Song shu* 宋書 (493), by Shen Yue 沈約 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1974), 67.1778, and Richard B. Mather, *The Poet Shen Yüeh (441–513): The Reticent Marquis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 42.

<sup>22</sup> See Strickmann, “The Mao Shan revelations,” 31–32.

## I. *The Illumination of Ritual*

According to Lu Xiuqing, correct ritual practice both regulated the practitioner and served as a means to enlightenment:

Without ritual, deviation 邪曲 cannot right itself. If you practice ritual without understanding, you cannot discern your merits or demerits 得失. Those who aspire to righteousness cannot do without ritual. Those who practice ritual cannot do without understanding. To master oneself 自定,<sup>23</sup> it is indispensable to practice the Retreat. To practice the Retreat it is indispensable to read this scripture. This scripture is therefore [titled] the *Illumination of Ritual*.<sup>24</sup>

Lu's sermons were thus designed to illumine ritual practice. The master of rites 法師 bore the text like a source of light when approaching the altar, while the congregation 法眾 emptied their hearts and pledged to receive the scripture's initiation. As a result, "Their sight and hearing would be discerning, and the teaching of the great Way would become clear to all."<sup>25</sup> To highlight the deviation of contemporary practice, Lu Xiuqing invokes Yan Zun 嚴遵,<sup>26</sup> the first-century BC recluse and commentator on the *Daode jing*: "Empty your mind to return to the Way and its Virtue; calm your breathing to visualize the gods 虛心以原道德，靜氣以期[存]神明."<sup>27</sup> By contrast,

Scholars of this latter age 末世<sup>28</sup> value what is showy and despise what is substantial. Good fortune lies in stillness, yet they agitate themselves to obtain it. Destiny resides in oneself, yet they abandon

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Sermon 1 below, where the term refers to the control of sensory cravings.

<sup>24</sup> *Fazhu jing* 1a–b. Cf. Sermon 2 below, on Ruling oneself and correcting one's thoughts.

<sup>25</sup> *Fazhu jing* 2b.

<sup>26</sup> I.e., Zhuang Zun 莊遵 (also known as Yan Junping 嚴君平). The character *zhuang* was tabooed after the reign of Han Mingdi (AD 57–75); see Alan K. L. Chan, "The essential meaning of the Way and Virtue: Yan Zun and 'Laozi Learning' in early Han China," *Monumenta Serica* 46 (1998), 105–27.

<sup>27</sup> *Fazhu jing* 2a. See Yan Zun's *Laozi zhigui* 老子指歸, ed. Wang Deyou 王德有 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1994), 22. The original reads *cun* 存 in the place of *qi* 期.

<sup>28</sup> A corrupt and obtuse age, in Buddhist parlance also known as "the end of the doctrine 末法."

themselves in pursuit of the outside world.<sup>29</sup> Followers like this, though they happily perform Retreats, do not understand the rites of the Retreat 齋法, or if they understand the rites of the Retreat, do not know the structure of the Retreat 齋體. Or if they know the structure of the Retreat, they do not comprehend the meaning of the Retreat 齋義. Or if they comprehend the meaning of the Retreat, they do not grasp its intent 齋意. Floundering in confusion and error, they will stop at nothing. Moving erratically, they lose sight of their purpose and remain forever oblivious. It's like turning one's back to the gale or following a strong current: not understanding that it is by going against the stream that you return to the source, they forever sink into the Sea of Woes 苦海.<sup>30</sup> Are they not to be pitied? Is this not painful indeed!<sup>31</sup>

A liturgical day was divided into six periods 六時, including three daytime and three nighttime offices devoted to “practicing the Way 行道” through offerings, confessions or meditations.<sup>32</sup> The Buddhist Fast ritual reserved fully one third of the liturgical day for “concentration” (*dhyāna* 禪).<sup>33</sup> A Daoist Retreat comprised morning, noon, and evening audiences. In addition, during the ritual construction of the altar the night preceding the Retreat, a “nocturnal announcement 宿啟” was held.<sup>34</sup> Lu Xiujing's ten sermons on *The Way and its Virtue* punctuated Retreat performances at prescribed points with instructions and meditations:

<sup>29</sup> The issues raised here skillfully point to the essential themes and conclusion of the sermons below.

<sup>30</sup> On Lu Xiujing's use of the Buddhist term, referring to the boundless suffering that is the lot of mortals, see Tang Yijie 湯一介, *Wei Jin Nanbei chao shiqi di dao jiao* 魏晉南北朝時期的道教, 280.

<sup>31</sup> *Fazhu jing* 2a–b.

<sup>32</sup> See *Taishang dongyuan shenzhou jing* 太上洞淵神咒經 (ca. 400–420), ed. Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933), *Daozang* 335, 7.12b, 17.5a.

<sup>33</sup> See the apocryphal sūtra *Pusa shouzhai jing* 菩薩受齋經, attrib. Nie Daozhen 聶道真 (Western Jin, 265–316), T. 1502, 1116b.

<sup>34</sup> See Kristofer Schipper, “An outline of Taoist ritual,” in *Essais sur le rituel III: Colloque du centenaire de la Section des sciences religieuses de l'École pratique des hautes études*, ed. Anne-Marie Blondeau and Kristofer Schipper (Louvain-Paris: Peeters, 1995), 106.

Therefore I expounded ten verses of the *Classic* [on *the Way and its Virtue*] 說經十章 in order to complete the phases of the Retreat 齋時. I titled [the work] *The Illumination of Ritual* 法燭. At the nocturnal announcement one verse was expounded. In the course of the six devotional offices 六時行道, six verses were expounded. In the course of a meditation in three phases 三時思神, the three remaining verses were expounded.<sup>35</sup>

The classical term for retreat or fast 齋 was often used in conjunction with precepts 戒 and ablutions 沐浴, pointing to the ritual's essential object of purification, especially in view of entering into the presence of spirits when offering sacrifices.<sup>36</sup> Lu Xiuqing lays out his rationale for the Lingbao Retreat in a presentation preceding the ten sermons, which is also included in his *Explanations on the Lingbao Retreat: Protocols for Radiant illuminations, Precepts and Punishments, Lamps and Prayers*.<sup>37</sup> Rooted in the philosophy of the *Daode jing*, it was of a cosmo-psycho-physiological order. In particular, Lu emphasizes here the centrality of the concept of “breath-and-spirit 神氣” that features also in Lingbao precepts and interdictions with respect to impairing one's endowed vitality:

The Word of the Dao 道言: Among the ten thousand beings, man is the most noble 萬物人為貴.<sup>38</sup> Humans regard life as the most precious. The necessary conditions for life are spirit 神 and breath 氣. This vitality 神氣 resides in the human body. For the animation 命 of his four limbs 四體, the human being cannot for one moment be without breath, nor may he for even an instant lose his spirit. When you lose your spirit, the five viscera 五臟 break down. He who loses breath, hastens to his death. The interrelationship of breath to spirit is

<sup>35</sup> *Fazhu jing* 2b.

<sup>36</sup> See *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏 8B.152, in *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏: “only after observing the fast, interdictions, and ablutions is it permissible to sacrifice to Shangdi” 齋戒沐浴則可以祀上帝.

<sup>37</sup> A recompilation of preliminary rites codified by Lu: *Dongxuan lingbao zhai shuo guangzhu jiefa deng zhuyuan yi* 洞玄靈寶齋說光燭戒罰燈祝願儀, *Daozang* 524, cited below as *Zhuyuan yi*.

<sup>38</sup> The phrase is also found in the contemporary *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* 太上靈寶五符序, *Daozang* 388, A.19b. The idea of man's nobility among creation is variously expressed in traditional cosmology, see for example *Shangshu* 尚書 11.152 and *Xiaojing* 孝經 5.36, in *Shisan jing zhushu*.

to perpetually proceed in mutual succession. The interrelationship of the spirit to breath is to perpetually derive strength from mutual emulation. When the spirit departs, breath perishes. When breathing discontinues, the body dies. All and sundry know the fear of death and the joy of life,<sup>39</sup> yet they are unaware that their existence is the result of spirit and breath. Those who time and again do violence to their heart-and-mind and abuse their breath, who degrade their spirit over and over and dissipate their life 彫其命,<sup>40</sup> who care not for quietude nor safeguard their true being, end up deformed and broken 枉殘.<sup>41</sup> How can a person not cherish his essence 精 and guard his breath to make them endure, practice kindness and nurture other creatures to bring blessing to posterity?<sup>42</sup>

Pursuing his presentation, Lu Xiujing returns to the leitmotif of the *Daode jing* sermons, the meaning and method of the Retreat. Again, Lu Xiujing demarcates his Retreat from the Buddhist Fast by resorting to an unambiguously pre-Buddhist idiom and attributing his teaching to the culture heroes of Chinese antiquity. The Retreat ritual, we learn, was instituted by the sages, “settling each matter according to circumstances” 故立齋法，因事息事. The expression echoes the Warring States legalist reformer Shang Yang 商鞅 (d. 338 BC) who said of the sage founders of the Western Zhou 周 dynasty (1046–771 BC) that they “established laws as opportune and regulated rituals according to circumstances” 當時而立法，因事而制禮.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps Lu Xiujing was alluding to this saying via its echo in another classic of Chinese lore, the *Warring States Stratagems*.<sup>44</sup> For he goes on to explain that precepts and rites respectively served to control the temptations arising from within and those assailing a person from the outside, and this dual combat he again illustrates with a dictum from *Warring States Stratagems*,

<sup>39</sup> Cf. above, “Human beings regard life as the most precious.”

<sup>40</sup> *Zhuyuan yi* writes 凋其命.

<sup>41</sup> Laozi 42, which forms the basis for this introductory sermon, ends with the adage that the violent come to a ruinous end; see *Laozi jiaoshi*, 176.

<sup>42</sup> *Fazhu jing* 1b–2a; *Zhuyuan yi* 5b–6b.

<sup>43</sup> *Shang jun shu jin zhu jinyi* 商君書今註今譯, attrib. Shang Yang 商鞅 (d. 338 BC), ed. and trans. He Lingxu 賀凌虛 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu, 1987) 1.6.

<sup>44</sup> See *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策, comp. Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–8 BC) (Shanghai: Guji, 1978), 19.663.

“As long as the bandit within is not pacified, you cannot repel the enemy without” 內寇不與外敵不可距:<sup>45</sup>

The sages considered that ordinary people, contending for advantage and indulging the Five Desires 五慾,<sup>46</sup> were incapable of self-control 自定.<sup>47</sup> Therefore they established the Retreat ritual, settling each matter according to circumstance. The Precepts 禁戒 guard against<sup>48</sup> the bandit within 內寇, and the *solemn rites* 威儀 restrain the thief without 外賊. Recitation 禮誦 masters the body and mouth: ride *movement* 乘動 to restore *stillness* 反靜. Meditation 思神 subjugates the mind and thoughts: drive *being* 御有 to return to *emptiness* 歸虛.<sup>49</sup> He who is capable of stillness and emptiness unites with the Dao: it's like turning back the paces of the noble steed 逸驥 and making it the mount of your return to true being 歸真.<sup>50</sup>

In Buddhist metaphor, the human heart was as difficult to bridle as a noble steed: “Who would willingly master this square inch of heart” 誰肯制此方寸心, asked the prince Xiao Ziliang 蕭子良 (460–494) of Qi 齊: “The noble steed and impetuous rhinoceros range at large and would not be harnessed!” 逸驥狂兕曠不御.<sup>51</sup> Lu Xiuqing's Retreat promises not only to turn back the adept's impetuous heart, but to transform it into a disciplined conveyance for the return to his original self.

Like the introductory presentation, each of the following ten sermons also begins with “The Word of the Dao” 道言, but each ends in a quotation from the *Daode jing* that is introduced by the phrase “Thus it is said” 故曰. The general framework is

<sup>45</sup> *Zhanguo ce*, 29.1058.

<sup>46</sup> I.e., 五欲 (the version in *Zhuyuan yi* 6a text has this character): desires arising from the senses (sound, sight, smell, taste, and mind/heart, with Buddhist and Daoist variations).

<sup>47</sup> Cf. “Illumination of ritual” above and Sermon 1, where the term refers to the control of sensory cravings.

<sup>48</sup> Guard against 關: the *Zhuyuan yi* text here has *xian* 閑, “to stop.”

<sup>49</sup> References to the ontological beginning: when the One differentiated, it gave rise to “respite” and “movement,” and to “being” from “emptiness.” See Michael, *The Pristine Dao*, 65.

<sup>50</sup> *Fazhu jing* 2a; *Zhuyuan yi* 6a.

<sup>51</sup> *Jingzhuji jingxing famen* 淨住子淨行法門, in *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集, T. 2103, 30.317a.

cosmological and soteriological.<sup>52</sup> Defining the place of man within the universe leads Lu to an exposition of human psycho-physiology in correlation with cosmic principles, including the rationale for moral action and discernment, the emotions, and the faculties of perception; in other words, the composition of a Daoist persona. The same intellectual sweep embracing the cosmos, mankind, and the adept's return to his ontological roots then leads the author from philosophy to physiological alchemy, interior visualization, and the ultimate liberation through meditation. As announced, the last three sermons were set within a meditation session in three phases; the closing instructions speak to mental concentration and visualization techniques, touching also on the subjects of breathing and mind travel. Other noteworthy themes include the empowerment of the adept through ordination, rules for ritual practice, and the importance for the accomplishment of the ritual of discipline, sincerity, virtuous conduct, detachment, and quietism.

## II. Philosophy

The first five sermons ground the practice of the Retreat in key tenets of *Daode jing* mysticism: self-discipline comes before ruling others, nonaction commands the world, detachment leads to empowerment. As we have seen, **Sermon 1** was pronounced during the preliminary nocturnal announcement session.<sup>53</sup> It opens in a didactic vein, elucidating the meanings and sequential dynamic of the terms Way, Virtue, and Classic that make up the title of the *Daode jing*: the word *jīng* 經, classic or *sūtra*, is here assimilated with *jìng* 徑, path. This leads to conduct 行, which Lu Xiujing associates with proceeding 行步, and hence to law or ritual 法, defined as model or norm 法式.<sup>54</sup> Thus the title *Daode jing* is found to encapsulate a whole program of Daoist practice:

---

<sup>52</sup> In the sense of these terms elaborated in Thomas Michael, *The Pristine Dao: Metaphysics in Early Daoist Discourse* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), chapters 3 and 5.

<sup>53</sup> *Fazhu jing* 2b–3b; this first sermon is also found in *Zhuyuan yi* 6b–7b.

<sup>54</sup> In a note in *Fazhu jing* 1a, as well as the main text in *Zhuyuan yi* 5a, the term law/ritual 法 is defined as a carpenter's compass and square 規矩, i.e. "regulation."

Those who would study the Dao must rely on ritual to probe the Classic (*jing*), and practice goodness to achieve Virtue (*de*), before they can reach the Way (*dao*).

This reversed order *Jing dedao* flows from Laozi 42, *The Dao produced the One; the One produced the two; the two produced the three. And the three produced the ten thousand things.*<sup>55</sup> The passage is usually understood as postulating the emergence, at the origin of creation, of two cosmic energies *yin* and *yang* from an undifferentiated One.<sup>56</sup> But Lu Xiuqing substitutes a different trinity here: “The three are the Way, Virtue, and Man.” Under this scheme, humanity is placed at the beginning of a sequential order where man proceeds along the path of meritorious conduct (*jing*), attains Virtue (*de*), and finally reaches the Way (*dao*):

Man comes first. Meritorious conduct is second. The attainment of the Way, once Virtue is accomplished, is number three. When these three come together, then the Way is attained.

Like other predicators, Lu Xiuqing uses similes and parables to lend tangible meaning to abstract concepts or cloak abstruse language in a mantle of everyday familiarity:

Those who do not accomplish merit, but only hold to the One 守一 without stirring, will not in the end attain the Dao. It’s like people sitting in their home without stepping forth. How can the Way thus be attained?

Again, Lu demonstrates the primacy of man as the fructifying principle in the universe—in Confucian terms, the “mutuality of Heaven and Man”<sup>57</sup>—through a series of rhetorical questions arising from such similes:

If the law of the Dao 道法 existed without human beings, then the ultimate principle 至理 would fall away and disappear, and [the Dao]

<sup>55</sup> *Fazhu jing* 2b–3b; *Laozi jiaoshi*, 174.

<sup>56</sup> Or Primordial Qi. Three would normally be the trinity Heaven-Man-Earth, producing all phenomenal things. See Michael, *The Pristine Dao*, 56–57.

<sup>57</sup> Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiosity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 9.

would return to the state of nonbeing 無有.<sup>58</sup> It's like sowing cereals. If you cast the seeds into the ground but there is no water to moisten them, then how can they grow? If you have a lord and ministers but no people, then how can there be government? If you have heaven and earth but no human beings, then how can life come to fruition?

For **Sermon 2**, Lu Xiujing takes as his point of departure Laozi 45, *Through purity and stillness the world is regulated* 清淨為天下正,<sup>59</sup> to illustrate the power of discipline and quietude that accrues from practicing the Retreat:

He who would rule men, should first rule himself. He who would rectify others, should first rectify himself. For ruling oneself and regulating one's thoughts, nothing compares with the discipline of the Retreat 齊直. "Retreat" 齊 means "putting in order" 齊. It serves to order mankind's muddled conduct. "Discipline" 直 is "rectitude" 正. It serves to correct the mind of a novice 入道. Purity of thought and stillness of spirit, this is the meaning of *zhai* and the object of undergoing the Retreat.

Purity and stillness are also the practitioner's defense against the ceaseless cares, anxieties, and impulsive cravings of everyday life. Lu Xiujing depicts these vividly:

The life of man knows four great tribulations. When he is hungry, he worries about food. When he is cold, he worries about clothing. When he has already attained sufficiency in clothing and food, he worries about amassing more. Those who are poor desire wealth. Those who are lowly desire nobility. Thus [cravings for] honors 榮, tastes 味, sounds 聲, and sights 色,<sup>60</sup> and all the various desires engender one another. While one has not yet gained, he worries about not gaining. When one has already gained, he worries about losing. His ambitions know not a moment's respite. All his life he worries about nothing but toil. Agitated, he strives to get ahead, while affairs keep piling up. Right and wrong, gain and loss, sorrow and joy, happiness and anger, a vexed mind, tired body, and bitter spirit—these distance the *qi* of the

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏 15.140, in *Shisan jing zhushu*: "It is man that can make the Way great; the Way cannot make man great" 人能弘道非道弘人.

<sup>59</sup> *Fazhu jing* 3b-4a; *Laozi jiaoshi*, 184. The latter reads "quietude" 清靜 instead of "purity and stillness" 清淨.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Buddhist and Daoist five desires 五欲 that arose from the senses.

Way 道氣<sup>61</sup> from the self. When the *hun* 魂 and *po* 魄 souls depart from a human being, the body becomes like an empty city. Calamities are daily encountered, infants ail and fall ill, people die prematurely and are buried, and find themselves demoted to the Three Destinations of Retribution 三塗,<sup>62</sup> erring calamitously in the afterlife 後世.<sup>63</sup>

The adept is told in terms no less concrete how to shield against such worries and temptations by performing the Retreat, calming body and mind, practicing moderation, and concentrating his or her mental powers in meditation:<sup>64</sup>

It is for those reasons that the sages instituted the Retreat. Purity and stillness 清淨 shield against the cares of this world, fully restrain the *hun* and *po*-souls 具錄魂魄,<sup>65</sup> and rest the essential spirit 精神. You must practice it with utmost sincerity and reverence, cease speech and refrain from making noise, nor must you speak in jest. If there is reprehensible behavior, random thoughts and lack of attention, then the eye fails to discern and sees not right and wrong, and the ear is deaf and hears not good and evil tidings. Let a simple life be your goal, and emptiness and nothingness your objective. Make moderation your principle and eating little your foundation. If you focus your thoughts on the Way and visualize the gods 存神, then Heaven and Man will be in consonance, disaster will be averted, blessings will descend, and your original destiny 性命 fulfilled.

**Sermon 3** is short. Its theme is a phrase from Laozi 48 on the power of refraining from purposeful action: *To seize the world, be*

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Sermon 3: Silently discarding cogitation . . . , the practitioner unites with the *qi* of the Way.

<sup>62</sup> The three undesirable *gati* or paths of rebirth as hell-denizen 地獄, animal 畜生, or hungry ghost 餓鬼. Cf. *Wugan wen*, 4a, Sentiment 4, “. . . deliver us from the Three Destinies of Retribution.”

<sup>63</sup> Another Buddhist term for *laishi* 來世, the world after death.

<sup>64</sup> On the continuity of Heavenly Master doctrine on this subject (especially in the *Xiang'er* 想爾 commentary) from practices in ancient China, see Michael Puett, “Becoming Laozi: cultivating and visualizing spirits in early-medieval China,” *Asia Major*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser. 23, no. 1 (2010), 223–52.

<sup>65</sup> According to Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343), to prevent death and disease resulting from a scattering of the souls, Daoist practitioners performed a “restraining ritual 拘錄之法.” The term *julu* 拘錄 was also written *luju* 錄具; see *Baopu zi neipian jiaoshi* 抱樸子內篇校釋, ed. Wang Ming 王明 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), 2.19–20.

*ever disengaged* 取天下常以無事.<sup>66</sup> Applying Laozi's mystic vision of power to the Heavenly Master initiation system, Lu Xiujing affirms the empowerment of an adept through ordination due to the protection of the spirits inscribed on the ordination register. The Generals, Officials, and Soldiers 將軍吏兵 register corresponded to an entry-level Heavenly Master ordination for men, women, and children<sup>67</sup> that was adopted into the Lingbao ordination system.<sup>68</sup> The generals, officials, and soldiers in the ordination register were the guardian spirits of the Heavenly Master diocese responsible for issuing the document.<sup>69</sup> They were at the service of the holder of the register. The expectation of empowerment through Daoist ordination registers even appealed to contemporary Buddhists.<sup>70</sup> Yet, as Lu Xiujing warns his disciples, the protection of the generals, officials, and soldiers was contingent on an ordained adept's exemplary behavior and practice of quietude:

The Retreat alone allows you to follow Heaven and Earth, quietly cutting off cogitation. When not a single thought is left, you unite with the *qi* of the Dao, which circulates and enters the human realm 入道.<sup>71</sup> On receiving the Generals, Officials, and Soldiers 將軍吏兵 [Ordination], you come under their protection. These being at your command, your every aspiration is fulfilled. But if you are incapable of quietude and give yourself up to agitation and worry, you will be unwell and will disobey your superiors and your parents, as well as the netherworld administration. When the body lacks virtuous conduct and the heart is wicked and unreformed, then the [spirit] officials and

<sup>66</sup> *Laozi jiaoshi*, 193.

<sup>67</sup> See *Zhengyi fawen taishang wailu yi* 正一法文太上外籙儀 (Six Dynasties), *Daozang* 1243, 7b ff.

<sup>68</sup> See *Taishang dongxuan lingbao shoudu yi* 7a; cf. the Dunhuang text tradition discussed in Schipper, "Taoist ordination ranks," 131–34, and Lü Pengzhi 呂鵬志, "Tianshi dao shoulu keyi: Dunhuang xieben S203 kaolun 天師道授籙科儀——敦煌寫本S203考論," *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica* 77 (2006), 113 and *passim*.

<sup>69</sup> See *Chisong zi zhangli* 赤松子章曆, *Daozang* 615, 4.21b–22a.

<sup>70</sup> Hureau, "Buddhist ritual," 1220.

<sup>71</sup> The circulation and infusion of the *qi* of the Dao in the adept's body is mentioned in the earliest Heavenly Master liturgical manual, *Hanzhong ruzhi chaojing fa* 漢中入治朝靜法 (2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> c.), cited in *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 (between 492 and 514), by Tao Hongjing 陶弘景, *Daozang* 421, 3.11a.

soldiers depart and are no longer at the service of man. What you obtain is untoward and disasters pile up. Thus it is said *To seize the world, be ever disengaged* 取天下常以無事.<sup>72</sup>

**Sermon 4** conflates two phrases from Laozi 57 into one: *If I emulate quietude, the people regulate themselves* 我好靜人自正 and *If I am free from desire, the people achieve simplicity of their own accord* 我無欲人自樸 produce *Tranquil, I am free from desire and the world governs itself* 無欲以靜天下自正.<sup>73</sup> With this, Lu Xiuqing pursues the same idea that equates power with non-intervention and mystical quietism. Waxing rhetorical in his ardor to guide the faithful to orthopraxy, Lu sets out Ten Capacities 十能 of conduct as a further prerequisite for performing the Retreat. No doubt these Ten Capacities were to be memorized alongside the Ten Purifications and the Ten Precepts laid out in Lu's *Explanations on the Lingbao Retreat*.<sup>74</sup>

*Retreat* can be defined as putting in order all manner of conduct and establishing every kind of virtue. To carry it out, you must be able to endure humiliation, able to be pliant, able to be compassionate, able to be charitable, able to do good works in secret, able to practice loyalty and filial devotion, capable of complete sincerity, able to be conscientious and trustworthy, able to practice restraint, and capable of reverence. Only having acquired these Ten Capacities can you practice the Retreat and calm your thoughts, practice self-examination and introspection, and return your thoughts within. Your mouth will not speak wantonly, nor will your body act rashly. Thereby the color of colorlessness becomes visible, thereby the sound of silence becomes audible, thereby the taste of insipidness becomes delectable, and thereby the speech of wordlessness becomes communicable. Thereby the gods will descend and good fortune will arrive. Then you will experience a change of heart and your intention will become sagely, you will have good dreams with favorable omens and will be able to see presages of the future.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> *Fazhu jing* 4a–b.

<sup>73</sup> *Fazhu jing* 5a; Laozi *jiaoshi*, 232.

<sup>74</sup> *Zhuyuan yi* 1b–2b.

<sup>75</sup> *Fazhu jing* 4b–5a. An approximate recension of the last passage from “practice self-examination” onward features in *Taishang hunyuan zhenlu* 太上混元真錄 (7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> c.), *Daozang* 954, 25a and several later texts.

Lacking inner commitment, Lu Xiujing explains, one could not hope to succeed. By following his prescriptions, however, results were assured. In Chinese thinking about ritual, the efficacy of the performance was regularly linked to the practitioner's sincerity. A pious attitude required consistency between a person's interior self and outer persona, a true face.<sup>76</sup> As explicated in the introductory presentation, the adept needed to be armed with the precepts to control his inward volition, the "bandit within," and ritual to regulate his outward comportment, the "thief without:"

If outwardly you do not perform the solemn rites, and inwardly you do not keep the precept rules, your action will be unremarkable and your merits will go unrecorded. If you are less than absolutely sincere, if you doubt and hesitate, if inside and outside do not correspond and mouth and heart do not match one another,<sup>77</sup> if your feelings are anxious and your disposition recalcitrant, if you are given to fickleness, make secret curses and harbor envy, if your thoughts and intentions are not true to yourself, if your essence is wasted in lascivious passion, if you covet riches and hanker after sex, if you are unable to exercise self-control, if your body and mind are thus, then even though you practice the discipline of the Retreat, no blessings will accrue to you in a lifetime. What then? If your thoughts are not indwelling and your *hun* 魂 and *po* 魄 souls suffer outside servitude, your harmonious *qi* 和氣 will depart and as a result your resonance 感動 will become incapacitated. Thus it is said *Free from desire I am tranquil and the world governs itself* 無欲以靜，天下自正。<sup>78</sup>

At the end of the cycle, the issue of congruence between inside and outside will be explored on a different plane: the inner visualization of the world, where the individual becomes one with the universe. Pursuing first the importance of precepts discipline, **Sermon 5** here introduces the Wisdom Precepts. To be saved, the adept must observe "wisdom medicine 慧藥," i.e. the precepts that form an indispensable part of the redemptive plan of the Retreat. The Ten

<sup>76</sup> Cf. the recitative in J. S. Bach, Cantata no. 179, "Wer so von innen wie von außen ist, der heißt ein wahrer Christ. . ."

<sup>77</sup> Cf. *Zhuyuan yi* 9a, no. 5 of the Ten Precepts, "Let your speech be unadorned, fair and straight inside and out."

<sup>78</sup> *Fazhu jing* 4b-5a; *Laozi jiaoshi*, 232.

Precepts 十戒 used by Lu Xiuqing are those of the early Lingbao canon.<sup>79</sup> The set is also found in the *Great Superior Wisdom Precepts* collection of rules for transmission to ordination candidates that was current in the fifth century.<sup>80</sup> In essence, the Lingbao Ten Wisdom Precepts are none other than the Ten Bodhisattva Precepts 菩薩十戒. These had been popularized in China by the *Brahmā's Net*,<sup>81</sup> an apocryphal *sūtra* probably written in Lu Xiuqing's own lifetime, which was partly based on authentic Indian sources and served as a Chinese Buddhist lay catechism. The Indian teaching known as Perfection of Wisdom *prajñāpāramitā*, was among the most prevalent early imports from Mahāyāna Buddhism into China. Its central doctrine stated that phenomenal things had existence but were void of permanency and therefore non-substantial. This view appealed to Laozi scholiasts like Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249) and adepts of Zhuangzi and Mystery Learning. A strategy named “matched meanings” 格義 was employed by Daoan, Huiyuan, and other translators, to actively exploit such affinities between Indian and Chinese speculative thought.<sup>82</sup>

The final section of Sermon 5, presented as a summary, is in fact a paraphrase of the lesson “What do we mean by Broad Wisdom?” 何謂廣智慧 in the *Bright Radiance Meditation Sūtra*.<sup>83</sup> The aim of Lu Xiuqing's unacknowledged borrowing appears to be to connect the Buddhist Expediency of Wisdom theme with a

<sup>79</sup> For the different sets of ten precepts in Daoism, see Kusuyama Haruki 楠山春樹, “Dōkyō ni okeru jikkai 道教における十戒,” *Waseda Daigaku Daigakuin Bungaku Kenkyūka kiyō* 早稻田大學大學院文學研究科紀要 28 (1982), 15–32.

<sup>80</sup> *Taishang dongzhen zhibui shangpin daje* 太上洞真智慧上品大誡 (ca. 400), *Daozang* 177, 1b–2b. Cited as *Shangpin daje* below.

<sup>81</sup> *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (5<sup>th</sup> c.), attrib. Kumārajīva, T. 1484, B.1004c–5a. See Paul Groner, “The *Fan-wang ching* and monastic discipline in Japanese Tendai: A study of Annen's *Futsū jubosatsukai kōshaku*,” in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, edited by Robert E. Buswell (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990), 251–57.

<sup>82</sup> Liu Jiahe, “Early Buddhism and Taoism in China (A.D. 65–420),” trans. Dongfang, *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 12 (1992), 38–41.

<sup>83</sup> *Fo shuo chengju guangming dingyi jing* 佛說成具光明定意經, trans. Zhi Yao 支曜 (fl. 185), T. 630, cited as *Dingyi jing* below. On this text, see Pu Chengzhong, “Notes on the *Chengju guangming jing*, ‘Sūtra of achieving the bright light concentration,’” *Buddhist Studies Review* 25, no. 1 (2008), 27–53.

recurrent dictum in the *Way and its Virtue* (Laozi 4 and 56): *Blunt the edge, dissolve your resentment* 挫其銳解其忿. A text variant renders the second part of this phrase *untie your entanglements* 解其紛.<sup>84</sup> Lu Xiujing cites the latter version:

To practice the Way and perform the Retreat it is necessary to observe the law of the precepts 戒法. Salvation is boundless, the ritual prescriptions subtle. Constrain your attitude and subdue your heart; then you will be pure and your ruinous flaws will be eliminated. Practice the Expedient of Wisdom 行智慧之便 (cf. the “summary” below) and extirpate the calamity of life and death 拔生死之難.<sup>85</sup> Cut off all thought and betake yourself to the land of nonaction. Deeply study that which arises;<sup>86</sup> carefully examine that which submerges, observe what is ailing, and cure it with the medicine of wisdom 慧藥.<sup>87</sup> If you perceive the attraction of color and profit 色利,<sup>88</sup> use the precepts to cover your eyes; if you hear words of loathing or resentment, use the precepts to stop your ears; if you eat sweet and fragrant delicacies, use the precepts to moderate your mouth; if you wish for wealth and treasures, or yield to the temptation of desire, use the precepts to blunt your heart; if you are inclined to wickedness or drawn to evil deeds, use the precepts to “break the foot” 折足 (i.e., incapacitate your inclination).<sup>89</sup>

To sum up:<sup>90</sup> A person who does not violate the precepts transcends worldly entanglement and does not sink into the mire. Dwelling in

<sup>84</sup> *Laozi jiaoshi*, 19 and 228.

<sup>85</sup> Phrase from *Dingyi jing* 453b.

<sup>86</sup> This sequence up to “medicine” is a paraphrase from *Dingyi jing* 453b: 觀其所起，察其所滅。視其所病，選以何藥。

<sup>87</sup> Emended from “medicine of kindness 惠藥”; cf. *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* 無上黃籙大齋立成儀 (postface dated 1223), comp. Jiang Shuyu 蔣叔興 et al., *Daozang* 508, 16.23a.

<sup>88</sup> The following sequence up to “break the foot” is reproduced in *Yaoxiu keyi jielü chao* 要修科儀戒律鈔, by Zhu Faman 朱法滿 (early 8<sup>th</sup> c.), *Daozang* 463, 4.2a.

<sup>89</sup> The expression “broken foot, overturned food 折足覆餗” signifies incapacity; see *Book of Changes* 94: “when one foot of the [three-legged] *ding* 鼎 cauldron breaks, the food is overturned 鼎折足覆餗” (*Zhouyi* 周易, 5.113, in *Shisan jing zhushu*).

<sup>90</sup> The following is a paraphrase of *Dingyi jing* 453b13. The last item (plot of thistles and thorns), however, is missing from the received version of *Dingyi jing*.

the midst of sundry attachments, the heart stays in the repository of the precepts of the Dao 道誠;<sup>91</sup> residing in a house of vexations 憂患之舍;<sup>92</sup> the heart remains in the hall of blessed salvation 善救之堂;<sup>93</sup> inhabiting a room of obscurity 闇冥之室,<sup>94</sup> the heart remains in the home of *nirvāṇa* liberation 斷滅; relying on 倚<sup>95</sup> an unsafe house, the heart remains at the gate of expediency 方便之門;<sup>96</sup> sitting in a burrow of snakes, the heart remains on the path of renunciation 捨遠之徑;<sup>97</sup> living in a lair of tigers and leopards, the heart remains in the inn of good fortune; confronting the danger of sailing a broken<sup>98</sup> boat, the heart projects<sup>99</sup> a way of escape. Approaching a forest of raging flames, the heart contemplates the peace<sup>100</sup> of extinction 灌滅; standing in a plot of thistles and thorns, the heart remains shielded in protective armor. This is what it means that I hold to the precepts to practice the Expediency of Wisdom 智慧之便也.<sup>101</sup> Thus it is said *Blunt the edge, untie your entanglements* 挫其銳，解其紛。<sup>102</sup>

### III. Physiology

The listener has now reached the midpoint in Lu Xiuji's cycle of sermons. If the first part emphasized the *Daode jing's* mystical philosophy of power, from here on the focus shifts to physiology, inner alchemy, and meditation. This is in keeping with a no less prevalent interpretation of the classic. Indeed, some scholars argue that the earliest strata of the *Daode jing* tradition were primarily

<sup>91</sup> The *Dingyi jing* has "factors of enlightenment" 道品.

<sup>92</sup> *Dingyi jing*: "house of Six Perils" 六患之舍.

<sup>93</sup> *Dingyi jing*: "hall of Six Purities" 六淨之堂.

<sup>94</sup> *Dingyi jing*: "room of Five Concealments" 五蔽之室.

<sup>95</sup> Perhaps an error for "lodging in" 寄. *Dingyi jing* erroneously writes "倚."

<sup>96</sup> *Dingyi jing*: "shelter of expediency" 方便之護.

<sup>97</sup> *Dingyi jing*: "捨遠之徑."

<sup>98</sup> Adopting *Dingyi jing* "坏" in place of "浮."

<sup>99</sup> Adopting *Dingyi jing* "圖" in place of "固."

<sup>100</sup> Adopting *Dingyi jing* "安" in place of "要."

<sup>101</sup> *Dingyi jing*: "Thus an enlightened scholar practices the Expediency of Wisdom to extricate himself from the cycle of rebirth" 是以明士行智慧之便拔出生死之難.

<sup>102</sup> *Fazhu jing* 5b-6a.

grounded in physical cultivation practices known as “nurturing life” 養生, including techniques of breath circulation, rather than political suasion.<sup>103</sup> This view is supported by the Han commentaries *Xiang'er* 想爾 and *Heshang gong* 河上公. Nurturing life involved the practice of visualizing the Five Viscera 五臟, the principal internal organs and their associated spirits. The conceptual model behind this quintuple constellation embedded medical theory in a framework of physio-cosmology and the dynamic of Five Phases correlation and transformation. The popular appeal of that model can be inferred from the wide circulation of Zhang Zhongjing’s 張仲景 (ca. 200 AD) *Treatise on Five Viscera* 五臟論, as attested by its surviving Dunhuang manuscripts.<sup>104</sup>

In **Sermon 6** Lu Xiuqing links Daoist physiological theory and life-nurturing practices to Laozi 6, *The Spirit of the Valley never dies* 谷神不死.<sup>105</sup> The Spirit of the Valley, also named the dark female 玄牝 or the root of Heaven and Earth, is the mystical matrix of creation. At the outset, Lu’s exegesis replaces humanity from the Way-Virtue-Man trinity of Sermon 1 to the classic configuration Heaven-Earth-Man posited in the *Book of Changes*, a fundamental work of divination that represented the physical, moral, and human universe in the form of sequential states of transformation.<sup>106</sup>

*Changes* scholarship was a major pursuit of southern aristocratic court Daoists.<sup>107</sup> It was also a Lu family tradition: Lu Xiuqing’s collateral ancestor Lu Ji 陸績 (188–219) was the author of

<sup>103</sup> See Thomas Michael, *In the Shadows of the Dao: Laozi, the Sage, and the Daodejing* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 10–12 and ch. 5.

<sup>104</sup> See Donald Harper, “Précis de connaissance médicale: le *Shanghan lun* 傷寒論 (Traité des atteintes par le Froid) et le *Wuzang lun* 五臟論 (Traité des cinq viscères),” in *Médecine, religion et société dans la Chine médiévale: étude de manuscrits chinois de Dunhuang et de Turfan*, edited by Catherine Despeux et al. (Paris: Collège de France, 2010), 65–106.

<sup>105</sup> *Laozi jiaoshi*, 25.

<sup>106</sup> On archaeological evidence for its earliest history, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes: Recently Discovered Manuscripts of the Yi Jing (I Ching) and Related Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 1–36.

<sup>107</sup> See Michel Strickmann, “On the alchemy of T’ao Hung-ching,” in *Facets of Taoism*, edited by H. Welch and A. Seidel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 187.

a *Changes* commentary.<sup>108</sup> The latter's cousin Lu Ji 陸機 (261–303), whose writings Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343) likened to “night-gleaming jades,” was a reputed *Changes* connoisseur.<sup>109</sup> This Lu Ji 陸機 and his younger brother Lu Yun 陸雲 (262–303) were acclaimed by the literary critic Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 465–522) in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* 文心雕龍 as “two brilliant spirits who stood out in beautifully patterned relief.” Lu Yun, too, was an acknowledged expert in Mystery Learning and the *Changes*.<sup>110</sup>

Each hexagram in the *Book of Changes* was constructed from three entities, Heaven, Earth, and Man, each of them doubled under two antithetical aspects: *yin* or *yang* as the Way of Heaven, weak or strong as the Way of Earth, and benevolent or righteous as the Way of Man. Lu Xiuqing, however, transforms the third antithetical pair in the *Book of Changes*, i.e., “establishing the Way of Man are *benevolence and righteousness* 立人之道曰仁與義,”<sup>111</sup> into something quite different: “establishing the Way of Man, there are *Three Causes and Five Principals*” 立人之道有三因五主. As explained in the sermon, the latter categories refer to overlapping psychosomatic constituents of the human being—including mental faculties, sensory perceptions, and emotions. This substitution<sup>112</sup> enables Lu Xiuqing to move his discourse from the realm of speculative cosmology to practical issues of moral, mental, and physical regulation, including even sensible advice on shunning fog and mist and keeping out of the wind and rain:

Establishing the way of Man there are Three Causes and Five Principals.

<sup>108</sup> See *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (297), by Chen Shou 陳壽 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1985), 57.1328, and Giovanni Vitiello, “Studio sul taoista Lu Xiuqing (406–477),” *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 47.3 (1987), 302–3.

<sup>109</sup> See *Jin shu* 晉書, by Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578–648) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1974), 54.1472 and 1481.

<sup>110</sup> See Sujane Wu, “The biography of Lu Yun (262–303) in *Jin shu* 54,” *Early Medieval China* 7 (2001), 1–2, 11–12 and *passim*.

<sup>111</sup> *Zhouyi*, 2.5.

<sup>112</sup> Note however that benevolence and righteousness have a “physiological” comeback in Sermon 7 below, where they become respectively correlated with the liver and the lungs.

What are the Three Causes? The first is *shen* 神 (spirit), the second is *qi* 氣 (breath), and the third is *xing* 形 (bodily form). The spirit depends on the breath to establish itself. The breath depends on the spirit to circulate. The body depends on the spirit to exist. The spirit depends on the body as its habitation. When the spirit passes away, the breath scatters; when the breath scatters, the body dies. Thus the sages gave priority to nurturing the spirit, next they nurtured breath, and then they nurtured the body. When the three are in harmony and benefit one another, then one can live long.

What are the Five Principals? The first is *jing* 精 (essence), the basis for seeing the five colors; the second is *shen* 神 (spirit), the basis for hearing the five sounds; the third is the *hun* 魂 soul, the basis for discerning good and evil; the fourth is the *po* 魄 soul, the basis for distinguishing clear from turbid; and the fifth is *qi* 氣 (breath), the basis for sensing suffering and pain.

Thus the physical body 形體 is the dwelling of the spirit-soul 神魂; the five viscera 五臟 are home to the essence-soul 精魂; the nine apertures 九竅 are the doors and windows of spirit-energy 神氣 (vitality). Thus when from birth human beings see with their eyes and hear with their ears, smell with their nose and speak with their mouth, and with their body experience pains and suffering, all this is the work of essence, spirit, *hun*-soul, *po*-soul, and breath. In the absence of the first, there is dull-wittedness; in the absence of the second, there is confusion; in the absence of the third, there is decline; in the absence of the fourth, disease befalls; in the absence of the fifth, death ensues. As for the dead, their eyes are unable to see anything, their ears unable to hear anything, their noses can no longer smell, their mouths can no longer speak, and their bodies no longer know pain or suffering. Should this be because they no longer have ears, eyes, noses, mouths, and bodies? It is for no other reason than that their essence-spirits 精神 and their souls 魂魄 have perished.<sup>113</sup>

Joy and anger cause discernment to scatter and not inhabit, worry and sadness cause the spirit to stop up and not circulate, fear and anxiety cause the souls to fly up, and excessive eating and drinking cause the

---

<sup>113</sup> On the binomial categories in this paragraph, resulting from combinations of the Five Principals, cf. Catherine Despeux, "Âmes et animation du corps: La notion de *shen* dans la médecine chinoise antique," *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 29 (2007), 75.

body to block and the breath to be obstructed.<sup>114</sup> Therefore the sages held that loss of the spirit meant early death; loss of discernment, insanity; loss of the *hun*-soul, sorrow; loss of the *po*-soul, pallor; loss of will, chaos; loss of aim, lack of vitality. Indeed, dispel desire with emptiness of heart, *blunt the edge, and untie your entanglements* 挫其銳·解其紛;<sup>115</sup> do not let alluring beauty and luxuriousness harm the essence, do not let brooding thoughts, love, and hatred harm the spirit, do not let love of pleasure and indulging in appearances harm the *hun*-soul, do not let anger and outspokenness harm the *po*-soul, do not let excess of food or drink harm the body, do not let sorrows and complaints harm the breath; only then will you live happily in seclusion, unite with the *qi* of Heaven and Earth and prevail in your Self. Conform with the four seasons, adapt to winter and summer, regulate *yin* and *yang*, harmonize joy and anger, moderate food and drink, temper sadness and affliction, shun fog and mist, keep out of wind and rain,<sup>116</sup> cherish breath and restore essence.

At this point, Lu Xiuqing's physiological interpretation of Laozi's Spirit of the Valley manifestly adopts a reading advocated by the *Heshang gong* commentary: "Valley means to nourish. If man can nourish his spirits, he never dies. *Spirit* refers to the spirits of the Five Viscera. . . ." <sup>117</sup> The *Heshang gong* commentary, which assimilated the Laozi with the spirit of Han longevity teaching, was among the works keenly debated between Lu Xiuqing and the learned śramaṇa of the Zhuangyan temple 莊嚴佛寺 in Jiankang.<sup>118</sup> Sermon 6 continues thus:

The Spirit of the Valley nurtures the *hun*-soul. Practice introspection as if you were blind, practice self-examination (literally, "reverse

<sup>114</sup> Referring to the seven passions 七情, joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hatred, and desire 喜怒哀懼愛惡欲.

<sup>115</sup> The theme of Sermon 5 above.

<sup>116</sup> On the "wind etiologies" of demonic and other diseases, see Paul U. Unschuld, *Medicine in China: a history of ideas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 67–73.

<sup>117</sup> *Laozi Daode jing Heshang gong zhangju* 老子道德經河上公章句, ed. Wang Ka 王卡 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1993), 1.21–22; cf. Chang Hsiu-Chen, "On the historicity of the *Tao Te Ching*," *Comparative Literature Studies* 35, no. 2 (1998), 155–56. Some scholars assign the *Heshang gong* commentary to a date as late as Lu Xiuqing's period. On its links with the *Huangting neijing*, see Despeux, "Âmes et animation," 77–79.

<sup>118</sup> *Daoxue zhuan*, cited in *Sandong zhunang* 2.6a (Bumbacher, *Fragments*, 209, 212).

listening”) as if you were deaf. Void and indifferent, inhabit neither east nor west. Internally visualize the Five Viscera 五臟, distinguish their colors and appearance. Visualize the heart 心 to replenish essence 精, visualize the liver 肝 to replenish the intelligence, visualize the lungs 肺 for aura 身光,<sup>119</sup> visualize the spleen 脾 for lightness of body, visualize the kidneys 腎 for long-lasting *qi*. When *shen* and *qi* 神氣 are preserved within, whence should illness arise? Thus it is said *The Spirit of the Valley never dies* 谷神不死.<sup>120</sup>

The ancient practice of visualizing the Five Viscera<sup>121</sup> is documented in Han texts like the *Taiping jing* 太平經 and the *Laozi zhongjing* 老子中經.<sup>122</sup> Closer to Lu Xiuqing’s period, it features prominently in Shangqing 上清 meditation texts.<sup>123</sup> Proceeding from the above instructions, **Sermon 7** transposes the object of the exercise to the sphere of physiological alchemy. Each person comes into the world with a set of endowments: life, energy, and the Five Viscera or “storehouses.” These organs are correlated with the Five Phases, agents of transformation, producing a dynamic of amalgamation which determines the individual’s physical particularity, personality, character, and moral disposition:

Man is endowed with Five Viscera 五臟; they are provisioned from the Five Phases 五行; outside they determine his physical body 形體; inside they determine his personality 性情. His bones are correlated with Wood, his blood with Water, his flesh with Earth, his teeth with Metal, and his *qi*-warmth 氣煖<sup>124</sup> with Fire. The liver is [correlated

<sup>119</sup> The light surrounding the body in Buddhist images. By contrast, lung disease caused pallor and white tongue; see *Taishang wuji dadao ziran zhenyi wucheng fu shangjing* 太上無極大道自然真一五稱符上經 (ca. 400), *Daozang* 671, A.7b.

<sup>120</sup> *Fazhu jing* 6a–7b.

<sup>121</sup> Puett, “Becoming Laozi,” 223–52.

<sup>122</sup> See respectively Kamitsuka Yoshiko 神塚淑子, *Rikuchō dōkyō shisō no kenkyū* 六朝道教思想の研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1999), 348–53, and Kristofer Schipper, “The inner world of the *Lao-tzu chung-ching*,” in *Time and Space in Chinese Culture*, edited by Chun-chieh Huang and Erik Zürcher (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 114–31.

<sup>123</sup> See Isabelle Robinet, *Méditation taoïste* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1979), 94–129.

<sup>124</sup> Regulator of the body temperature. Hot *qi*, e.g., caused “severe heat disease 大熱病,” see *Huangdi neijing suwen yijie* 黃帝內經素問譯解, ed. Yang Weijie 楊維傑 (Taipei: Tailian guofeng, 1984), 28.236. Note that in Aristotle’s system, *pneuma* regulated body heat. See Ronald M. Polansky, *Aristotle’s De anima* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 221.

with] benevolence 仁, the lungs with righteousness 義, the heart with ritual comportment 禮, the kidneys with trustworthiness 信, and the spleen with wisdom 智. The nature of Wood is strength and uprightness 強直; the nature of Fire is fierceness 猛烈; the nature of Earth, temperateness 仁和; the nature of Metal is stern and brittle 嚴毳; the nature of Water, pliant and yielding 謙退. From the outset, the endowed *qi* vitality 稟氣 of each is clear, turbid, hard, or soft. Those whose endowed *qi* is clear are intelligent and perspicacious, those with soft *qi* are liberal and kind, those with hard *qi* are noble and courageous, while those with turbid *qi* are obtuse and wicked. The character 情性 of each is fixed according to his correlations and his endowments.

“That which Heaven allots is called ‘nature’ 天命之謂性.”<sup>125</sup> In fifth-century poetics, the same endowments, with their Five Phases modulations, were thought to give rise to the expression of an individual’s feelings in poetry and song.<sup>126</sup> A person’s endowed nature, however, was not to be taken for granted, nor was it wholly predetermined. To bring human nature into accord with the Dao, it needed to be subdued through disciplined conduct:

One’s nature 性 is one’s allotment 命.<sup>127</sup> The foolish spend it recklessly and forfeit their lives. The wise see deeply and master their nature. Set right your heart, set right your conduct. Reverently contemplate the mysterious Dao. Examine your conscience and let your every act be in accord with the Way. Where there is want or discord, use the statutes of heaven 天科 and the ritual codes 法律 to constrain your emotions 情, change your nature 性, and subdue your heart. Follow the teaching handed down by your master and take refuge 歸命 in your teachers and elders 師老. Do not dare to be negligent or derelict!

One who acts like this, the gods in Heaven will respect, the Earth spirits will shelter, the wicked will fear, teachers and elders will protect. The Director of Destiny 司命 will save him and he will be

<sup>125</sup> *Zhongyong* 中庸, 31.879a; cf. Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and commonality*, 5–6.

<sup>126</sup> Mather, *Shen Yüeh*, 40.

<sup>127</sup> On Daoist and pre-Daoist notions of *ming* 命 (life, allotment, destiny) in relation to the body, see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, “Simple twists of fate: the Daoist body and its *ming*,” in Lupke, *Magnitude of Ming*, 151–68.

inscribed on the Left Tally 左契 [of life].<sup>128</sup> The Southern Dipper will enter his name on the Record of Births and the Northern Dipper will strike him off the Death Register. He will become a Real Being (*zhenren* 真人). This is what is meant by “subdue your nature and harbor your life allotment.” Thus it is said *To return to one’s allotment is to become unchanging. Whoever does not know the unchanging acts recklessly and meets with misfortune* 復命曰常，不知常，妄作凶。<sup>129</sup>

The theme phrase is conflated from Laozi 16, *To return to one’s allotment is to become unchanging. To know the unchanging is to be discerning. Who does not to know the unchanging, acts recklessly and meets with misfortune* 復命曰常，知常曰明。不知常，忘作，凶。<sup>130</sup> conformity with the Dao was ultimately a return to one’s original nature.<sup>131</sup> A Real Being was one who embodied the Dao and made the Dao present in the world. To attain this state was to return.<sup>132</sup>

#### IV. Meditation

The final three sermons by Lu Xiuqing on the *Daode jing*, each accompanying a ritual phase of meditation, offer reflections on meditation technique and the moral dimension of quietude as drawn from selected pronouncements of the sage.

One of the links between the *Daode jing* and visualization already appeared in the “nurturing life” practices described above. Others involved devotional visualizations of Laozi as a celestial

<sup>128</sup> See the approximately contemporary *Dongxuan lingbao xuanyi zhenren shuo shengsi lunzhuan yinyuan jing* 洞玄靈寶玄一真人說生死輪轉因緣經, *Daozang* 1119, 4b–5a.

<sup>129</sup> *Fazhu jing* 7b–8a.

<sup>130</sup> *Laozi jiaoshi*, 66.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Xiang Shiling, “A study on the theory of Returning to the Original and Recovering Nature in Chinese philosophy,” *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 3 (2008), 503–4.

<sup>132</sup> As famously described by Zhuangzi; see Michael, *The Pristine Dao*, 140–41. On the notion of “real” as distinct from “profane,” see Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1959), 13.

deity or spirit indwelling the “central palace” within the head, or again meditative recitations of the *Daode jing* as a form of scriptural veneration.<sup>133</sup> However, Lu Xiuqing’s inspiration for the following sermons on meditation lay elsewhere. Beside the *prajñāpāramitā* doctrine of emptiness, the second most influential transfer of Buddhist thought conveyed into China through early *sūtra* translations fell in the area of *dhyāna* meditation.<sup>134</sup> With its emphasis on quietude, isolation from intruding stimuli, and deep concentration, *dhyāna* meditation shared—like the wisdom philosophy *prajñā*—a common ground with the conceptual world of the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*.

**Sermon 8** is about meditative concentration (*samādhi* 定). This text may have inspired the wording of *The Most High Lord Lao’s Scripture on the Origin of Void Spontaneity*, a Tang text that reproduces several of Lu’s instructions verbatim.<sup>135</sup> The lesson is developed from Laozi 52, *Stop the openings, shut the doors; use the light to revert its luminosity* 塞其兌，閉其門，用其光，復歸其明。<sup>136</sup>

To hold fast to the Dao and quiet your thoughts, you should first sit upright and close doors, ears, and eyes. Return your spirit radiance to the Crimson Palace 絳宮 [i.e., the heart]. Banish all reflection. You must not force any visions. Your thoughts are indistinct 髣髴. For a long while breathe 喘息 lightly. You then enter [a state of] unselfconsciousness 自然 where you are no longer aware of your own breathing. Unaware of your breathing, you become unconscious of the existence of your body. When you become able to forget your body, you have attained *samādhi* 定. You are facing the gate of the Dao 道門.<sup>137</sup> At that time your spirit is in the void above the heavens. Glancing left and right, you see nothing whatever. Consider this as the

<sup>133</sup> See Livia Kohn, “The *Tao-te-ching* in ritual,” in *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching*, edited by Livia Kohn and Michael LaFargue (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 150–53.

<sup>134</sup> See Liu Jiahe, “Early Buddhism and Taoism,” 38.

<sup>135</sup> *Taishang laojun xuwu ziran benqi jing* 太上老君虛無自然本起經, *Daozang* 1438. Cited as *Benqi jing* below.

<sup>136</sup> *Laozi jiaoshi*, 206–7.

<sup>137</sup> *The Origin of Void Spontaneity* here glosses “the Dao” as “the Void” 道者虛也. See *Benqi jing* 9a.

sign. Thus it is said *Stop the openings, shut the doors; use the light to revert its luminosity* 塞其兌，閉其門，用其光，復歸其明。<sup>138</sup>

In addition to the translation of Sanskrit texts, traveling monks also participated in the dissemination of Indian ideas and techniques in China. The Central Asian *dhyāna* master 禪師 Kālayashas 曇良耶舍 (383–442) had been welcomed in 424 at the court of Lu Xiuqing's first patron, Emperor Wendi (r. 424–453).<sup>139</sup> This foreign expert features in a story in the fifth-century *Signs from the Unseen Realm* by Wang Yan 王琰 that gives a graphic description of the *samādhi* experience sketched out by Lu Xiuqing: already as a young child, the nun Tanhui 曇輝 (422–504), later an acquaintance of the author of *Tales Retold and New Conversations* 世說新語 Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), had a natural propensity for *samādhi*. Growing up in her native Chengdu 成都 in the commandery of Shu 蜀郡 (Sichuan), she would practice “sitting” until her consciousness attained an absence of self-awareness. She thought that this was merely dreaming. But one night after she had entered *samādhi* her body was discovered inanimate, like “wood or stone,” and she had stopped breathing. The alarmed family sought the services of a spirit-medium who pronounced the girl to be possessed. A few years later, Tanhui confided her experience in Kālayashas who was then visiting Shu. Recognizing Tanhui's gift, Kālayashas strengthened the girl's resolve to enter monastic life, over the strenuous objections of her family.<sup>140</sup>

The following **Sermon 9** addresses the obstacle that a morally unsettled mind presented to attaining *samādhi*. Lu takes his cue from Laozi 10, *Harbor [your soul] and embrace the One; cleanse your mystic perception* 載營[魄]抱一，滌除玄覽。<sup>141</sup> He explains that the aggregate of material and spiritual elements that made up a person

<sup>138</sup> *Fazhu jing* 8b.

<sup>139</sup> See his biography in *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, by Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554), ed. Tang Yongtong 湯用彤 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1992), 3.128–30.

<sup>140</sup> *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記, cited in *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林, comp. Daoshi 道世 (d. 683), T. 2122, 22.453a; trans. Robert F. Campany, *Signs from the Unseen Realm: Buddhist Miracle Tales from Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 223–24.

<sup>141</sup> *Laozi jiaoshi*, 37, 40.

acquired moral volition by virtue of its cosmological constitution: the cosmic Primordial Qi 元氣 produced three subordinate *qi*, named Great Yang 太陽, Great Yin 太陰, and Central Harmony 中和.<sup>142</sup> Similarly, three “Ones” inhabited the human being. Each of the three Ones was likewise differentiated by a distinct *qi*. These three *qi* respectively “counseled” a person’s spirit to act justly (Central Harmony), to do good (Pure Yang), or to commit evil deeds (Pure Yin). Sermon 6, discussing the Five Principals, indicated that the discernment of good and evil was the domain of the *hun*- and *po*-souls. Here we learn that the souls exercised this faculty thanks to their respective *qi*:

In the human body there are three Ones: the spirit 神, the *hun* 魂 soul, and the *po* 魄 soul. The One of the Center is the spirit, the essence of Central Harmony 中和; its *qi* is just. The One of the Left is the *hun*-soul, the essence of Pure Yang 純陽; its *qi* is clear. The One of the Right is the *po*-soul, the essence of Pure Yin 純陰; its *qi* is turbid.

The One of the Center is my spirit, the offspring of the Dao 道之子.<sup>143</sup> The One of the Left and the One of the Right act as counsels to my spirit. Because their *qi* is clear or turbid, there is good and evil conduct. The One of the Left constantly instructs me to do good, and my merit grows daily more abundant, enabling me to attain the True Way. The One of the Right teaches me to commit evil deeds and involves me in evil ways. My evil deepens daily and I sink into the Citadel of Wickedness 邪城.

This, then, is the rationale for the moral discernment and volition prompting human action. Here again, Lu Xiujing does not content himself with a deterministic view of cosmic givens. Rather, postulating such predispositions serves as his starting point for an

<sup>142</sup> See *Taiping jing bejiao* 太平經合校, ed. Wang Ming 王明 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1960), 18.19: “元氣有三名，太陽、太陰、中和”; *Renwu zhi* 人物志, by Liu Shao 劉邵 (ca. 180-ca. 245), trans. Luo Yinghuan 羅英換 and Fu Junlian 伏俊璉 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2007), 1.14. Cf. the Greek account of the soul as *harmonia* or “attunement” of the body, Ronald M. Polansky, *Aristotle’s De anima* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 103–12.

<sup>143</sup> Referring to the Primordial One in Daoist cosmogony; cf. Laozi 42 (and Sermon 1, above): “Dao produced the One. The One produced the two . . .” (*Laozi jiaoshi*, 174).

exhortation to practice moral cultivation and quietude in order to deepen one's discernment:

Those who practice the Dao, if they desire to understand the Three Ones, are conscious of good and evil, distinguish wicked from just, withdraw from the world and calm their thoughts. They become deeply versed in the scriptures, return to their selves and reflect. Then wisdom is born of its own, the Five Desires 五慾<sup>144</sup> are subdued and dispelled, the Six Senses 六情<sup>145</sup> washed away, conduct becomes upright, and good deeds accumulate; merit is accomplished and the evil spirits and assorted demons of the One of the Right surrender altogether and cannot assault me. My thoughts are solely devoted to justice and establishing communion 感通<sup>146</sup> [with the divine and with nature].

The Five Desires and Six Senses were controlled by means of the precepts (Sermon 5 above). A set of six precepts was especially designed for this purpose, known as the Wisdom Superior Precepts for Stopping the Six Senses.<sup>147</sup> These served to block the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hand, and heart, respectively. Returning to the core subject of this lesson, i.e., meditation, Lu suggests that those who failed to achieve meditative concentration, despite the help afforded them by the precepts, might at root have failed in the prerequisite quest for moral cultivation:

Those who do not discern wickedness and justice are also devoid of merit. They obstinately shut their ears and eyes to visualizing the gods and practicing the Dao. For that reason multiple evils jointly assail people, producing wicked thoughts. First their minds are set on perdition, then on starting over again. Continually they carry on as before, with no possibility of resolution. Already confused and deluded, they become mentally unsettled 不定 for ten thousand *kalpas* 萬劫. Thus it is said *Harbor [your soul] and embrace the One; cleanse*

<sup>144</sup> Arising from the sense perceptions, cf. above.

<sup>145</sup> The Buddhist sense organs and sensorial consciousness as part of the composition and functioning of man as a material-immaterial aggregate; see Erik Zürcher, "Buddhist influence on early Taoism: A survey of scriptural evidence," *T'oung Pao* 66 (1980), 112–13.

<sup>146</sup> A principle of Confucian moral education; cf. *Zhouyi* 7.154: 感而遂通天下之故.

<sup>147</sup> "Zhihui bise liuqing shangpin jie 智慧閉塞六情上品誠," in *Shangpin daje* 6a–b.

*your mystic perception* 載營[魄]抱一，滌除玄覽。<sup>148</sup>

To become thus morally and mentally unsettled was to be ever unfit to achieve *samādhi* 不定. Erik Zürcher astutely remarked, in reference to the *Scripture on Entering Samādhi*,<sup>149</sup> that while the Indian practice was essentially a yogic exercise, the Daoist adoption tended to draw *samādhi* into the moral domain.<sup>150</sup> This observation fully applies to Lu Xiuqing, who placed his lesson on moral discernment and volition precisely in the context of meditation, postulating that the main hindrance to attaining *samādhi* was of a moral nature.

In counterpoint with the opening declaration “Among the ten thousand beings, man is the most noble” in the collection’s introductory presentation, Sermon 10 brings the cycle to a close on a vibrant note of humanism, a medieval Chinese variety of *What a piece of work is a man*:<sup>151</sup>

Man has essence, spirit, *hun*-, and *po*-souls. In form, he is distinctive among all the species. In reverence, he shares the Way of Heaven and Earth. In nobility, he equals the Virtue of the gods. In intelligence, he reaches the perspicacity of the sun and the moon.<sup>152</sup>

For Daoist literati in the time of Lu Xiuqing, an allusion to the *Book of Changes*, which echoed through commentaries and the Confucian classics, was unmistakable: “The superior man 大人 accords with heaven and earth in virtue, with sun and moon in brightness, with the seasons in regularity, with the gods in good and evil fortune.”<sup>153</sup> To realize this exalted destiny, however, man needed first to discipline his mind and body, and to put into

<sup>148</sup> *Fazhu jing* 8b–9b.

<sup>149</sup> *Taishang xuanyi zhenren shuo miaotong zhuanshen ruding jing* 太上玄一真人說妙通轉神入定經 (Six Dynasties), *Daozang* 347.

<sup>150</sup> Zürcher, “Buddhist influence,” 112.

<sup>151</sup> *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene 2, “. . . how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god!”

<sup>152</sup> *Fazhu jing* 9b.

<sup>153</sup> *Zhouyi*, 1.17.

practice the teachings laid out in these ten sermons:

He must be able to quiet his body and fix his mind 定意, earnestly observe the Retreat precepts, diligently honor the Three Jewels 三寶,<sup>154</sup> be thoroughly versed in the grades of the heavenly officials and soldiers 天官吏兵,<sup>155</sup> return the light 復還光 to introspect 內觀<sup>156</sup> upon the mansions 宮室 within the body, visualize the emplacements of the spirit effulgences 神景,<sup>157</sup> constantly seek reality in the midst of emptiness, and being in the midst of nonbeing. Then can he reach the radiance above the Nine Heavens 九天 and penetrate beneath the Nine Earths 九地. The Essence of Mystery 玄精<sup>158</sup> can descend and the Primordial Beginning 元始 can be transmitted. It is when the Most High 太上 is wholly venerated that it most truly manifests itself; when the Way of Life 生道 is perfectly cherished, that the gods most genuinely respond.

The body, like the grottoes of Daoist mythical geography, was a microcosm.<sup>159</sup> It is thanks to introspection that a person transcends his or her boundaries and enters, like a shaman, into the presence of the divine. Ultimately, Lu invites his audience to contemplate man's cosmic centrality in terms of an adept's mental capacity to internalize the cosmos in the manner of the Sage,<sup>160</sup> whose physical body is one with the Dao:

Therefore the quest for life 求生 begins in the abdomen. It is within our own body that we know the substance of Heaven and Earth, extending to the Eighty-one Regions and comprising the Four Seas and Five Peaks.<sup>161</sup> It is my *chui* 吹 and *xu* 嘘 breaths that raise the

<sup>154</sup> An adaptation of the "triple refuge" in the Buddhist Three Jewels (*triratna*): Buddha, Doctrine and Monastic Community; here they are the Way, the Scriptures, and the Master. See Zürcher, "Buddhist influence," 115.

<sup>155</sup> See Verellen, "Heavenly Master liturgical agenda," 301–2.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. the theme of Sermon 8 from Laozi 52: *use the light to revert its illumination*. Indwelling spirits, cf. Strickmann, "Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching," 173–75.

<sup>157</sup> See *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (499), comp. Tao Hongjing 陶弘景, *Daozang* 1016, 10.18b.

<sup>159</sup> See Franciscus Verellen, "The Beyond within: Grotto-heavens (*dongtian* 洞天) in Taoist ritual and cosmology," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 8 (1995), 265–90.

<sup>160</sup> Michael, *The Pristine Dao*, 61.

<sup>161</sup> The central realm (China) was marked out by five sacred mountains and surrounded by four seas and eighty-one barbarian regions.

clouds and bring rain, and my *hu* 呼 and *xi* 吸 breaths that cause marshes to gather and the sap to invigorate.<sup>162</sup>

The piece concludes with a rhapsodic vision of “mind travel.”<sup>163</sup> To illustrate the soaring reach of a mind meditating in seclusion, Lu chose for this sermon’s theme Laozi 47, *One can discern the Way of Heaven without looking outside the window; one can know the world without leaving one’s door* 不窺牖，見天道；不出戶，知天下。<sup>164</sup> In the same vein, Lu refashioned a phrase by Lu Jia 陸賈 (d. 178 BC), a Confucian statesman with Daoist leanings under the Former Han dynasty. Describing the inner vision harbored by Yi Yin 伊尹, a cook, before he became a counselor to the (mythical) King Tang of Shang 商湯, Lu Jia wrote “His body dwells inside a shack, but his ambition projects beyond the confines of the universe” 身在衡門之裏，志圖八極之表。<sup>165</sup> In Lu Xiuqing’s sermon, this becomes “While meditating within his breast, he reaps blessings beyond the confines of the universe” 坐修於胸心之裏，然臻福八極之表：

The body stays while the mind travels 形在神往，<sup>166</sup> as in the palm of a hand. Meditating within his breast, he reaps blessings beyond the confines of the universe, a favorable clime and gathering vapors, all while resting in motionless stillness. In the space of a moment, disasters are dispelled and longevity attained. For long life is within oneself. Thus it is said *One can discern the Way of Heaven without looking outside*

<sup>162</sup> Breaths corresponding to four of the six different ways of expelling air; see Henri Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese religion*, transl. Frank Kierman (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), 495–99. Cf. the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (4<sup>th</sup> c. BC) on Zhuyin 燭陰, the dragon spirit of Mount Zhong 鍾山: “Its [sharp] *chui* exhalation is winter, its [soft] *hu* exhalation is summer” 吹為冬，呼為夏. *Shanhai jing jiaozhu* 山海經校注, ed. Yuan Ke 袁珂 (Chengdu: Ba Shu, 1992), 3.230. On cosmic *yin-yang* inhalation-exhalation, see Michael, *The Pristine Dao*, 57–58.

<sup>163</sup> On the background of mind travel in Buddhism, Daoism, and Chinese landscape painting, see Tian Xiaofei, “Seeing with the mind’s eye: the Eastern Jin discourse of visualization and imagination,” *Asia Major* 3<sup>rd</sup> ser. 18 (2006), 67–102.

<sup>164</sup> *Laozi jiaoshi*, 189. See also Schipper, “Inner world of the *Lao-tzu chung-ching*.”

<sup>165</sup> *Xinyu jiaozhu* 新語校注, by Lu Jia 陸賈 (d. 178 BC), ed. Wang Liqi 王利器 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986), A.89.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. the phrase “The spirit travels, the body remains” 神往形留在 “For Ji Kang” 贈嵇康, by Guo Xiashu 郭遐叔 (Wei), *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbei chao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩, ed. Lu Qinli 邊欽立 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 8.476.

*the window; one can know the world without leaving one's door* 不窺牖，見天道；不出戶，知天下。<sup>167</sup>

The ten lessons end on this ecstatic note. Standing beside the Shangqing vision of personal meditative interiorization,<sup>168</sup> these sermons introduce the practice into the Lingbao Retreat and collective ritual performances by proto-monastic communities.

If *The Illumination of Ritual* emphasizes the function of the Retreat as an instrument for nurturing life and realizing Laozi's soteriology of reversal ("for destiny resides within"), Lu Xiujing's *Five Sentiments of Gratitude* carried a complementary message. Taking a page from the Indian tale of Maudgalyāyana rescuing the hungry ghost of his mother in hell and the associated *ullambana* 盂蘭盆 ritual,<sup>169</sup> the *Five Sentiments* upheld the Retreat as the Daoist vehicle for universal salvation, its redemptive program founded on merit acquired by requiting parents, ancestors, and teachers with acts of penitence and ardent sentiments of gratitude for their sacrifices. A Daoist life in medieval China thus held out two competing promises struggling for conciliation: one, a return to the ontological origin by means of the physical cultivation techniques of Chinese antiquity; the other, deliverance from the sufferings of humanity as postulated by karmic causality and the doctrine of merit transfer.

<sup>167</sup> *Fazhu jing* 9b–10a.

<sup>168</sup> See Robinet, *Méditation taoïste*.

<sup>169</sup> See *Wugan wen* above and Franciscus Verellen, "The dharma-bridge of requital: Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 on filial piety," forthcoming in *Jao Tsung-I Centenary Festschrift* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016).

## 陸修靜(406–477)論道教修行： 說《道德經》「十章」

傅飛嵐

### 摘要

本研究以一套說《道德經》「十章」為中心，此「十章」收錄在陸修靜《太上洞玄靈寶法燭經》中流傳，是根據《道德經》解說靈寶齋的施行，提供了一個獨特的視角以洞察陸修靜之宗教信仰和使命。相對來說，總是較少研究關注陸氏於講解《道德經》和勸誡弟子時顯出在訓誨和教導方面之使命。在陸氏領導下發起意義深遠的道教科儀改革之時，及道眾面對佛教修行的同化挑戰之背景下，他這些對齋法的公開反思尤其有特別重要的意義。

關鍵詞：陸修靜、太上洞玄靈寶法燭經、靈寶齋、道德經、講經