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EARLY DAOIST MEDITATION AND THE ORIGINS OF INNER ALCHEMY

Fabrizio Pregadio

According to one of the scriptures belonging to the Taiqing, or Great Clarity, tradition, after an adept receives alchemical texts and relevant oral instructions from his master, he withdraws to a mountain or a secluded place to perform purification practices. He establishes the ritual area, demarcates it with talismans for protection against demons and wild animals, and builds a Chamber of the Elixirs (*danshi*) at the centre of this protected space. To start compounding the elixir, he chooses a favourable day based on traditional methods of calendrical computation. When all ritual, spatial and temporal conditions are fulfilled, he may finally kindle the fire. Now he offers food and drink to three deities, and asks that they grant the successful compounding of the elixir:

> This petty man, (*name of the adept*), truly and entirely devotes his thoughts to the Great Lord of the Dao, Lord Lao and the Lord of Great Harmony. Alas! This petty man, (*name of the adept*), covets the Medicine of Life! Lead him so that the Medicine will not volatilise and be lost, but rather be fixed by the fire! Let the Medicine be good and efficacious, let the transmutations take place without hesitation, and let the Yellow and the White be entirely fixed! When he ingests the Medicine, let him fly as an immortal, have audience at the Purple Palace (Zigong), live an unending life and become an accomplished man (*zhiren*)![1]

The Great Lord of the Dao (Da Daojun), Lord Lao (Laojun, or Laozi in his divine aspect) and the Lord of Great Harmony (Taihe jun) are not mentioned together in other alchemical texts. They are, instead, referred to as a group of deities in an early manual on Daoist meditation, the *Laozi zhongjing* (the *Central Scripture of Laozi*). One of the sections of this text devoted to the main gods who live both in heaven and within the human being contains this passage:

> The Lord of the Dao is the One (Yi). He is the Emperor on High of the August Heaven (Huangtian shangdi) and is the central star of the Northern Asterism of the Central Ultimate (*zhongji beichen*). He resides above the Nine Heavens, ten thousand *zhang* on high, within the Palace of the Purple Chamber (Zifang gong) in the Great Abyss (*taiyuan*). He is clothed in five-coloured garments and wears the Headgear of the Nine Virtues (*jiude zhi guan*). Above him is the five-coloured glow of the cloudy pneumas of Great Clarity. Underneath a nine-layered flowery canopy, Laozi and Great Harmony attend upon him at his left and his right.

The text continues by giving details on the Lord of the Dao, including his names, bodily features, garments, spouse (the Jade Woman of Mysterious Radiance of Great Yin, Taiyin Xuanguang Yunü) and location within the human being – under another flowery canopy within another Palace of the Purple Chamber, i.e. the gallbladder. His two attendants, Lord Lao and Great Harmony, are described separately in the next two sections of the *Central Scripture*.[2]

While at first it might seem unusual that a text on *waidan* and a text on meditation mention the same three gods, this and the other shared details in the passages quoted above – the references to the heaven of Great Clarity and to a Purple Palace, or Palace of the Purple Chamber – are less surprising if one considers that both texts circulated at the same time, the third century, in the same area, the Jiangnan region south of the lower Yangzi River. These parallels invite us to look more closely at the relation between alchemy and meditation, and especially at the role played by traditions based on meditation practices in the transition from *waidan* or 'external alchemy' to *neidan* or 'inner alchemy'.

From *Waidan* to *Neidan*

The influence of meditation in the shift from *waidan* to *neidan* has been noted in several studies, and the importance of the Shangqing (Highest Clarity) tradition of Daoism has often been emphasised in this context. About twenty-five years ago, Michel Strickmann looked at the place of *waidan* within Shangqing, and remarked that this tradition moved the focus of alchemy from the actual compounding of elixirs to 'a sequence of symbolic procedures within a diffused frame of pharmacochemical reference'.[3] A few years later, Isabelle Robinet observed repeated instances of alchemical imagery in her work on the Shangqing revealed literature, and suggested that the Shangqing meditation practices not only played a crucial role in the rise of *neidan* but actually anticipated many of its features.[4] The relation between meditation and *neidan* has also been examined in studies by Sakade Yoshinobu and, most recently, by Katō Chie. While Sakade has clarified how *neidan* compares to the two main types of Daoist meditation (visualisation of inner gods and 'inner contemplation' or *neiguan*),[5] Katō has shown

that some facets of *neidan* practice are adumbrated in a text as early as the *Central Scripture of Laozi*.[6]

In the present study, I examine the role played by meditation in relation to the main feature in the development of Chinese alchemy: the shift of emphasis from the world of gods and demons to the impersonal principles that fashion and regulate the functioning of the cosmos and the human being. The broad traits of this shift may be formulated as follows. The earliest extant *waidan* sources, belonging to the Taiqing tradition, are distinguished by two related features. First, the elixirs are compounded, not only to obtain longevity and immortality but also to receive the protection of divinities and to ward off demons and other dangers. Second, the alchemical process is described without having recourse to the abstract emblems of correlative cosmology. The few instances of methods based on cosmological configurations are not predominant in the Taiqing sources as a whole, whose recipes include a large variety of ingredients; when they occur, they reproduce simple patterns – either Yin and Yang, or the Five Agents (*wuxing*) – and do not make it possible to represent sequences of cosmological planes and the hierarchical relations that subsist among them. There is, more exactly, no intent in using the alchemical process for this purpose. In their own domain, the contemporary texts on meditation share both of these features. These sources are primarily concerned with the divine world existing both in the outer heavens and within the human being. Accordingly, they require an adept to visualise the inner gods, feed them with essences and pneumas found in his own body, and invoke them so that they stay with him and allow communication with the gods of the outer pantheon. Like the Taiqing sources, moreover, the early meditation texts do not discuss the different cosmological states that mark the extension of the Dao into the cosmos, and do not resort to correlative cosmology to frame the practices that they describe or to expound their meaning.

The shift of emphasis mentioned above happened in parallel with the rise to prominence of the *Zhouyi cantong qi*, or *Token for the Agreement of the Three According to the Book of Changes*, the main Chinese alchemical scripture. The date and the main features of this work, and its relation to *waidan* and *neidan*, are discussed later in this study. Here it is sufficient to note that, under its influence, a large number of texts, dating from the Tang period onward, describe the compounding of an 'outer' or 'inner' elixir based on two emblematic substances, Authentic Lead (*zhenqian*) and Authentic Mercury (*zhenhong*). With considerable innovation in language and in the underlying notions, the new *waidan* and *neidan* texts associate the elixir and its ingredients (metals and minerals in the former case, the primary constituents of the cosmos and the human being in the latter) with cosmological principles, and systematically ground the alchemical process in patterns of emblems that include Yin and Yang, the Five Agents, the trigrams and hexagrams of the *Book of Changes*, the Celestial Stems and the Earthly Branches, the twelve pitchpipes, the twenty-eight lunar mansions and so forth. These emblems serve to relate the alchemical process to the major

features of the cosmos – especially its temporal cycles – and, more importantly, to represent different cosmological states that the adept traces in a sequence contrary to their hierarchical order.[7] In this form of *waidan*, the ritual features of the earlier Taiqing tradition are discounted; and in *neidan*, there is no more need to rely on the deities of the inner pantheon in order to approach those of the outer heavens. In the new traditions of both *waidan* and *neidan*, in fact, gods and demons are virtually forgotten.[8]

The comparable shift of emphasis that occurs in the outer and inner practices from the Tang period onward is related, therefore, to the adoption of a new doctrinal model that underlies both. This shows that the *neidan* tradition cannot be seen merely as an 'inner' version of *waidan*, or as created *ex nihilo* after the *Cantong qi* had favoured the development of a new form of *waidan*. Taking this into account, the process that preceded the creation of a text like the *Cantong qi*, and the rise of the related inner practices, acquires much more importance for understanding the nature and history of *neidan* than its borrowings from the language and terminology of *waidan*. The first purpose of the present study is to trace some aspects of this process. As we already know, at its origins lie the meditation practices of Shangqing Daoism and, even earlier, those described in a text such as the *Central Scripture of Laozi*; some sources quoted below actually allow us to trace it as far back as the second century. All these sources, as we shall see, use identical or similar alchemical images and terms in relation to the visualisation of inner gods and the circulation of inner pneumas and essences. To examine their role in the process that led to the rise of *neidan*, I briefly survey some features of early *waidan*, and then look at examples of the use of alchemical imagery in early meditation texts, at the inner pantheons and the related practices described in two important third-century sources and at the integration and expansion of this legacy by Shangqing Daoism.

The second purpose of this study is to present some initial comments on the nature of the *Cantong qi* and its relation to the earlier meditation practices, on one hand, and to the Tang and later forms of alchemical practice, on the other. As I have said, and as we shall see in more detail below, this scripture performed the historical task of replacing one doctrinal model with another. The *Cantong qi*, none the less, bears clear traces of traditions, practices, images and terminology related to meditation. This is not unexpected, since the received text took shape in the same region, and at approximately the same time, in which the main sources examined in this study circulated.[9] The explicit and unquestionable criticism to which the *Cantong qi* subjects some aspects of those traditions and practices signals, though, a firm intent to distinguish its own doctrines from theirs. The examples drawn from the pre-Shangqing and Shangqing sources on meditation allow us to place this attitude in its historical context.

As will be clear, I refer here to *neidan* in an inclusive way and not to a specific period of its history, or to a specific lineage. In the context of current studies on Chinese alchemy, even a broad outline such as this might contribute to our understanding of the nature of this complex tradition and

its relation to other traditions within Daoism. There are, none the less, three related issues that complicate the survey attempted here. First, there seems to be no way of fixing a precise date for the shift of emphasis from gods and demons to impersonal principles within the history of Chinese alchemy. The available evidence shows that the transition had already happened by 500 CE, but in this and similar cases, major changes in systems of doctrine and practice occur within individual lineages or local groups before they invest larger segments of a tradition.[10] Second, the lineages or local groups that accomplished this process cannot, at present, be exactly identified. Further work on the history of Daoism in the Six Dynasties may provide clues to their identity; until then, one can only sketch an outline, in the hope that this may help to identify who actually was involved in the relevant processes of change. Third, these processes took place under the influence of multiple factors; besides meditation, these include, in varying degrees, the doctrines of the *Laozi* (quoted several times in the *Cantong qi*), Han cosmological lore, Six Dynasties Daoist revelations, Buddhist teachings and practices, classical medical theories and self-cultivation techniques. The processes of change examined here, moreover, should be seen against the background of the historical and social changes that affected Jiangnan during the Six Dynasties. While this study touches on some of these factors, it makes no attempt to examine them in a comprehensive way.

Great Clarity

A brief outline of the Taiqing, or Great Clarity, tradition of *waidan* will serve to identify the main features it shares with meditation. This tradition evolved in Jiangnan during the third and fourth centuries. Hagiographic and pseudo-historical sources place at its origin the revelations received by Zuo Ci on Mount Tianzhu (Tianzhu shan, in present-day eastern Anhui) at the end of the second century.[11] The three writings that Zuo Ci obtained form the textual core of the Taiqing legacy; they are the *Taiqing jing* (the *Scripture of Great Clarity*), the *Jiudan jing* (the *Scripture of the Nine Elixirs*) and the *Jinye jing* (the *Scripture of the Golden Liquor*). These texts describe the alchemical process as a sequence of stages that include the transmission of scriptures and oral instructions from master to disciple, the preliminary purification practices (*zhai*), the establishment and protection of the ritual area, the choice of an auspicious time for starting the fire, the heating of the ingredients in the crucible, the offering of the elixir to the gods and finally the ingestion of the elixir.[12]

The main benefit granted by the Taiqing elixirs is immortality, sometimes described as incorporation into the celestial hierarchies. In one of the relevant passages, the *Golden Liquor* mentions two other major deities:

> If you take one ounce each of Gold Water (*jinshui*, i.e. the Golden Liquor) and Mercury Water (*hongshui*), and drink them facing the sun, you will immediately become a Golden Man (*jinren*). Your

> body will turn into pure light and will grow feathers and wings. On high you will put in motion Original Essence (*yuanjing*) on behalf of [the Real Man of] the Central Yellow (Zhonghuang [zhenren]) and the Great One (Taiyi).[13]

As we shall see, both gods are also mentioned in the *Central Scripture of Laozi*. Besides immortality, the Taiqing elixirs confer longevity, grant the power of summoning gods and warding off demons and spirits, heal various ailments, offer protection from wild animals and brigands and award powers such as walking on water or retrieving spent coins.

The alchemical medicines, however, do not need to be ingested to provide their benefits. One can use them as protective or apotropaic devices merely by carrying them in one's hand, or at one's belt, in order to send off demons and other calamities.[14] Moreover, one can employ the alchemical 'gold' to make dishes and cups; in this case, it is eating and drinking from those vessels that confers immortality.[15] In the Taiqing tradition, therefore, the elixir is valued, not only as an actual medicine that confers ascension to Heaven after ingestion, but also for its ritual and symbolic properties. As we shall see, the early texts devoted to meditation practices represent the elixir in the same way.

Alchemical imagery in early meditation practices

Although the origins of alchemical imagery in China are often associated with the Shangqing school of Daoism, there is evidence to suggest that Shangqing in this respect did not innovate, but developed earlier traditions. Later in this study we shall look at relevant examples found in the *Central Scripture of Laozi* and in another text related to meditation practices transmitted during the third century. Even before them, sources antedating the Shangqing revelations of 364–370 by exactly two centuries contain brief hints of this concern.

One of these sources, the *Inscription for Laozi* (*Laozi ming*) of the year 165, describes Laozi in his divine form:

> He joins the radiance of the Sun and the Moon,
> and is at one with the five planets;
> he goes in and out of the Cinnabar Hut (*danlu*),
> and rises from and descends into the Yellow Court (*huangting*).[16]

These verses depict Laozi as a divine being existing at once in the outer cosmos and in inner space: the Cinnabar Hut and the Yellow Court are names of the upper and the lower *dantian*, or Cinnabar Fields, respectively located in the regions of the brain and the abdomen. Also important for our present subject is the image of 'joining the radiance of the Sun and the Moon', which suggests an affinity with practices mentioned in the *Central Scripture* (and later with *neidan* methods) that we shall examine below.

Moreover, one can hardly read this passage without noticing the association between the Cinnabar Hut and its homophone, the alchemical stove or 'elixir furnace' (*danlu*).

Both the *Inscription for Laozi* and a second epigraph dating from 165, the *Stele to Wang Ziqiao* (*Wang Ziqiao bei*), also contain the earliest mention of a term that later would become prominent in *neidan*, namely *dantian*. The *Inscription* uses this term to mean the lower Cinnabar Field and places it alongside Purple Chamber (*zifang*), a name for the gallbladder analogous to those we have seen above, Purple Palace and Palace of the Purple Chamber. These verses of the *Inscription* again refer to Laozi in his divine aspect:

> He regulates the Three Luminaries (*sanguang*),
> and the Four Numina (*siling*) are to his sides;
> he maintains his thoughts on his Cinnabar Field
> and on the Purple Chamber of the Great One.[17]

As in the passage of the *Central Scripture* quoted above, the *Inscription* defines the Purple Chamber as the residence of the Great One (according to the *Central Scripture*, 'the Lord of the Dao is the One'). Moreover, the *Inscription* associates both the Purple Chamber and the Cinnabar Field with meditation practices (Laozi 'maintains his thoughts', *cunxiang*, on these loci, i.e. visualises them). The *Stele to Wang Ziqiao* does the same, telling the story of a local magistrate who had a temple built in homage to this immortal after unusual events had occurred near his tomb in Ye (present-day central Henan). At that time, says the *Stele*, 'some strummed zithers and sang of the Great One; others practised meditation by passing through (*li*) their Cinnabar Fields'.[18]

In the late second century, another text related to the divinised Laozi, the *Scripture of the Transformations of Laozi* (*Laozi bianhua jing*), again mentions the Yellow Court. This time Laozi talks about himself, saying:

> I flow in cycles (*zhouliu*) through the Four Oceans,
> and according to the seasons appear in the Yellow Court.[19]

The Four Oceans (*sihai*) also are loci of the inner body (heart, kidneys, brain and spleen), through which Laozi – or, rather, the adept meditating on him as an inner god – goes in a cyclical motion.[20]

From the late second century also comes the first allusion to the 'inner embryo', another notion that would become distinctive of *neidan*. Somewhat unexpectedly, it is found in the *Xiang'er* commentary to the *Laozi*, written around the year 200 and produced within the milieu of the Way of the Celestial Masters (Tianshi dao). Commenting on the sentence *you zhi yiwei li, wu zhi yiwei yong* of the *Laozi*, which the *Xiang'er* understands as '[those who] have something regard its profit; [those who] lack it regard its utility', the commentary criticises the belief that one can find the Dao or the One by meditating on one's own inner body, saying:

> Those who regularly practise false arts in the mortal world have established glib and deceptive arguments, basing themselves on this perfected text (i.e. the *Laozi*) . . . They say that nurturing the embryo (*peitai*) and refining the physical form (*lianxing*) should be like making clay into pottery.[21]

The *Xiang'er* states its argument more precisely in another passage:

> Now, where does the Dao reside in the body of a person? How can a person hold it fast? The One does not reside within the human body . . . Those who forever practise false arts in the mortal world point to [one of] the five viscera and call it 'the One'. They close their eyes and practise meditation, hoping by these means to seek good fortune. This is wrong. They depart even further from life in so doing.[22]

The One, according to the *Xiang'er*, fundamentally resides 'outside Heaven and Earth', and when it enters the human body, it does so by 'coming and going' (*wanglai*, i.e. changing positions) within it.[23] Therefore, according to this text, it cannot be identified with or localized in any inner organ.

Early mentions of the inner gods

Both the *Xiang'er* and other contemporary sources document, for the first time, another topic with which the present study is concerned, namely the belief that the human being is the residence of inner gods. As shown by the passage quoted above from the *Xiang'er*, the generation of the inner embryo is achieved through practices focused on the five viscera (*wuzang*), which are the temporary residences of the One. Around the same time as the *Xiang'er*, the *Taiping jing* (*Scripture of Great Peace*) gives the earliest descriptions of deities dwelling within these loci of the inner body. A passage of this work reads:

> The subtle spirits (*jingshen*) of the four seasons and the Five Agents are, within, the subtle spirits of the five viscera of man and, outside, the subtle spirits of the four seasons and the Five Agents . . . Their colour corresponds to the colour of the seasons of Heaven and Earth . . . They have periods of growth and decline that follow the rhythms of the seasons.[24]

Another passage gives details on practices specifically related to the gods of the viscera: 'Meditate (*sinian*) on the gods (*shen*) of the five viscera; depict (*hua*) their coming and going (*wanglai*), and see their moving around. You can talk to them . . . Thus you will know good and bad fortune'.[25] The term translated as 'depict' in the above passage is likely to refer to creating 'mental pictures' of the inner gods as they move within the inner body. That

the word *shen* is meant here in the sense of anthropomorphic deities is also shown by the fact that one can 'talk' to them, presumably by means of invocations similar to those quoted later in the present study. Also worthy of attention is the statement that the purpose of these practices is knowing 'good and bad fortune', which matches the 'seeking good fortune' of the *Xiang'er*.

Neither the *Xiang'er* nor *Scripture of Great Peace* mentions the names of the inner gods. These are found for the first time in an apocryphon or 'weft text' (*weishu*) approximately dating from the same period as the texts examined above. One of the extant fragments of the *Longyu hetu* (*River Chart of the Dragon-fish*) names the deities of the hair, the ears, the eyes, the nose and the teeth, followed by two short sentences on a meditation practice.[26] The same names appear in a longer list found in the *Lingbao wufu xu* (*Prolegomena to the Five Talismans of the Numinous Treasure*), a work dating from the fourth or early fifth century but known to reflect, among others, the apocryphal traditions of the late Han period. Since the *Prolegomena* mentions the five gods in the same order as in the fragment of the *Dragon-fish*, and continues with details on the same meditation practice summarised there, it may preserve the original passage of the *Dragon-fish*.[27]

Taken together, the works quoted above show that alchemical imagery was used in relation to meditation practices as early as the mid-second century, and that the notion of an embryo generated within one's inner body already existed by the beginning of the third century. Related contemporary sources mention the existence of deities residing within the human being – the Great One and Laozi himself among them – and give their names.

Traces in the *Inner Chapters*

The step is not a major one from the notion of an embryo generated within one's inner body to the idea of producing an 'inner elixir'. Indeed, as early as the fifth century a scripture belonging to the Lingbao (Numinous Treasure) corpus states that 'the Golden Elixir is within your body' (*jindan zai zi xing*).[28] Below, we examine the main identities and differences between the two notions; but to follow the process that led to the statement of the Lingbao scripture, we should first look at sources that developed the ideas and terminology seen in the texts quoted above.

Traces of two of these sources, both of which are now lost, appear in passages of Ge Hong's (283–343) *Inner Chapters* (*Neipian*). The initial verses of one of them read:

> The One resides at the North Pole,
> in the midst of the abyss.
> In front is the Hall of Light (*mingtang*),
> behind is the Crimson Palace (*jianggong*).
> Imposing is the Flowery Canopy (*huagai*),
> great is the Golden Pavilion (*jinlou*)![29]

Another passage, whose prosodic form is different and therefore is likely to derive from a different text, refers to inner essences circulated and joined by the adept in meditation:

> Under Initial Green (*shiqing*) the Moon is with the Sun:
> the two halves ascend together and combine to become one.
> Exiting from the Jade Pond (*yuchi*), it enters the Golden Chambers (*jinshi*);
> it is as large as a pellet, as yellow as an orange,
> and has a delicious taste within, as sweet as honey.
> If you are able to obtain it, beware not to lose it:
> once gone you could not chase it, and it would be extinguished (*mie*).
> The pure and white pneuma, utterly subtle and rarefied,
> ascends to the Obscure Barrier (*youguan*) by bending and twisting three times,
> and the middle Cinnabar [Field] (*zhongdan*) shines incomparably;
> when it is established in the Gate of Life (*mingmen*), your bodily form will know no end.
> Profound! Wondrous! And difficult to investigate.[30]

These poems contain several terms that appear in contemporary texts related to meditation and in later texts related to *neidan*, including Hall of Light (the upper *dantian* or one of its 'chambers'), Crimson Palace (the middle *dantian*), Flowery Canopy (the eyebrows and, again, the upper *dantian*), Jade Pond (the mouth), Golden Chambers (the lungs), Obscure Barrier (the space between the kidneys) and Gate of Life (the lower *dantian*, or a locus in its region). In the second poem, moreover, we find another reference to joining essences associated with the Sun and the Moon. There is no exact match of terms, on the other hand, between the two poems and the sources examined above. All these texts, none the less, share the use of images (palaces, halls, courts, chambers) that refer to the view of the human body as a bureaucratic administration, and of other images (fields, huts) that refer to the view of the body as an 'inner landscape'.[31]

The mention of the One in the first poem quoted above suggests that these descriptions were related to the practice of 'guarding the One' (*shouyi*), which Ge Hong reckons as the superior way of transcendence in his time, together with alchemy. He distinguishes between two types of practice. The first, which he calls 'guarding the Authentic One' (*shou zhenyi*), consists in visualising the features that the One, as an anthropomorphic deity, takes within the human being. A well known passage of the *Inner Chapters* gives details on the practice:

> The One has surnames and names, clothes and colours. In men it is nine tenths of an inch tall, in women six tenths. Sometimes it is in the lower Cinnabar Field, two inches and four tenths below the navel. Sometimes it is in the middle Cinnabar Field, the Golden

> Portal (*jinque*) of the Crimson Palace below the heart. Sometimes it is in the space between the eyebrows: at one inch behind them is the Hall of Light (*mingtang*), at two inches is the Cavern Chamber (*dongfang*) and at three inches is the upper Cinnabar Field.[32]

Like Laozi does in the *Inscription* and in the *Transformations*, and like the gods of the viscera do in the *Great Peace*, in this passage the One moves from one Field to the other, followed in its motions by the adept in meditation. The second type of practice, which Ge Hong calls 'guarding the Mysterious One' (*shou xuanyi*), results in multiplying one's body or making it invisible to demons and other dangerous creatures.[33] The benefits afforded by the two practices, however, are the same. Guarding the Authentic One allows an adept to 'communicate with the gods' (*tongshen*) and confers protection against demons and other dangers. Similarly, by guarding the Mysterious One, an adept will be able 'to see all the numina of heaven and the spirits of earth, and to summon all the deities of the mountains and the rivers'.[34]

The *Central Scripture of Laozi* and the *Scripture of the Yellow Court*

The analogies among the sources examined above show that a set of cognate meditation practices existed by the third century, and that a codified terminology was used to describe them. Both the practices and the relevant terminology continued to be transmitted in the subsequent centuries, first within traditions related to meditation, and later within traditions related to *neidan*. The two main sources that document the relation of these traditions to both *waidan* and *neidan* are the *Central Scripture of Laozi* and a cognate text that also circulated in Jiangnan during the third century, the *Huangting jing* (*Scripture of the Yellow Court*). One detail is sufficient to indicate the extent of their continuity with the sources examined above. In its descriptions of the inner body, the *Central Scripture* mentions the Yellow Court, the Cinnabar Field and the Purple Chamber, i.e. three of the four terms found in the two epigraphs of 165 CE.[35] The *Scripture of the Yellow Court* mentions the Hut, the Yellow Court and the Cinnabar Field in one of its two versions, and all four terms in the other.[36]

The *Central Scripture* and the *Yellow Court*, however, differ from each other in important respects. The *Central Scripture* is a text in prose containing factual and relatively clear instructions concerned with loci of the inner body, visualisations to be performed on certain days and at certain hours and invocations to be addressed to the inner and outer gods. The speaker of the text is the divine Laozi, a detail significant in itself given the role that he performs in some of the sources quoted above. Most scholars agree in dating the *Central Scripture* to the early third century, although it has been suggested that it may date from around 500. In this connection, it is worthwhile to consider that the *Central Scripture* repeatedly mentions the Great

Clarity as the residence of the highest gods of the outer pantheon. This suggests that the text, or at least most of it, does indeed date from before the Shangqing revelations, when the Great Clarity lost its status of most exalted celestial domain and was replaced by other heavens in this role.[37]

The *Yellow Court*, which is spoken by the Great Lord of the Dao (Da Daojun), is a work in verse, written in an allusive language hardly suitable for learning or performing actual practices. One might define it as the poetical version of a meditation manual, and indeed it appears clear that its first purpose is to portray, in an aesthetically charming form, traditions that were cherished by the learned elite of Jiangnan.[38] This description applies to both received versions of the *Yellow Court*, known as 'Outer' (*wai*) and 'Inner' (*nei*). Although the respective status and date are still debated among scholars, for our present purposes it is sufficient to note that the 'Outer' and the 'Inner' versions do not substantially differ from each other as far as their language and imagery are concerned. All verses of the 'Outer' version appear in the 'Inner' version (which is about two times longer), unaltered, with minor changes or with amplifications. The main distinction between the 'Inner' and the 'Outer' text is that while the former discloses the names and locations of the inner deities, these details are missing (with one exception to be mentioned below) in the latter. Also worthy of note is the fact that whereas the 'Inner' version was formally incorporated into the Shangqing corpus, and contains occasional references to Shangqing doctrinal features, the names of its inner gods are not the same as those found in the original Shangqing revealed sources. This suggests that even though the 'Inner' version was composed based on the 'Outer' version after the Shangqing revelations of 364–370, it substantially reflects traditions that were current before that time.[39]

Two inner pantheons

Both the *Central Scripture* and the *Yellow Court* enjoin adepts to visualise the deities who reside within themselves, and to feed both them and the loci in which they reside with their own inner essences and pneumas. These deities perform multiple related roles: they serve as administrators of the body, allow the human being to communicate with the major – and in several cases corresponding – gods of the outer pantheon and personify the formless Dao or abstract notions such as Yin and Yang and the Five Agents. Especially in the latter aspect, they are 'images' (*xiang*) playing an intermediary function 'between the world of sensory realities and the world of the unknowable'.[40] As their disappearance is one of the major indicators of the transition to *neidan*, the main features of the inner pantheons reflected in these two texts deserve attention before we examine other aspects of their practices.

The *Central Scripture* mentions an impressive number of gods. Their size is often said to be only 'nine-tenths of an inch' (which is also the size of the One according to the *Inner Chapters*), and they often superimpose each

other in the same loci of the body. This is especially true of the minor gods, whose dwellings and names are often identical or similar to those given in the *River Chart of the Dragon-fish* and in the *Prolegomena to the Five Talismans of the Numinous Treasure*.[41] This suggests that the apocryphal traditions of the Han period contributed to the forming of one layer in the text of the *Central Scripture*. The existence of several textual layers explains the repetitions that occur throughout this work, sometimes even within individual sections.

The major gods, instead, are essentially transformations of a single sovereign deity, the Supreme Great One. He is the Original Pneuma (*yuanqi*) spontaneously issued from the Dao, and appears under varying names and forms, including Yin–Yang dyads, in different cosmic domains and inner loci. The appearances of the Supreme Great One are mutually related by their designations as the father, the mother or the son of each other, and often by the name of the respective spouse: four of the gods listed below, in particular, are married to the Jade Woman of Mysterious Radiance of Great Yin, whose name is sometimes abbreviated into Jade Woman or into Mysterious Radiance. These major gods are described in the first twelve sections of the text and are mentioned again in other sections. Some details that concern them are summarised below.

1 The Supreme Great One (Shangshang Taiyi) 'is the Father of the Dao (*dao zhi fu*) and exists before Heaven and Earth'. The anonymous author of the *Central Scripture* attributes to Laozi these words about this god: 'I do not know his name(s)' (*wu bu zhi qi ming*); the same sentence is found in *Laozi* 25, which continues: 'I style it Dao, and if I am forced to give it a name, I call it Great'. The Supreme Great One, in fact, is the only major god for whom the *Central Scripture* gives no alternative names. He has 'the head of a man and the body of a bird, and his shape is similar to a rooster'. His residence is 'above the Nine Heavens, within the Great Clarity', but he also dwells 'just above your head, nine feet away from your body'.

2 The Most High Original Lord of the Ultimateless (Wuji Taishang Yuanjun) is 'the son of the Supreme Great One; but actually he is not his son, for he comes spontaneously from Original Pneuma'; that is, from the same pneuma that is his father. Above, he resides in the heaven of Great Tenuity (Taiwei); within the human being, he is 'just above your head', but he can also be visualised in the upper *dantian* ('the space between the eyebrows').

3–4 The Queen Mother of the West (Xiwang mu) and the King Father of the East (Dongwang fu) reside in heaven in the Northern Dipper, on earth on Mount Penglai (Penglai shan) and Mount Kunlun and within the human being in the right and left eyes, respectively. They are the father and the mother of a child who lives between the eyes, in a location that corresponds to the upper *dantian*. The King, who is equated with the Sun, is also known as Fu Xi; the Queen, who is equated with

the Moon, is also called Great Yin, Mysterious Radiance and Reclined Jade (Yanyu).

5–7 The Lord of the Dao (Daojun), as we have seen in a passage quoted above, is the One (Yi). He resides in the heaven of Great Clarity, and within the human being he is in the gallbladder. His spouse is the Jade Woman of Mysterious Radiance of Great Yin. As we already know, the Lord of the Dao is attended on his left by Lord Lao (Laojun) and on his right by the Lord of Great Harmony (Taihe jun). These two gods also stand to the left and the right of each human being; their spouses are the Pure Woman (Sunü) and the Jade Woman (Yunü).

8 The Lord of the Muddy Pellet (Niwan jun) is the god of the brain, the upper *dantian*. He is also known as the Old Man of the Southern Ultimate (Nanji laoren, on whom see the next section).

9 The Southern Ultimate (Nanji) resides in the planet Mars on high, and in the heart (the middle *dantian*) within the human being. 'He is the Supreme Great One', or another of his multiple forms. Like the Lord of the Dao, his spouse is the Jade Woman.

10 The Minister of Education (Situ gong), the Minister of Works (Sikong gong), the Controller of Destiny (Siming), the Metropolitan Commandant (Sili xiaowei), the Controller of the Registers (Silu) and the Chamberlain for Law Enforcement (Tingwei) reside in the kidneys. Together, these six gods 'rule on recording the faults of the human being, reporting above to the Emperor on High of the August Heaven, the Most High Lord of the Dao' (who is the Most High Original Lord of the Ultimateless; see under 2 above). Therefore the *Central Scripture* advises: 'You should constantly visualise them, so that they delete your name from the Records of Death (*siji*)' and enter it in the Jade Calendar of Long Life (*changsheng yuli*).

11 The Yellow Old Man of the Central Ultimate (Zhongji Huanglao) resides in the Central Dipper (*zhongdou*) in heaven, and in the Yellow Court (the lower *dantian*) within the human being. He is also called Real Man of the Central Yellow (Zhonghuang zhenren); we have already met him under this name in a passage of the *Golden Liquor*. The *Central Scripture* also states that this god, under the name Supreme Lord of the Central Ultimate (Shangshang zhongji jun), is the Dao itself.[42] His spouse is variously called Empress (*huanghou*), Pure Woman and Jade Woman of Mysterious Radiance of Great Yin.

12 The Red Child (Chizi) lives in the stomach. He is the son of the Yellow Old Man and of the Jade Woman of Mysterious Radiance.

The inner pantheon depicted in the 'Inner' version of the *Yellow Court* is different and, in a numerical sense, more modest that the one of the *Central Scripture.* Here the main groups of deities are the following:

1 Seven gods who live in different parts of the head: hair, brain, eyes, nose, ears, tongue and teeth.[43]

2 The gods of the five viscera – heart, lungs, kidneys, liver and spleen – and of the gallbladder, which in the *Yellow Court* and other texts represent all the 'six receptacles' (*liufu*).[44]
3 The gods of the *dantian*, namely the Great One who resides in the upper *dantian*; White Origin (Baiyuan) and Blossomless (Wuying, also called the Lordling or Gongzi), who reside in two chambers of the upper *dantian*; and the Peach Child (Taohai, also known as Peach Vigour or Taokang), who resides in the lower *dantian*.[45]
4 The twenty-four *jing*, which are 'luminous spirits' (*mingjing*) arranged into three groups of eight.[46]

Using a terminology that refers to the underlying bureaucratic view of the human body, each of the six main inner organs (five viscera and gallbladder) is called in the *Yellow Court* a 'department' (*bu*) and is managed by a deity who resides in a 'palace' (*gong*) within that organ. The single deities, who are identified by their names and the colours of their garments, rule on the organ that hosts them and supervise the corresponding function in the body.

Nourishing the gods, receiving nourishment from the gods

Nourishing the gods of the inner pantheon and the loci in which they dwell is essential to ensure that the gods are maintained (*cun*) in their locations, perform the bureaucratic and biological functions that lie with them, allow communication with the outer deities and guarantee the alignment of the individual with the impersonal forces on which life depends. In both the *Central Scripture* and the *Yellow Court*, accordingly, meditation on the inner gods is combined with the visualisation of nutritive essences and pneumas that adepts drive through the body and deliver to the gods in the five viscera, the three *dantian* and other organs. Both Shangqing and *neidan* would incorporate these practices and much of the attached imagery.

In particular, the *Central Scripture* often instructs adepts to circulate within their body a 'yellow essence' (*huangjing*) and a 'red pneuma' (*chiqi*) that respectively represent the Moon and the Sun. Adepts should merge them with each other and then ingest them:

> Constantly think that below the nipples are the Sun and the Moon. Within the Sun and the Moon are a yellow essence and a red pneuma that enter the Crimson Palace; then again they enter the Yellow Court and the Purple Chamber. The yellow essence and the red pneuma thoroughly fill the Great Granary (*taicang*).

In this practice, the yellow essence and the red pneuma are moved through the Crimson Palace (heart), the Yellow Court (spleen) and the Purple Chamber (gallbladder), and finally reach the Great Granary (stomach). The purpose is to nourish the Red Child, the deity residing within the Great

Granary.[47] In another instance, the yellow essence and the red pneuma are joined and then ingested:

> The saintly man dissolves the pearls; the worthy man liquefies the jade. For dissolving the pearls and liquefying the jade, the method is the same. Dissolving the pearls means ingesting the essence of the Sun: the left eye is the Sun. Liquefying the jade means feeding on the essence of the Moon: the right eye is the Moon.

The related practice consists of lying down and repeatedly visualising the yellow essence and the red pneuma that descend from one's eyes and enter one's mouth, so that they may be swallowed. Doing so makes one's spirit (*shen*) bright, and one 'discerns throughout the eight directions'.[48]

The *Yellow Court* mentions the same essences and pneumas, saying, for instance:

> Circulate the purple (*huizi*) and embrace the yellow (*baohuang*)
> so that they enter the Cinnabar Field;
> an inner light in the Abyssal Chamber (*youshi*) illuminates the
> Yang Gate (*yangmen*).

Here the two pneumas are circulated and guided to the upper *dantian*, while the Gate of Life (or Yang Gate) in the lower *dantian* is visualised as irradiated by a light issuing forth from the kidneys (the Abyssal Chamber).[49]

There are clear associations between the essences and pneumas of the Sun and the Moon, delivered by the adept of the *Central Scripture* to his inner gods, and the Yin and Yang essences and pneumas that a *neidan* adept circulates in his body to compound the elixir or nourish the 'inner embryo'. These associations are explicit when the *Central Scripture* refers to visualising the pneuma of the Sun descending from the heart and the pneuma of the Moon arising from the kidneys; the adept should 'join them making them one, and distribute them to the four limbs'. An analogous practice is performed by a *neidan* adept when he joins the Fire of the heart and the Water of the kidneys.[50] Analogies with the alchemical process are also apparent in relation to another major source of nourishment for the inner gods and their residences, namely the adept's own salivary juices. Their main function is to aid the ingestion of essences and pneumas, but they are also used to 'irrigate' (*guan*) the inner organs and, as we shall see presently, to feed the gods.[51] To denote these juices, the *Central Scripture* and the *Yellow Court* use terms derived from *waidan* or having alchemical connotations, such as Mysterious Pearl (*xuanzhu*), Jade Sap (*yujiang*), Jade Blossom (*yuying*), Jade Pond (*yuchi*), Jade Liquor (*yuye*), Golden Nectar (*jinli*) and even Golden Liquor (*jinye*). Other sources refer to them as Divine Water (*shenshui*), White Snow (*baixue*) and Golden Essence (*jinjing*), all of which are also synonyms of ingredients of *waidan* elixirs. These terms suggest

that in providing superior nourishment to the adept and his inner gods, the salivary juices are seen as performing a function similar to the one that the elixirs, or their ingredients, play in *waidan*. The analogies of essences, pneumas and salivary juices with *waidan* end where those with *neidan* begin: the adept nourishes himself and his gods not through the ingestion of 'external' substances, but through components of his own inner body; he finds the vital ingredients within himself, and their ingestion takes place internally.

Similar dual associations with both *waidan* and *neidan* are manifest in another feature of the methods of the *Central Scripture*. Although offering nourishment to the gods is the rule, in some cases it is the adept who asks the gods to deliver nourishment to him. To do so, he utters invocations that recall the one pronounced by the Taiqing alchemist in a passage quoted above. Now, however, he does not ask the gods to favour the compounding of the elixir. He asks, instead, that they dispense an elixir to him:

> The highest god is styled Lord Great One of Original Radiance (Yuanguang Taiyi jun) . . . Below he resides within the heart of human beings. At dawn and at midday, on the *jiawu* and the *bingwu* days, always call him and say: 'Old Man of the Southern Ultimate, Lord Great One of Original Radiance! I want to obtain the Dao of long life of the Divine Elixir of the Great One!'[52]

In an invocation he addresses to Master Yellow Gown (Huangchang zi), the father of the Red Child, he asks to receive 'medicinal liquor' (*yaojiu*) and other nurture: 'Master Yellow Gown! Master Yellow Gown! Real Man of the Yellow Court, reside in me! Summon for me medicinal liquor, dried pine-seeds, rice, and broth of millet, so that I can eat and drink of them! Let them come right now!'[53] Similarly, the adept invokes Double Indigo, the god of the liver who is none other than Lord Lao himself, as follows:

> Flesh Child (Rouzi), Double Indigo (Lanlan)! Be my friend, stay here and be my envoy! I want to obtain the Divine Elixir of the Great One and ingest it! Let me live a long life! Do not leave my body! Constantly reside within the Palace of the Purple Chamber, joined with the Dao![54]

If the term 'inner elixir' was not already charged with other meanings and associations, it could be an appropriate definition for the nourishment that the inner gods are invited to provide. Indeed, whether its elixir is 'outer' or 'inner', the *Central Scripture* regards alchemy and meditation as equivalent when it states: 'If you cannot ingest the Divine Elixir and the Golden Liquor, and do not labour to become skilled in meditation (*sinian*), you merely bring suffering upon yourself.'[55]

The Red Child and the inner embryo

As we have seen, leading the yellow essence and the red pneuma to the stomach provides nourishment to the Red Child. This god, who is also known as Child-Cinnabar (Zidan), is called the 'self' (*wu*) or 'the master of one's real self' (*zhenwu zhi shi*), and is the innermost deity residing within the human being. Like the Supreme Great One, he is a transformation of the primordial pneuma emanating from the Dao. The *Central Scripture* describes him as follows:

> The self is the son of the Dao; this is what he is. Human beings also have him, not only me. He resides precisely in the ducts of the stomach, the Great Granary. He sits facing due south on a couch of jade and pearls, and a flowery canopy of yellow clouds covers him. He wears clothes with pearls of five hues. His mother resides above on his right, embracing and nourishing him; his father resides above on his left, instructing and defending him.[56]

The Child's mother is the Jade Woman of Mysterious Radiance. Through the nourishment that she provides, the Child 'feeds on yellow gold and jade dumplings, and ingests the Divine Elixir and the fungus-plant (*zhicao*)'. But the Child should also be nourished by the adept: 'He feeds on the yellow essence and the red pneuma, drinking and ingesting the Fountain of Nectar (*liquan*)', another name of the salivary juices produced during meditation practices. The Child's father, whose task is 'instructing and defending' his son, is the Yellow Old Man of the Central Ultimate, god of the Yellow Court. The *Central Scripture* often calls him Master Yellow Gown (Huangchang zi), a name that derives from a term used in the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*) and that may have entered the *Central Scripture* through the Han apocryphal literature.[57] Both the Red Child, under the name of Child-Cinnabar, and Yellow Gown are also mentioned in the 'Inner' version of the *Yellow Court*, while the 'Outer' version grants Child-Cinnabar the honour of being the only deity mentioned by name in the entire text.[58]

The alchemical imagery associated with the nourishment of the Red Child – gold, jade, the Divine Elixir itself – does not need to be emphasized again. Another point, instead, calls for attention, namely the relation of the Red Child to the inner embryo of *neidan*. The Child of the *Central Scripture* resides within oneself since one's birth; he is not generated through the adept's practice, but by other gods who are his parents; and he receives nourishment and guidance from his own mother and father, the adept's task being one of support. This differs from the inner embryo as an image of the inner elixir, conceived and generated by the *neidan* adept himself through his practice. But the relation between the Red Child and the inner embryo is more complex than this annotation might suggest, for the image of the embryo changes according to the understanding of *neidan* itself: while some *neidan* authors emphasise the notion of 'generating' and 'raising' the inner

embryo through practices performed for this purpose, others refer to the embryo, and the elixir itself, as an image of one's own authentic self and of one's inherent awakened state. Both ways of seeing have affinities with the image of the 'inner child' as it appears in the *Central Scripture* and (as we shall see shortly) in Shangqing Daoism. On the one hand, nourishing the Red Child in meditation and generating and raising the embryo in *neidan* are achieved through similar practices – by joining essences and pneumas related to the Sun and the Moon in the former case, or to Yin and Yang in the latter. On the other hand, the 'inner child' and the inner embryo are both representations of the 'real self' (*zhenwu*), which, just like the Red Child in the *Central Scripture*, is innate in everyone and is raised by the same forces that sustain life – represented by the Child's parents in the *Central Scripture*, and by one's 'original Father and Mother' (*yuanfu*, *yuanmu*) in Shangqing – but also requires one's continuous sustenance and nourishment.

With regard to the first view, we should also note that the notion of generating an inner embryo is not a *neidan* innovation. As we have seen, the *Xiang'er* commentary already alludes to practices for 'nurturing the embryo'. The 'Inner' version of the *Yellow Court* also instructs adepts to generate a 'body' (or a 'person', *shen*) in their own inner womb:

> By coagulating the essence and fostering the womb (*yubao*), you will generate a body by transformation (*huasheng shen*);
> by detaining the embryo (*liutai*) and causing the essence to stop, you will live a long life.[59]

While this passage has no correspondence in the 'Outer' version, it is hard to establish whether it reflects an influence of Shangqing meditation practices, where the image of generating an inner embryo appears in different forms and contexts. Even in this case, earlier traditions provided *neidan* with the representation of an 'inner being' that personifies one's authentic self, with the notion of generating that being in one's inner body and, in relation to the latter notion, with a model for the practices required to accomplish that task.

Dantian: Cinnabar Fields and Fields of the Elixir

In several passages quoted above, we have met mentions of the three *dantian* or Cinnabar Fields. The *Central Scripture* is the first source that describes the lower *dantian* in detail, saying:

> The Cinnabar Field is the root of the human being. It is the place where essence and spirit are stored, the origin of the five pneumas (*wuqi*) and the Storehouse of the Red Child (*chizi zhi fu*). Men store it in their semen, and women in their menstrual blood. It rules on generating children and is the gate of the joining of Yin and Yang. It is three inches below the navel, attached to the Caudal Funnel

> (*weilü*), and is the root of the two kidneys. Within the Cinnabar Field the centre is red, the left is green, the right is yellow, above is white and below is black. It is within a space that measures four inches, square (like Earth) and round (like Heaven).[60]

The passage ends by stating that the god of the *dantian* 'has the surname Kong, the name Qiu and the style Zhongni'. The god of this locus of the body is, therefore, none other than Confucius himself. As has been noted, this is likely to be a further element that reveals the relation of the *Central Scripture* to the Han apocrypha, sometimes deemed to have been written by Confucius to expound the meaning of the Classics.[61]

As we have seen, early meditation texts describe the three *dantian* as the abodes of the One in the human being, or of other gods who are transformations of this supreme deity. In particular, the *dantian* are inhabited by youthful lads (*tongzi*): the Red Child himself in the upper *dantian* (according to the *Yellow Court*), the son of the Queen Mother and the King Father also in the upper *dantian* and Peach Child in the lower *dantian*. In another case, the adept of the *Central Scripture* invokes the Lords of the Sun and the Moon, and asks that they help him to nourish two 'little lads' in the middle and the lower *dantian*:

> Effulgent Lord, Original Yang (Jingjun Yuanyang)! Join your virtue with me! Let us nourish together the little lad within the Crimson Palace! . . . Lord of the Moon, Child-Light (Yuejun Ziguang)! Join your virtue with me! Nourish the little lad within my Cinnabar Field![62]

In *neidan*, instead, the *dantian* are the three main loci of inner transmutation, where the elixir, or the 'inner child', is generated, nourished and progressively moved upward, in a process described in some texts as the 'egress of the spirit' (*chushen*) through the sinciput. I will not attempt, though, to examine the similarities and differences between meditation and *neidan* in relation to the *dantian*, and will merely focus on two terminological remarks.

First, although several dozens of names and synonyms are attested for the three *dantian*, most texts apply the term Cinnabar Field, or *dantian*, specifically to the lower Field (as in the passage just quoted), and call the middle one Crimson Palace, or *jianggong*, and the upper one Muddy Pellet, or *niwan*. The theory that the term *niwan* originated as a phonetic transcription of *nirvana* appears to have no foundation, as this meaning is not attested in the dozen or so occurrences of this term in the Taishō Buddhist canon. The earliest sources that mention the term *niwan* to mean the upper *dantian* are, to my knowledge, the *Central Scripture* and the *Yellow Court*.[63] Interestingly, a passage in Ge Hong's *Inner Chapters* lists *niwan* as a synonym of an unidentified substance used in *waidan* (possibly the mud used for luting the crucible).[64] As in several other cases, therefore, the use of this term in *neidan* texts appears to derive from an earlier use in *waidan*, attested around

300 CE; the contemporary texts on meditation were the agents of its transmission from *waidan* to *neidan*.

The second remark concerns the use of the term *dantian* itself in meditation and *neidan* texts. As shown by the description in the *Central Scripture* quoted above, the *dantian* is denoted as 'cinnabar' with reference to the colour of its inmost part. This peculiarity is deemed to be so important as to overcome the canonical associations between directions and colours: the centre of the *dantian* is red, while yellow – normally associated with the centre – is the colour of its right side. In *neidan*, instead, *dantian* is used in a sense closer to 'field of the elixir' than to 'cinnabar field', for these are the three loci involved in the compounding of the inner elixir. At the basis of both ways of understanding this term is the root meaning of the word *dan* as 'essence', in the sense of reality, principle, nature and authenticity. The colour cinnabar (*dan*) and in general the colour red partake of this meaning, as also do the mineral cinnabar (*dan*) and the elixir (also *dan*). Neither the mineral cinnabar nor the elixir, however, is originally involved in the notion of *dantian.* Just as the *dantian* in the *Central Scripture* is the storehouse of male and female essence (*jing*, i.e. semen and menstrual blood), so in *neidan* it is the 'field' where one grows and collects the elixir, the human being's authentic essence.[65]

From the Great Clarity to the Highest Clarity

We may now leave the *Central Scripture of Laozi* and the *Scripture of the Yellow Court*, which have guided us along the greater part of this study, and look at the role that Shangqing played in the transition to *neidan*. As this stage in the history of Daoist meditation has already been studied extensively,[66] it will be enough to provide some examples of the Shangqing adaptation of two of the themes discussed above – the image of the 'inner child' and the practices associated with the Sun and the Moon – and briefly comment on the influence that Shangqing had on the decline of *waidan*.

Methods of visualisation of the deities of the inner pantheon, and chants addressed to them, form the subject matter of the *Dadong zhenjing* (the *Authentic Scripture of Great Profundity*), the main Shangqing text.[67] Although this pantheon differs from the ones of the *Central Scripture* and the *Yellow Court*, the 'inner child' plays within it the same central role. The *Great Profundity* ends by describing how an adept generates an inner 'divine person' by coagulating and ingesting pneumas that descend from his upper *dantian*:

> Visualise a five-coloured purple cloud entering within you from your Muddy Pellet. Then ingest that divine cloud with your saliva. It will coalesce into a divine person (*shenshen*), wrapped in a five-coloured, purple, white and roseate round luminous wheel. The god is inside the wheel. Below he spreads himself within your entire body, distributing his pneuma to your nine openings and coagulating it over the tip of your tongue.

Revealing the identity of the 'inner child' more explicitly than does the *Central Scripture*, the *Great Profundity* calls him the Venerable Lord Emperor One (Diyi zunjun), thereby equating him with the Supreme Great One of the earlier model.[68]

In other contexts, the image of the 'inner child' or the inner embryo reveals alchemical connotations different from those we have seen in the pre-Shangqing texts. One of the Shangqing revealed scriptures applies a *waidan* term, Nine Elixirs (*jiudan*), to the pneumas of the Nine Heavens (*jiutian zhi qi*) received by human beings during their embryonic development. In the view of this and other Shangqing texts, however, the gestation process also accounts for the creation of 'knots and nodes' (*jiejie*). Their function is 'holding together the five viscera', but at the same time they are responsible for one's death:

> When one is born, there are in the womb twelve knots and nodes that hold the five viscera together. The five viscera are obstructed and squeezed, the knots cannot be untied and the nodes cannot be removed. Therefore the illnesses of human beings depend on the obstructions caused by these nodes, and the extinction of one's allotted destiny (*ming*, i.e. one's death) depends on the strengthening of these knots.

To untie the 'knots of death', adepts are instructed to re-experience their embryonic development in meditation, again receiving the Nine Elixirs (the pneumas of each of the Nine Heavens) and then visualising the Original Father in the upper *dantian*, and the Original Mother in the lower *dantian*, who issue pneumas that adepts join in the middle *dantian* to generate, this time, an inner immortal body.[69]

A further set of Shangqing practices based on the image of the embryo are those performed to ensure that the souls of one's ancestors obtain release from the underworld. Through these practices, ancestors may 'return to the embryo' (*fantai*) and become 'immortals at the embryonic state' (*taixian*), obtaining, this time, rebirth in heaven. In this case too, the notion of purification underlying these practices is associated with alchemical imagery and terminology. Thanks to their descendant, ancestors can rise to the Golden Gate (Jinmen), a station in the heavenly circuit of the Sun, where they 'refine their matter' (*lianzhi*) by bathing themselves in the Water of Smelting Refinement (*yelian zhi shui*).[70]

The role of the Sun as a purifying agent is also apparent in the Shangqing practices based on the images of the Sun and the Moon. Here Shangqing clearly develops the legacy of earlier traditions where, as we have seen, pneumas and essences associated with these two celestial bodies perform a major role; here, however, the essences and pneumas are not those found within the adept's own body, but those of the Sun and the Moon themselves. In one instance, the adept meditates on the circuits of the Sun and the Moon, then visualises their essences and joins and ingests them. In another method, he

Figure 7.1 Generating the 'inner child' in meditation. *Shangqing dadong zhenjing* (Highest Clarity Authentic Scripture of Great Profundity), 6.13b.

collects their essences in a vessel containing water and a talisman, then ingests some of that water and uses the other part to wash himself. These and similar methods often end with the adept visualising himself as being ignited by the Sun and transformed into pure light.[71] Some notions related to these practices have an even deeper relation to alchemy than those seen before. As noted by Robinet, the Shangqing texts sometimes exchange the Yin and Yang qualities of the Sun and the Moon, so that each of them is said to contain an essence of the opposite sign (Yin for the Sun, Yang for the Moon). This anticipates an essential pattern of *neidan*, where the alchemical process is based on gathering Yin within Yang (Original Yin) and Yang within Yin (Original Yang) in order to join them and compound the elixir.[72] Two further common features can be identified. First, as in alchemy, here fire is the agent of purification – of matter in one case, of the human being himself in the other. Moreover, in both *waidan* and *neidan* the elixir formed by joining Original Yin and Original Yang is equated with Pure Yang (*chunyang*), the state before the separation of the One into the two. In the same way, the Shangqing practices related to the Sun and the Moon end with the adept absorbing himself into the Yang principle, represented by the Sun.

Shangqing also influenced the history of alchemy in another significant way. Taking the compounding of the elixir as the starting point of some of its practices, it effectively reformulated the nature and purposes of *waidan* and used the compounding of the elixir as a metaphor to describe inner processes.[73] This attitude, which essentially is the same as the one that *neidan* has to *waidan*, was a decisive contribution to the decline in the status of *waidan* among the traditions of medieval Jiangnan, and was, indeed, at the origins of that decline. While Ge Hong, writing only a few decades before the Shangqing revelations, had promoted *waidan* and meditation as the two superior paths to immortality, the revelations of 364–370 resulted in a new hierarchical arrangement of methods and practices.[74] The *Zhen'gao* (Authentic Declarations), a work that Tao Hongjing (456–536) wrote both to systematise the Shangqing legacy and to clarify its relation to the earlier local traditions, reflects a hierarchy that places the Shangqing meditation methods first, followed by *waidan*, then by sexual techniques, circulation of pneuma (*xingqi*), *daoyin* (gymnastics) and finally by the ingestion of herbal drugs. One of the relevant passages in Tao's work ends with these words: 'If one obtains the Golden Liquor and the Divine Elixirs, one becomes an immortal with no need of other practices. If one obtains the *Authentic Scripture of Great Profundity*, there is no need for the Way of the Golden Elixir (*jindan zhi dao*).'[75] This decline in the status of *waidan* may have been one of the major reasons for the replacement of the earlier forms of alchemical practice with those based on the doctrinal model of the *Zhouyi cantong qi*.

New forms of alchemical doctrines and practices

Another indication of the decrease of importance of *waidan* among the early medieval traditions is seen in the system of the Three Caverns (*sandong*).

Created during the fifth century, this system resulted from the effort of arranging both the earlier and the contemporary Daoist traditions of Jiangnan into a unitary framework after the Shangqing and Lingbao corpora had taken shape, and after the cults and practices of the Way of the Celestial Masters had spread to that area. The low rank assigned to *waidan* among the Three Caverns fully partakes of the Shangqing outlook. The Taiqing or Great Clarity heaven, from which the *waidan* scriptures and methods are revealed and to which they grant access, lost the exalted status that it had enjoyed earlier, and became the lowest of three celestial domains, or Caverns, after those related to the Shangqing and Lingbao corpora.[76]

As it was around the same time – the fifth century – that the *Cantong qi* entered the history of Chinese alchemy, one can look at the course taken by the alchemical traditions from the last part of the Six Dynasties as a response to these changes. A remarkable feature of this response is that it occurred in part by recovering Han traditions represented by the apocryphal texts, of whose importance in relation to meditation we have had glimpses in the course of this study. As I have tried to show elsewhere,[77] a text entitled *Cantong qi* existed during the Han period; it was related to the milieu that produced the apocrypha and possibly was a 'weft text' itself. The transmission of this original *Cantong qi* did not suffer major breaks after the end of the Han period and continued, like that of other apocrypha, in Jiangnan, where the *Cantong qi* came in touch with the traditions that we have surveyed. The received text is the result of alterations and additions made as part of this process. As we know it today, the *Cantong qi* is related to the development of two new forms of practice: a new variety of *waidan* that relies on the abstract emblems of correlative cosmology instead of ritual, and a new variety of inner practice that relies on those same emblems instead of meditation on the inner gods.

While this is not the place to dwell in detail on the contents of this complex text, some remarks are in order at least on one point. Although it incorporates fragments of both *waidan* and *neidan* practices, the *Cantong qi* is not primarily concerned with either *waidan* or *neidan*, and not even with 'alchemy' per se. Using a language remarkably different from that of the earlier sources on *waidan* or meditation, it purports to illustrate the bond that exists between Non-being (*wu*) and Being (*you*), or the absolute and the relative. To do so, it borrows from correlative cosmology various patterns of emblems – Yin and Yang, the Five Agents, the trigrams and hexagrams of the *Book of Changes*, the Celestial Stems and Earthly Branches and so forth – and uses them to represent the ontological and cosmological states that define the extension of the Dao into the cosmos, with the intent of explaining their nature and mutual relations.[78]

The ultimate purpose is to show that change, the main feature of the world of form, is owed to the operation of the formless Dao as it manifests itself. Alchemy comes into play, so to speak, at a later stage, namely when the *Cantong qi* offers its way to 'return to the Dao'. But besides being

extremely allusive, descriptions of processes related to either *waidan* or *neidan* form only a fraction of the whole text. The task of describing alchemical methods, whether 'inner' or 'outer', is left to commentaries and other works that apply the same emblems to the compounding of the elixir. The purpose, in this case, is to follow the ontological and cosmological stages that intervene between the Dao and the 'ten thousand things' in a sequence contrary to their hierarchical arrangement, and therefore revert to the higher states of being.

In this context, the inner gods serve no more. In their intermediary function between the Formless and the forms, they are replaced by other 'images' (*xiang*), namely the emblems of correlative cosmology and the alchemical symbols proper.[79] Some of these images correspond to those represented earlier as anthropomorphic deities: it is not difficult to see, for instance, the relation that occurs between the Original Pneuma of the Dao that changes itself into the cosmos and the Supreme Great One of the *Central Scripture* who is that very pneuma; or even between the inner elixir and the inner Red Child who is one's own inner 'self'. However, the 'speculative gnosis' that forms an essential aspect of the discourse of the *Cantong qi*, and that relies on correlative cosmology as a tool for explaining the relation between the Dao, the cosmos and the human being, is absent in the traditions represented by the early texts on meditation, as it is also in Shangqing. Even some clusters of terms that recur in the *Cantong qi* show how its adept is not interested in meditating on the deities that reside within himself any more. Instead, he surveys (*can*), examines (*cha*), investigates (*kao*), explores (*tan*), enquires (*ji*) and inspects (*shen*); he gauges (*cun*) and measures (*du*); he reflects (*si*), ponders (*lü*), infers (*tui*) and assesses (*kui*). This is not mere intellectual activity and takes place, instead, through 'contemplation' (*guan*).

Despite this, the *Cantong qi* uses terminology also found in the *Central Scripture*, the *Yellow Court* and the Shangqing texts. For instance, it borrows from the *Yellow Court* the phrase that describes the centre of the human being ('square and round and with a diameter of one inch') and applies it to the elixir itself; this is one of about four or five dozen terms and expressions shared by the two texts.[80] A similar sentence, as we have seen in a passage quoted above, is found in the *Central Scripture of Laozi*, and here again it is one of several instances of shared images and phrases. In most cases, though, the actual meanings of the terms, or the sense in which the *Cantong qi* uses them, are different. An example found in a section concerned with the principles of inner cultivation illustrates how the text borrows earlier images and terms and uses them in relation to impersonal notions. On three occasions, the *Central Scripture* instructs its adepts to visualise their inner essences and pneumas, saying that those essences and pneumas should 'moisten and impregnate' (*runze*) several organs of the body.[81] The *Cantong qi* uses the same expression with a change of focus: what is 'moistened and impregnated' is not the viscera of the adept

in meditation, but the cosmos itself when Original Pneuma expands throughout it from the centre:

> Gradually 'from the Yellow Centre it pervades the veinings (*tongli*)',
> moistening and impregnating it reaches the flesh and the skin . . .
> The One thereby covers all,
> but no one in the world knows it.[82]

In another passage, the action of 'moistening and impregnating' is performed by the Sun and the Moon, when they join to each other at the end of each time cycle and release their 'nurturing fluids' (*ziye*, a compound formed by two terms that in the *Central Scripture* and other texts define the salivary juices):

> Between the last day of a month and the first day of the next,
> they join their tallies and move to the Centre.
> In chaos, vaporous and opaque,
> female and male follow each other:
> their nurturing fluids moisten and impregnate,
> emanating and transmuting, they flow and pervade.[83]

This passage provides another example of the incorporation and modification of earlier symbolic forms in the *Cantong qi*. In the meditation texts, as we have seen, essences and pneumas associated with the Sun and the Moon are joined and ingested by the adept. In the *Cantong qi*, the passage just quoted is found in a section concerned with the *najia* (Matching Stems) cosmological pattern, which this work uses to formulate one of its most important doctrines. Being the main emblems of the two complementary principles in the cosmos, the Sun and the Moon respectively harbour the essences of Original Yin and Original Yang of the precosmic state. Their conjunction, which occurs at the end of each monthly cycle when they 'join their tallies and move to the Centre', causes Original Yin and Yang to couple and generate the next time cycle. While these cycles are responsible for the existence of change, in the views of the *Cantong qi* they are also necessary for Original Yin and Yang to be constantly present in the cosmos, rising and descending through the temporal cycles.[84]

As one could expect, these changes in the use of earlier terms and images are accompanied in the *Cantong qi* by statements about practices that are not derived from its doctrines. The last example that I provide of borrowed terms and expressions is one of those that reveal the attitude of the *Cantong qi* in this respect. In a section of the *Central Scripture*, visualising the inner gods of the viscera and directing essences and pneumas from one to another is called *lizang* or 'passing through the viscera'.[85] This expression, as we have seen, also appears in the *Stele to Wang Ziqiao* in relation to the three Cinnabar Fields, and is attested by several other Han and later sources,

including the 'Outer' version of the *Yellow Court*.[86] The *Cantong qi* uses the term *lizang* in a passage devoted to asserting the superiority of its doctrines compared to meditation and other practices:

> This is not the method of passing through the viscera, contemplating within (*neiguan*) and concentrating on something;
> of treading the Dipper and pacing the asterisms (*lüxing bu douxiu*), using the six *jia* (*liujia*) as chronograms (*richen*);
> of sating yourself with the nine-and-one (*jiuyi*) in the Way of Yin (*yindao*), fouling and tampering with the original womb (*yuanbao*);
> of ingesting pneuma till it chirps in your stomach, exhaling the upright and inhaling the external and evil.
>
> By being sleepless day and night,
> and from month to month never taking a pause,
> daily your body becomes tired and exhausted:
> you are 'vague and indistinct', but look like a fool (*chi*).
>
> Your hundred channels (*baimai*) churn like a cauldron,
> unable to clear and to settle;
> piling up soil you make space for an altar,
> and from morning to sunset reverently make offerings.

All this, concludes the *Cantong qi*, becomes pointless when 'you leave your bodily form to rot'.[87]

Two different meditation practices are mentioned in this passage: visualisation of the viscera (*lizang*) and 'treading the Dipper and pacing the asterisms' (*lüxing bu douxiu*), an expression that alludes to the Shangqing methods of 'pacing the celestial net' (*bugang*).[88] Besides them, 'six *jia*' refers to calendrical deities, in particular those of the divination method of the 'orphan-empty' (*guxu*), which in one of its applications allows adepts ritually to exit the cycle of time and the directions of space.[89] 'Way of Yin' is a term associated with sexual techniques, and 'nine-and-one' refers to 'nine shallow and one deep' penetrations in intercourse. 'Making offerings' obviously alludes to rites performed in honour of minor deities and spirits. The last sentence in the first paragraph, as well as the first two lines in the second quatrain, refer to breathing practices.

We have here, in other words, a sample of methods that were current during the Six Dynasties: different meditation practices, breathing techniques, sexual techniques and rites addressed to minor supernatural beings. The *Cantong qi* is not content with criticising these methods but refers to them with irony. 'Exhaling the old and inhaling the new' (*tugu naxin*), a common expression that denotes ingesting pneuma, is overturned into 'exhaling the upright and inhaling the external and evil' (*tuzheng xi waixie*). Pneuma is ingested 'till it chirps (*ming*) in your stomach'. The adept who devotes himself to these practices is 'vague and indistinct' (*huanghu*); in the *Laozi*, this expression denotes the Dao itself, but in the *Cantong qi*, that adept 'looks like a fool'.[90]

Conclusion: the fate of the inner gods

After seeing, in the earlier sections of this study, several examples of the use of alchemical imagery in relation to inner processes, one question is inevitable. Are we already dealing, before the development of practices related to the *Cantong qi*, with 'inner alchemy'? The answer to this question depends on how one evaluates the processes of change that we have surveyed, and especially the innovations reflected in and promoted by the *Cantong qi*.

Reckoning that the elixir is to be found within, and in general shifting the associated images to an inner plane, does not characterise *neidan* per se. *Neidan* reiterates and magnifies here the process of 'interiorisation' of earlier notions and practices that had already distinguished Shangqing Daoism,[91] and of which we have seen examples of an even earlier date. Taking this into account, the main feature that distinguishes *neidan* from earlier traditions is the replacement of a codified system (the pantheon of inner gods) with another codified system (correlative cosmology) both to construe the relation of the human being to the Dao and to frame the stages of one's practice. The *Cantong qi* is the main text that inspired this change. Under its influence, a comparable change invests *waidan* with an abstract framework at practically the same time, or slightly before. Thus, an earlier model, represented by the Taiqing tradition with its ritual approach to the compounding of the elixir, is replaced by a new model also based on correlative cosmology.[92]

With this shift, the whole outlook changes remarkably. I believe, therefore, that there is much value in Isabelle Robinet's suggestion of applying the term *neidan* to traditions that, besides representing their goal as the compounding of an 'inner elixir', use not only language and notions directly pertaining to alchemy, but also language and notions drawn from the system of correlative cosmology.[93] The shift mentioned above, however, can fully be appreciated if one looks at the doctrines incorporated into the *Cantong qi* as distinct from *neidan* as a practice. The change occurs first at the doctrinal level; the new practices result from grafting earlier methods – in particular, the forms of meditation that we have surveyed – into the new doctrines. Only in this way is it possible to account for the same pattern of change that is apparent in *waidan*, where the grafting of an earlier form of practice (the methods of the Taiqing tradition) on to new doctrinal foundations results in a remarkably different way of making the elixir: an earlier variety of methods based on a variety of ingredients is replaced by a single model, based on the conjunction of only two ingredients (lead and mercury) that represent Original Yin and Original Yang.

One of the several points that remain to be investigated is the fate of the inner gods after other traditions replaced the pre-Shangqing and Shangqing meditation practices, and the relation of these traditions to *neidan*. From the Tang period onward, visualisation of the inner deities is superseded by Buddhist-inspired *neiguan* (inner contemplation) and by *neidan*. As in *neidan*, the inner gods have no real function in the *neiguan* techniques. The *Neiguan*

jing (Scripture of Inner Contemplation) mentions some inner gods in its opening passages, but the text is not involved with them: those passages briefly introduce a 'model' of the inner body that an adept perceives through the enlightened state of his mind and spirit. The text is entirely concerned with this state, and the inner gods play no direct or indirect role in its attainment.[94] *Neidan*, as we have seen, discards the inner gods in an even more radical way. But do the inner gods really vanish, never to appear again?

Although many of the doctrinal and historical links remain to be explored, it is noteworthy that the inner deities have continued to perform a role until the present day in a different context, namely Daoist ritual. The few examples that follow might serve to establish a possible historical sequence. As we have seen, an important source incorporated into the Lingbao corpus but reflecting earlier traditions, the *Prolegomena to the Five Talismans*, mentions several inner gods and describes meditation practices. Not long later, a text related to the codification of Daoist ritual that occurred under Lingbao auspices, the *Ershisi shengtu* (*Charts of the Twenty-four Life-givers*), lists the inner gods that the priest despatches to heaven to submit petitions to the outer gods. Although their names are not the same as those given in pre-Shangqing or Shangqing sources on meditation, their locations correspond almost exactly with those that these and other works populate with inner gods: these deities are the twenty-four *jing* or 'luminous spirits' that also play a role in the *Scripture of the Yellow Court* and in Shangqing meditation.[95] At a time that is the heyday of the traditions surveyed above, thus, the inner gods accomplish in ritual one of the main functions they perform in meditation, namely relating the human being – in this case, the priest, and through him the whole community that he represents – to the gods of the celestial pantheon.

At the same time and in the same context, the main Lingbao text, the *Duren jing* (the *Scripture of Salvation*), enjoins adepts to ask the Lord of the Dao (Daojun) that he summon forth several inner divine beings from within their body before they may recite this text.[96] The same invocation is pronounced in the early Lingbao funerary rite[97] and reappears, in a slightly modified form, in the thirteenth-century *Shangqing lingbao dafa* (the *Great Rites of the Highest Clarity and the Numinous Treasure*), a work associated with the Daoist lineages of the Song period but embedded in the Lingbao tradition. It is still pronounced in present-day ritual during the rite of the Lighting of the Burner (*falu*).[98] In the version of the *Great Rites*, the priest addresses the Lord of the Dao, asking him to:

> summon forth from within your servant's body the correct spirits of the Three Pneumas (*sanqi*), the Controllers of Destiny, Fortune, Works and Judgement, as well as the two lords Taokang and Jingyan . . . the officers of merit of the three and the five, the agents on the left and right, the jade lads in charge of the incense, the jade lasses who transmit what is said, the keepers of the talismans of the Five Emperors and the officers of the incense in charge today, thirty-two individuals in all, to report what I say.[99]

Taokang – whom we have already met above as a god of the lower *dantian* – and Jingyan are mentioned together in another early Lingbao scripture that gives the names of the inner gods.[100]

Other examples concern the 'inner child'. In a twelfth-century text on the rite of Salvation through Refinement (*liandu*), the priest performs an inner meditation aimed at releasing the souls of the deceased from the underworld. In particular, he visualises a 'child' (*ying'er*) within his lower *dantian* and then moves him to the central and the upper *dantian*, where the 'child' becomes the Supreme Emperor of Primordial Commencement (Yuanshi shangdi). The assistant spirits of this deity enter Fengdu, the administration of the underworld that the priest visualises between his own kidneys, to release the souls imprisoned there.[101] A similar inner practice is performed in the present day during the rite of the Land of the Way (*daochang*). Here the priest concentrates on his twenty-four 'luminous spirits', then visualises a 'child' in his own lower *dantian* and moves him to the central and the upper *dantian*. Transformed into a Real Man (*zhenren*) dressed in red, this deity submits a petition to the gods of the Golden Portal (Jinque), which – like Fengdu in the example above – is also interiorised and symbolically located in the pearl-shaped pin of the priest's crown.[102]

Whether the priest, in visualising the 'inner child' within his Cinnabar Fields, is practising a form of inner alchemy, or whether he is performing the practices of early Daoist meditation under a different context that provides them with a different meaning, is a point that would require attention but that cannot be discussed within the limits of the present study. The examples shown above suggest, though, that just as Shangqing played a crucial historical role in handing down earlier meditation traditions to *neidan*, Lingbao played a similar role in passing them to Daoist ritual, where they survive to the present day.

Neglected by the *Cantong qi*, and replaced by other images in the *neidan* practices associated with it, the inner gods, thus, continue to perform the task of relating our world to the world above us.

Notes

This study develops some themes examined in the final chapter of my *Great Clarity: Daoism and Alchemy in Medieval China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005). I am grateful to Monica Esposito, Elena Valussi and Carl Bielefeldt for their valuable criticism and suggestions.

1 *Huangdi jiuding shendan jingjue* (DZ 885), 1:3a. In translating 'covets the Medicine of Life' I read *yao* for *le*.

2 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 5–7. The Purple Chamber is identified as the gallbladder in sec. 37. Here and below I refer to the section numbers in the text of the *Laozi zhongjing* found in *Yunji qiqian* (Seven Lots from the Bookcase of the Clouds; DZ 1032), *j*. 18–19. The independent edition in the Daoist Canon (DZ 1168) is virtually identical to the text in the *Yunji qiqian* but is entitled *Laojun zhongjing* (Central Scripture of Lord Lao).

3 Michel Strickmann, 'On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching', in Holmes Welch and Anna K. Seidel (eds), *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion*

(New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 123–92. See especially pp. 169–78; the quotation above is from p. 178.

4 Isabelle Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing dans l'histoire du taoïsme* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 176–80.

5 Sakade Yoshinobu, 'Zui-Tō jidai ni okeru fukutan to naikan to naitan', in Sakade (ed.), *Chūgoku kodai yōsei shisō no sōgōteki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hirakawa shuppansha, 1988), pp. 566–99.

6 Katō Chie, '*Rōshi chūkyō* to naitan shisō no genryū', *Tōhō shūkyō*, 87 (1996), 21–38.

7 It should be noted that this description applies to 'alchemy' in the conventional sense of the term. The same emblems, alchemical or cosmological, can also be used to represent the identity of the Dao and the cosmos, or the absolute and the relative, without distinction between *waidan* and *neidan* and, indeed, without the need for either. The *Cantong qi* is primarily concerned with the exposition of this doctrine, while the related *waidan* and *neidan* texts discuss its application in the sphere of the practice. I return to this point below.

8 On the two *waidan* subtraditions outlined above see Pregadio, 'Elixirs and Alchemy', in Livia Kohn (ed.), *Daoism Handbook* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), pp. 165–95 (especially pp. 179–85). The 'three' in the title of the *Cantong qi* is explicated by several commentators as Daoism, the system of the *Book of Changes* and alchemy; by others as Heaven, Earth and humanity.

9 See Pregadio, 'The Early History of the *Zhouyi cantong qi*', *Journal of Chinese Religions*, 30 (2002), 149–76.

10 As I show in the article cited in the previous note, around 500 CE the *Cantong qi* is mentioned for the first time in relation to the compounding of elixirs in a *waidan* context; this suggests that by that time at least its doctrinal principles were applied to alchemy. Whether forms of *waidan*, on the one hand, or inner practice, on the other, based on the same doctrines as those incorporated in the *Cantong qi* existed before that time is, at present, impossible to ascertain historically. To my knowledge, no extant source contains traces of such practices.

11 I am grateful to James Robson for discussing the location of Mount Tianzhu with me. This name refers to different mountains, a feature related to the shifts of location of the southern sacred mountain (Nanyue). In 'Elixirs and Alchemy' (p. 167), I mistakenly identified Tianzhu as one of the mountains in the Taishan range of Shandong.

12 The *Great Clarity* survives in fragments quoted in the *Taiqing jing tianshi koujue* (DZ 883), compiled not later than the mid-seventh century. The *Nine Elixirs* is included in the *Huangdi jiuding shendan jingjue* (see note 1 above), a *waidan* compilation written for Tang Gaozong (r. 649–683). The *Golden Liquor* is extant in the *Baopu zi shenxian jinzhuo jing* (DZ 917) with a commentary dating from *c*.500 CE. On these and other Taiqing texts see Pregadio, *Great Clarity*.

13 *Baopu zi shenxian jinzhuo jing*, 1:7a–b.

14 *Huangdi jiuding shendan jingjue*, 1:13b.

15 *Baopu zi shenxian jinzhuo jing*, 1:6b–7a. The final part of the first method in the *Nine Elixirs* (*Huangdi jiuding shendan jingjue*, 1:5b) also refers to the malleability of alchemical gold, which suggests that casting tools was one of its uses.

16 See Anna Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao tseu dans le Taoïsme des Han* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1969), pp. 47–8, 128.

17 See Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao tseu*, pp. 44, 123. The Three Luminaries are the Sun, the Moon and the five planets. The Four Numina are the emblematic animals of the four directions (green dragon for the east, vermilion bird for the south, white tiger for the west and turtle-snake for the north).

18 See Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao tseu*, pp. 58–9; and Donald Holzman, 'The Wang Ziqiao Stele', *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, 47, 2 (1991), 77–83, p. 79. On the term 'passing through' in relation to meditation practices, see below, pp. 147–8.
19 See Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao tseu*, p. 69.
20 The *Huangdi neijing lingshu* (Congshu jicheng edn), sec. 33, defines the Four Seas as the Ocean of Blood (*xuehai*, heart), the Ocean of Pneuma (*qihai*, kidneys), the Ocean of Marrow (*suihai*, brain) and the Ocean of the Five Grains (*wugu zhi hai*, spleen). The same list of the *Huangdi neijing* is found in one of the *neidan* works included in the late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century *Xiuzhen shishu* (DZ 263), 21:2a. The *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 37, states that 'the stomach is the upper ocean' and 'the abdomen is the lower ocean'.
21 Rao Zongyi, *Laozi xiang'er zhu jiaozheng* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), p. 14; Stephen R. Bokenkamp, with a contribution from Peter Nickerson, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 92. The *Laozi* sentence is found in sec. 11 of the current text. I quote Bokenkamp's translation, which renders it according to its understanding in the *Xiang'er*. More often, the sentence is interpreted as meaning 'the benefit lies in what is there, but the use lies in what is not there', an aphorism illustrated in the *Laozi* by the examples of the empty space in a vase or in a room, and later borrowed by the *Cantong qi* to support the notion that Non-being (*wu*) is the function (or 'operation', 'use', *yong*) of Being (*you*).
22 *Laozi xiang'er zhu*, p. 12; trans. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, p. 89.
23 *Laozi xiang'er zhu*, p. 12; trans. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, p. 89.
24 Wang Ming, *Taiping jing hejiao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 72:292; translated from the Chinese by Isabelle Robinet, *Taoist Meditation: The Mao-shan Tradition of Great Purity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 64.
25 *Taiping jing*, 71:283; see Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, p. 65.
26 Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi (eds), *Isho shūsei* (Tokyo: Meitoku shuppansha, 1971–88), vol. 6, p. 93. See Anna Seidel, 'Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments: Taoist Roots in the Apocrypha', in Michel Strickmann (ed.), *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of Rolf A. Stein* (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1981–5), vol. 2, pp. 291–371, p. 322; and Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, vol. 1, pp. 29, 63.
27 *Lingbao wufu xu* (DZ 388), 1:21a–b. A similar list of inner gods, whose origin could be the same as the ones in the *Dragon-fish* and the *Prolegomena*, is quoted as coming from the *Dongshen jing* in *Wushang biyao* (DZ 1138), 5:12b–15b; see John Lagerwey, *Wu-shang pi-yao: Somme taoïste du VIe siècle* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1981), pp. 79–80. *Dongshen jing* refers to the corpus attached to the *Script of the Three Sovereigns* (*Sanhuang wen*), which represents another textual and ritual tradition that incorporates the lore of the apocrypha.
28 *Bawei zhaolong miaojing* (DZ 361), 2:13a; see Isabelle Robinet, *Taoism: Growth of a Religion* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 228.
29 Wang Ming, *Baopu zi neipian jiaoshi* (second revised edn, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 18:324.
30 *Baopu zi*, 6:128. Initial Green is the first stage of life after the joining of Original Yin and Yang. A few lines before this passage, the sentences dealing with the 'two mountains' (*ershan*) are also related to meditation practices. A fourth relevant passage is in *Baopu zi*, 5:111. See James Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion in the China of AD 320: The Nei P'ien of Ko Hung (Pao-p'u tzu)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 120–1 and 99–100, respectively.
31 As shown by illustrations of the inner body as a mountain with peaks, watercourses and palaces, and even more by the well known *Neijing tu*, there is no

contradiction between the two representations, which do not constitute alternative models. See Catherine Despeux, *Immortelles de la Chine ancienne: Taoïsme et alchimie féminine* (Puiseaux: Pardès, 1990), pp. 194–8, on the body as a mountain, and Despeux, *Taoïsme et corps humain: Le Xiuzhen tu* (Paris: Guy Trédaniel, 1994), pp. 44–8, on the *Neijing tu*. On the 'inner landscape', with particular reference to the *Central Scripture*, see Kristofer Schipper (trans. Karen C. Duval), *The Taoist Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 100–12.

32 *Baopu zi*, 18:323. Although Ge Hong mentions only the first three chambers, their names match those given in later sources, which describe nine. The third and central one is the upper *dantian* proper.

33 *Baopu zi*, 18:325–6; Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine, and Religion*, pp. 305–6.

34 *Baopu zi*, 18:326.

35 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 3, 11, 17, 25, 27, 30 and 36 for the Yellow Court; sec. 3, 17, 20, 23, 26, 32, 35, 36, 45 and 50 for the Cinnabar Field; sec. 3–5, 11, 19, 23, 28, 36, 37, 39 and 40 for the Purple Chamber.

36 *Huangting jing*, 'Inner' version, sec. 2 for the Hut and the Cinnabar Field, sec. 4 for the Yellow Court and sec. 23 for the Purple Chamber; 'Outer' version, 32a and 54b for the Hut, 29a, 30a and 53b for the Yellow Court and 29b and 30b for the Cinnabar Field. References to the *Huangting jing* here and below are to the section number of the 'Inner' version and the page number of the 'Outer' version as found in *Yunji qiqian*, 11:1a–12:27b and 12:28a–56b, respectively.

37 The *Central Scripture* mentions the heaven of Great Clarity in sec. 1–3, 5, 13, 32 and 55. The approximate date of the text is also indicated by passages shared with the *Lingbao wufu xu*; compare *Wufu xu*, 1:18b–19b with sec. 34 and 35, 1:20b–21a with sec. 14 and 37, 1:21a–b with sec. 26 and 1:21b with sec. 21 and 22. Other evidence for a late Han date is provided by Kristofer Schipper in his 'The Inner World of the *Laozi zhongjing*', in Huang Chun-chieh and Erik Zürcher (eds), *Time and Space in Chinese Culture* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), pp. 114–31, especially pp. 118–19. Maeda Shigeki, however, has suggested that the shared passages derive from a third shared source, and has dated the *Central Scripture* to around 500 CE; see his '*Rōshi chūkyō* oboegaki' (Notes on the *Laozi zhongjing*), in Sakade, *Chūgoku kodai yōsei shisō no sōgōteki kenkyū*, pp. 474–502, especially pp. 491–7. The relation between the *Central Scripture* and the *Prolegomena* is examined in detail by John Lagerwey, who also accepts a late Han date for the *Central Scripture*; see his 'Deux écrits taoïstes anciens', *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, 14 (2004).

38 Obviously, those who had received the transmission of the relevant practices could decipher the terminology and imagery of this work, but the text as we have it is primarily a literary work. This is also suggested by the fact that the 'Inner' version states four times that it should be recited (*yong*) or chanted (*song*) rather than used for meditation practices. See sec. 1 ('This is called a Jade Writ and deserves to be studied in detail / If you recite it ten thousand times, you will rise to the Three Heavens'), sec. 21 ('By meditating on and reciting this Jade Writ, you will enter into Highest Clarity'), sec. 24 ('Why would you not ascend a mountain and chant my Writ?') and sec. 36 ('Perform ablutions to reach complete purity, and discard fat and spicy food / Enter the Chamber, face east and chant this Jade Book'). Isabelle Robinet's views on this text were unambiguous: the *Yellow Court*, she wrote, 'was not written to expose or explicate anything' (*Taoist Meditation*, p. 58).

39 The issues surrounding the relation of the two versions to each other cannot be approached within the limits of the present study. Here I can only note that the

traces of a Shangqing influence on the 'Inner' version do not go much beyond the mentions of the heaven of Highest Clarity (Shangqing; see the previous note) and of the *Dadong zhenjing* (see sec. 36). As I remark below, it is unclear whether the allusion to generating an 'inner body' in the 'Inner' version reflects a direct Shangqing influence.

40 Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, pp. 48–54; the quotation is from p. 50.

41 See Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, vol. 1, pp. 29, 63.

42 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 39: 'The Dao is the self (*wu*); he is the Supreme Lord of the Central Ultimate'.

43 *Huangting jing*, 'Inner' version, sec. 8.

44 *Huangting jing*, 'Inner' version, sec. 9–14. A verse in sec. 14 reads: 'The Palace of the Department of the Gallbladder is the essence of the Six Receptacles'. On the gallbladder as representing the 'six receptacles', see Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, pp. 66–7, and Despeux, *Taoïsme et corps humain*, pp. 110–12.

45 *Huangting jing*, 'Inner' version, sec. 9, 11, 15, 17 and 20. Other texts describe White Origin and Blossomless as also related to the lungs and the liver, respectively. See Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, pp. 384–5, and Despeux, *Taoïsme et corps humain*, pp. 135–8.

46 The *Yellow Court* does not give details on the twenty-four *jing*. On their locations and names in texts belonging or attached to the Shangqing and Lingbao corpora, respectively, see Mugitani Kunio, '*Kōtei naikei kyō* shiron', *Tōyō bunka*, 62 (1981), 29–59, pp. 46–8; and Wang Ming, '*Huangting jing* kao', in *Daojia he daojiao sixiang yanjiu* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1984), pp. 324–71, pp. 340–3.

47 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 11.

48 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 39. For similar practices see especially sec. 21, 30 and 34–36. Katō Chie provides an excellent guide to reading these and related passages in her '*Rōshi chūkyō* to naitan shisō no genryū'.

49 *Huangting jing*, 'Inner' version, sec. 2.

50 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 51. On the corresponding *neidan* practice, see Despeux, *Taoïsme et corps humain*, pp. 152–8.

51 On the role played by the salivary juices in the practices of the *Scripture of the Yellow Court* see Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, pp. 90–4.

52 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 25.

53 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 11.

54 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 28. The note with the variant name of the god is found in the text. On this passage see Kristofer Schipper, 'Le Calendrier de Jade: note sur le *Laozi zhongjing*', *Nachrichten der Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natür- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens*, 125 (1979), 75–80, pp. 77–8.

55 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 21. The same sentence, without the reference to meditation, is in the opening passages of the *Scripture of the Nine Elixirs*; see *Huangdi jiuding shendan jingjue*, 1:1a. See also sec. 38 of the *Central Scripture*, which says: 'If you constantly ingest pneuma, you will obtain a long life and be a Divine Immortal. If you visualise the gods and ingest the elixir, you will become a Real Man'.

56 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 12. The initial part of this passage defies a proper translation, for Laozi (the speaker of the *Central Scripture*) refers to himself in both the first and the third persons. He introduces himself as 'I' (*wu*) and says that he resides in every human being ('human beings also have me', i.e. 'him'); he is, therefore, one's own 'self' (*wu*) represented by the Red Child. For similar statements, see sec. 23 ('Child-Cinnabar, Original Yang, is the self'), 37 ('the stomach is the Great Granary, the residence of the Prince, the hut of the self'), 37 ('Child-Cinnabar is the self') and 39 ('the Dao is the self').

57 See Schipper, 'Le Calendrier de Jade', p. 76. The Red Child's father is also called Lingyang ziming, a name that in *waidan* is a synonym of mercury.
58 *Huangting jing*, 'Inner' version, sec. 13, 17 and 35; 'Outer' version, 34a. The Red Child also appears as Zidan in *Lingbao wufu xu*, 1:13a. On his images in the *Central Scripture*, see Maeda, '*Rōshi chūkyō* oboegaki', pp. 488–90, and Lagerwey's study quoted in note 37 above.
59 *Huangting jing*, 'Inner' version, sec. 20.
60 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 17; see also Despeux, *Taoïsme et corps humain*, pp. 75–6. On the physiology and the imagery of the Caudal Funnel, a point at the level of the coccyx, see Despeux, *Taoïsme et corps humain*, pp. 81–5. The corresponding passage in the independent edition of the *Central Scripture* in the Daoist Canon (DZ 1168) has *jilü* (lumbar vertebra) for *weilü*. I am grateful to Monica Esposito for providing me with details on this passage.
61 Schipper, 'Le Calendrier de Jade', p. 76.
62 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 34 and 35. These passages also appear in the *Lingbao wufu xu*, 1:18b–19b.
63 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 2, 8 and 22; *Huangting jing*, 'Inner' version, sec. 7, 9, 21 and 25. The term does not appear in the 'Outer' version of the *Huangting jing*.
64 *Baopu zi*, 16:287–8; Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine, and Religion*, p. 270. The luting mud is usually called *liuyi ni* (Mud of the Six-and-One) or *shenni* (Divine Mud). Sealing the mouth of a crucible with mud in *waidan* is called *feng*; the synonym given in the *Baopu zi* is *fengjun niwan*.
65 On the meanings and associations of the word *dan*, see Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, chapter 4.
66 See especially Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, and Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, vol. 1, pp. 161–85.
67 On this third major inner pantheon, after those of the *Central Scripture* and the *Yellow Court*, see Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, pp. 100–3, and Mugitani Kunio, '*Daidō shinkyō sanjūkyū shō o megutte*', in Yoshikawa Tadao (ed.), *Chūgoku ko dōkyōshi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1992), pp. 55–87 (especially pp. 75–82). On the deities mentioned in another revealed Shangqing scripture, the *Lingshu ziwen*, see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, pp. 284–5, 326–7.
68 *Shangqing dadong zhenjing* (DZ 6), 6:13b–14a.
69 This view of the gestation process and its re-enactment in meditation is the topic of the *Shangqing jiudan shanghua taijing zhongji jing* (DZ 1382). The passage quoted above is found at 3a–b. On this text see Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, pp. 139–43, and *La révélation du Shangqing*, vol. 1, pp. 78–9, and vol. 2, pp. 171–4. Other Shangqing sources locate the nodes in twelve loci of the body. On the Shangqing views of the embryo, and their relation to earlier descriptions of the gestation process, see Katō Chie, 'Tai no shisō', in Noguchi Tetsurō (ed.), *Dōkyō no seimeikan to shintairon* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku shuppansha, 2000), pp. 100–19; on the 'nodes' see pp. 106–12.
70 See Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, vol. 1, pp. 172–3.
71 See Robinet, 'Randonnées extatiques des taoïstes dans les astres', *Monumenta Serica*, 32 (1976), 159–273 (especially pp. 159–219), and the summary in *Taoist Meditation*, pp. 187–200. Other examples are given by Sakade, 'Zui-Tō jidai ni okeru fukutan to naikan to naitan', pp. 157–60.
72 Robinet, 'Randonnées extatiques', pp. 178–84, and *Taoist Meditation*, pp. 193–5. This view of the alchemical process is also shared by the *waidan* texts based on the *Cantong qi*.
73 For discussions of relevant texts see Strickmann, 'On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching', and Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, chapters 3 and 8. One of the main sources in this respect is translated by Bokenkamp in *Early Daoist Scriptures*,

pp. 331–9; see also Bokenkamp's remarks on the relation between *waidan* and alchemical imagery at pp. 289–95.

74 Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, vol. 1, pp. 35–48. On Ge Hong's views of the relations among alchemy, meditation and other practices prevalent at his time in Jiangnan, see Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, chapter 7.

75 *Zhen'gao* (DZ 1016), 5:11b.

76 On the main features of the Three Caverns system see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, pp. 190–4; on its doctrinal origins and antecedents, see Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, pp. 75–85.

77 See Pregadio, 'The Early History of the *Zhouyi cantong qi*'.

78 As elsewhere in Daoism, this ontology is also a cosmogony: the same hierarchical states can be arranged into a 'chronological' sequence to form a description of how the cosmos takes shape. This is important for alchemy, as the compounding of the elixir can be associated with different cosmogonic stages, sequentially traced in reverse.

79 To a certain extent, a similar change of focus characterises the formation of correlative cosmology itself in the third to second century BCE. Michael Puett has noted an early instance in relation to the cosmology of the *Taiyi shengshui*, a late fourth-century BCE manuscript from Guodian. He remarks: 'In this cosmology, natural phenomena are not controlled by individuated spirits. Rather, the authors of this text appropriated divinities and spirits and made them into cosmological forces . . . any attempt to manipulate the spirits of the world through divination and sacrifices would be useless within such a cosmology'. For a similar reason, the same could be true, according to the *Cantong qi*, for meditation on the inner gods. See Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-divinization in Early China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), pp. 160–4 (quotation from p. 163).

80 *Huangting jing*, 'Inner' version, sec. 7; *Cantong q*i, sec. 7. On these borrowings see Pregadio, 'The Early History of the *Zhouyi cantong qi*', and *Great Clarity*, chapter 12. References to the *Cantong qi* here and below are to the redaction by Chen Zhixu (1289 to after 1335), usually entitled *Zhouyi cantong qi fenzhang zhu* and available in several editions and reprints, including those of the *Siku quanshu* and the *Daozang jiyao*.

81 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 26, 28 and 42.

82 *Cantong qi*, sec. 6. The phrase within quotation marks comes from the 'Wenyan zhuan' of the *Book of Changes*, on the *kun* hexagram.

83 *Cantong qi*, sec. 18.

84 The description of the moon cycle is the main focus of sec. 4 and 18, but the joining of the Sun and the Moon as generating the time cycles is mentioned in several other sections of the *Cantong qi*. For a brief description of the *najia* and other time cycles employed in the *Cantong qi*, see my 'The Representation of Time in the *Zhouyi cantong qi*', *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, 8 (1995), 155–73.

85 *Laozi zhongjing*, sec. 26: 'If you want to practise the Dao, you should first of all pass through the viscera and see their deities'.

86 *Huangting jing*, 'Outer' version, 37a: 'Pass through the five viscera in contemplation, and observe their patterns (*jiedu*) / When the six receptacles are cultivated and controlled, they are as untainted as white silk'.

87 *Cantong qi*, sec. 8. The first part of this passage is in prose, followed by two quatrains in five-character verses.

88 See Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, pp. 187–225. Other redactions of the *Cantong qi* read *neishi* (inner observation) for *neiguan*; this term is used in various sources in relation to visualisations of the viscera.

89 See Ngo Van Xuyet, *Divination, magie et politique dans la Chine ancienne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France), pp. 194–6; and Marc Kalinowski, *Cosmologie et divination dans la Chine ancienne: Le Compendium des Cinq Agents (Wuxing dayi, VIe siècle)* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1991), pp. 217–19.
90 Similar warnings about the performance of incorrect practices, or the incorrect interpretation of certain notions and terms, will continue in later traditions related to the *Cantong qi*, sometimes becoming even more radical. I plan to devote a separate study to this topic.
91 Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, vol. 1, pp. 74–80.
92 In *waidan*, this change is reflected in the adoption of mercury and lead as the two metals that, in their refined or 'authentic' state, respectively represent Original Yin and Original Yang. These two metals are the main *waidan* emblems adopted in *neidan*.
93 Robinet, 'Original Contributions of Neidan to Taoism and Chinese Thought', in Livia Kohn (ed.), *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1989), pp. 297–330 (especially p. 301); see also *Taoism: Growth of a Religion*, p. 217.
94 See Livia Kohn, 'Taoist Insight Meditation: the Tang Practice of Neiguan', in Kohn (ed.), *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques*, pp. 193–224, p. 205.
95 See Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, pp. 458–60, and Wang Ming, '*Huangting jing* kao', pp. 340–3.
96 See Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, pp. 385, 414.
97 *Wushang biyao*, 51:3b; Bokenkamp, 'The Purification Ritual of the Luminous Perfected', in Donald S. Lopez Jr (ed.), *Religions of China in Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 268–77 (see p. 273). See also Lagerwey, *Wu-shang pi-yao*, pp. 158–9.
98 John Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 121–3; Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, pp. 96–7.
99 *Shangqing lingbao dafa* (DZ 1221), 39:2a and 39:4a–b. See Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual*, pp. 155–9, whose translation I have quoted with minor changes to match the terminology used above.
100 *Ziran jiutian shengshen zhangjing* (DZ 318), 10a.
101 See Judith Boltz, 'Opening the Gates of Purgatory: A Twelfth-century Taoist Meditation Technique for the Salvation of Lost Souls', in Strickmann (ed.), *Tantric and Taoist Studies*, vol. 2, pp. 487–511. A different version of the same rite is translated in Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual*, pp. 233–4. On the interiorisation of Fengdu, see Despeux, *Taoïsme et corps humain*, pp. 97–9.
102 See Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual*, p. 132, and Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, pp. 96–7.