



Facets of Taoism

Essays In Chinese Religion

Edited by
Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel

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Holmes Welch

Anna Seidel

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Introduction

CONFUCIANISM, BUDDHISM, AND TAOISM are sometimes called the three “great traditions” of China. They shared—and interacted with—many elements of popular religion. They were often united and combined in syncretistic sects, particularly after the Sung dynasty (960–1278).

They were also combined in the daily reality of Chinese life. During the last millennium most Chinese, including many of the literati, were Confucians in their social life and Buddhists or Taoists in self-cultivation and religious observances. There is only limited truth in the idea (implanted by the literati in Western residents in China and in scholars of China) that Confucianism was the doctrine of the ruling class, whereas Buddhism and Taoism appealed solely to the ignorant masses.¹ Furthermore, each of the three traditions had borrowed so much from the others that, except for terminology, there was little that was unique to any one of them.

Of these three traditions Taoism was, until recently, the one on which the least research had been done. The Bellagio Conference in 1968 brought scholars together for the first time to discuss Taoist studies.² It was felt by all participants to have been a successful harvest in a whole new field of investigation into Chinese culture, and plans were soon made for a sequel to it.

To begin with, because no senior Japanese specialists on Taoism had come to Bellagio and because research on Taoism was most developed in Japan (where the Taoist Studies Society had some three hundred members), the organizers preferred a Japanese site for the second conference. A budget ceiling made this impossible until Professor Tadao Sakai offered to raise the funds that were needed. He set up a committee that assumed

1. For a description of how this implantation succeeded with respect to Buddhism, see Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 202–53.

2. The first Taoism Conference, held at Bellagio, Italy, in September 1968, was sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies. Some of its papers were published in *History of Religions* (Chicago), 9.2–3:107–279 (1969/70).

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responsibility for all local arrangements and expenses. Funds came from several generous donors including the Ministry of Education and the Mitsubishi Corporation. International House of Japan provided a secretariat under the able direction of Mikio Kato. The selection of participants, however, and the conduct of the actual sessions remained the responsibility of the steering committee representing the sponsors, namely, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Center for the Study of World Religions, and the East Asian Research Center (both of Harvard University). The following scholars participated: T. Sakai and H. Miyakawa (Japan), J. Needham (Great Britain), M. Kaltenmark, R. A. Stein, C. L. Hou, and K. M. Schipper (France), A. Seidel (Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient), M. Porkert (Germany), J. L. Dull, R. B. Mather, N. Sivin, M. Strickmann, and H. H. Welch (United States).

The conference sessions were held during the first week of September 1972, in Tateshina, Nagano prefecture. The task of English-Japanese interpretation was very competently dealt with by Miss Chie Adachi, assisted, as far as specific Taoist terminology was concerned, by the expert and polyglot skills of the two scholars Fumimasa and Shigemasa Fukui. Professor Tetsurō Noguchi kindly assumed the task of tape-recording the discussions.³

A word must be said about an empty chair. Taoism is Chinese, and yet no senior Chinese scholar was among those present. L. S. Yang of Harvard had originally accepted the invitation, but ill health kept him away. For two years efforts had been made to invite Ch'en Kuo-fu, probably the leading authority on Taoism in mainland China. These efforts proved unsuccessful.⁴ Other Chinese scholars were invited or considered, but time

3. The rapporteurs were Anna Seidel, Farzeen Hussein, and Donald B. Wagner, with assistance from Judith Berling. A set of their abstracts of the conference discussions has been deposited with the East Asian Research Center, 1737 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, Mass. 01238.

4. In 1940-41 Ch'en Kuo-fu 陳國符 coauthored two articles in English on Chinese alchemy with Tenney L. Davis, Professor of Organic Chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1919-42). By 1942 he was back in China teaching chemistry and studying the Taoist Canon under Lung Ch'üan-chen 龍泉鎮. In 1949 he published *Tao-tsang yüan-liu k'ao* 道藏源流考 (Studies in the Evolution of the Taoist Canon), the scope of which was broader than the title indicates. It is, still today, regarded by many students of Taoism as the most valuable Chinese study of Taoist scriptures together with Fu Ch'in-chia 傅勤家, *Chung-kuo Tao-chiao shih* 中國道教史 (The History of Taoism in China [Shanghai, 1937]). In December 1963, just as the political relaxation of the early sixties was coming to an end, Ch'en brought out a new and enlarged edition of his history of the canon, published in Peking. In 1972 he was reported to be teaching chemistry at the University of Tientsin.

In hopes of getting approval to invite a scholar of Ch'en's caliber to attend the second

or other obstacles made it impossible for any of them to attend. So, much to the regret of the sponsors and participants, no senior Chinese scholar came to Tateshina. Also regretted was the absence of the eminent scholar Yoshitoyo Yoshioka, whose participation had been one of the purposes of holding the conference in Japan. The editors were, however, fortunate to obtain his permission to include in this volume a translation of his article dealing with his experiences in a Taoist monastery in Peking. The only other Japanese to have had extended personal experience of Taoist monastic life is the Reverend Kenryū Igarashi, a Shingon priest, who attended the conference as a specially invited guest, bringing along his Taoist monk's robe and black cap of the Ch'üan-chen sect which he had received in the T'ai-ch'ing Kung in Shen-yang in the late 1930s.

Most of the conference papers were submitted in preliminary form. There were two additional studies to be translated from Japanese. The editorial process was therefore long and difficult. Of the thirteen papers contributed, six have, for different reasons, not been included in this volume.⁵ They have, however, been published in the counterpart volume in Japanese.⁶

The Focus of the Conference

Taoism is often thought of as originating with the philosophical writings

Taoism conference, Frederick Burkhardt, the president of the ACLS, wrote twice to Kuo Mo-jo, president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, first on September 23, 1971, and second on March 3, 1972. This was just after the Sino-American agreement of February 27, 1972 regarding the facilitation of cultural exchanges. Unfortunately, this initiative did not produce any results, and no scholar from China attended the Taoism conference at Tateshina. It is also to be noted that no new research in the field of specifically religious studies has been published in mainland China for many years.

5. The papers omitted are: J. Needham, "The Social Aspects of Taoist Alchemy" (sections of which have appeared in *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 5, pt. 3 [Cambridge, 1976]). T. Sakai, "The Morality Books (*shan-shu*) and the Educated Commoners of Late Ming and Early Ch'ing Society"; J. L. Dull, "Taoist Trends among Confucian Thinkers"; M. Porkert, "The Ethical Make-up of the Taoist Insurgent according to the *P'ing-yao chuan*" (cf. Patrick Hanan, "The Composition of the *P'ing yao chuan*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 31: 201-19 [1971]); K. M. Schipper, "Some Remarks on the Function of the 'Inspector of Merits'"; N. Sivin, "Folk Medicine and Classical Medicine in Traditional China: a Contribution to the Definition of 'Taoist.'" The publication in this volume of a different paper by M. Strickmann will be explained below, as will the addition of articles by T. Sakai, N. Ōfuchi, and Y. Yoshioka.

6. Tadao Sakai, ed., *Dōkyō no sōgō teki kenkyū* 道教の総合的研究 (A synthesis of studies on Taoism; Tokyo, 1977). This volume includes all the papers contributed to the conference except that of Hou Ching-lang. In addition, it contains a study by Yoshitoyo Yoshioka on the *Ho-shang kung Commentary* of the *Lao tzu* ("Rōshi Kajōkō hon to dōkyō" 老子河上公本と道教) and an article by T. Sakai and Fumimasa Fukui entitled "What is Taoism?" ("Dōkyō to wa nani ka—Dōkyō, dōka, dōjutsu, dōshi" 道教とは何か—道教・道家・道術・道士).

of Lao-tzu and continuing in modern times with the parish priests of the Celestial Master's sect and the celibate monks whose life is described toward the end of this volume. Some scholars now find in the *Lao-tzu* not merely philosophy but political science, instructions on self-cultivation, descriptions of trance, and traces of shamanism. In the second century of our era, several hundred years after the *Lao-tzu* (or *Tao-te ching*) was written, it became the sacred scripture of Taoist rebels who set up an independent state in western China. Their movement was known as the "Way of the Five Pecks of Rice," these five pecks being the annual tithe its followers paid to their leaders.

At the same time (A.D. 184) Taoist rebels in eastern China were threatening to overthrow the central government. They were called the "Yellow Turbans" (from their headgear) and their sacred text was the *T'ai-p'ing ching* or "Scripture of Great Peace." A text with the same title survives, but it appears to have been connected not so much with the Yellow Turbans in the east, who called their movement the "Way of Great Peace," as with the Five Pecks of Rice in the West. This *T'ai-p'ing ching* is the subject of the opening article in the present volume, by M. Kaltenmark. Readers who find themselves becoming confused by the maze of similar names in separate movements (names of leaders as well as of texts) may be helped by what Kaltenmark has written about the subject in his popular book on Taoism.⁷

Some passages Kaltenmark quotes from the *T'ai-p'ing ching* are sui generis. Others are a mixture of ideas that sound like naïve echoes of Confucians, Mohists, cosmologists, and different schools of Buddhism. One passage, for example, states that merchants belong to the lowest social class. The idea is Confucian, but not its rationale—namely, that there must be circulation among Heaven, Earth, and Man, and among men there must be circulation of goods with which merchants interfere by hoarding (see Kaltenmark's article, p. 34). Offerings to the dead must be modest (p. 36), not for the Mohist reason that exorbitant offerings mean waste, but, first, because it is wrong to make *yin* (the realm of the dead) superior to *yang* (the realm of the living);⁸ second,

7. See M. Kaltenmark, *Lao tseu et le taoisme* (Paris, 1965), pp. 142–43; translated in Kaltenmark, *Lao-tzu and Taoism* (Stanford, 1969), pp. 113–15. The English edition omits all the splendid illustrations of the French. On the Taoist movements discussed in Kaltenmark's article, see also Holmes Welch, *Taoism, the Parting of the Way* (Boston, 1965), pp. 113–18; and, for the fullest treatment, see R. A. Stein, "Remarques sur les mouvements du taoïsme politico-religieux au II^e siècle ap. J.-C.," *T'oung Pao* 50.1–3:1–78 (1963).

8. Compare the place where "the bad young men" sit, the South-Western direction where the *yin* is increasing and the *yang* is decreasing (p. 33). In the *T'ai-p'ing ching* we see that *yin* and *yang* have already begun to evolve from complementary forces to good versus evil.

because the dead live in peace and joy below the earth (an archaic, pre-Buddhist concept) so that to lavish offerings on them would be to disturb them with the thought of returning to their soul tablets (as good Confucians hoped they would); and third, because if the spirits of dead ancestors could not eat up all the offerings put out for them, the unconsumed surplus would attract dangerous demons who might harm the community (early evidence of the Chinese people's preoccupation with the danger of demons).

The *T'ai-p'ing ching* states, like the *Mencius*, that when the ruler is good, all other nations hasten to submit to him of their own accord (Kaltenmark, p. 28), but the respect that it shows for other nations and their barbarian inhabitants is the reverse of what we find in *Mencius*.⁹

At a good many points the book seems Buddhist. A slave can become a god (Kaltenmark, n. 20) just as a dog can become a buddha. Those who refuse to teach the Tao are condemned (p. 33) like *pratyeka* buddhas in Mahāyāna texts. The Taoist notion of *ch'eng-fu*—inherited merit or guilt (p. 24)—has something in common with the Buddhist concept of karma, just as Buddhist reincarnation can be compared with the return to life of an ancestor's *ch'i* (n. 24). In the same way that Buddhist texts of the T'ien-t'ai school explain the apparent contradictions in the Buddha's teachings, so the *T'ai-p'ing ching* explains that Heaven teaches each of us only what we are capable of understanding and this is why different sages wrote different things (p. 25). The section entitled *Shih-t'se wen* (especially p. 39, b and g) advocates something like the Buddhist practice of reciting the name of Amitābha (introduced in the sixth century) and the incantation of mantras (introduced with Tantric Buddhism somewhat later). Yet none of these apparent similarities with Buddhism meant anything more than the fact that Buddhist ideas, as they reached the Chinese, seemed much less strange and more acceptable and offered a stronger challenge to indigenous systems. When it condemns "the four pernicious kinds of conduct" (p. 35), the *T'ai-p'ing ching* clearly displays a hostile rejection of Buddhism in whatever form Buddhism existed in China when the passage was written.

At other points the scripture sounds almost Marxist. All goods belong to the state (p. 35); the individual receives them according to his needs (p. 35) and produces them according to his means (p. 21). The ruler collects and distributes the opinions of the populace (pp. 28–29) rather as the People's Government did during the Great Leap Forward of 1958–59. This may be one reason why the *T'ai-p'ing ching* is one of the few ancient

9. For example, see *Mencius* III, 1. iv (Legge, pp. 253–54).

texts that has been collated, edited, and published in China since 1949 (see Kaltenmark, n. 2). Kaltenmark, however, is as skeptical of parallels with modern ideologies as with Buddhism. The *T'ai-p'ing ching* is not an antecedent of Mao's "little red book." Rather, it is a thesaurus of religious ideas that were current among the commoners of China in the period when they—the commoners—were becoming religiously conscious and active for the first time. This is what makes it so important: the book springs from a different social milieu from that of most other writings surviving from that period. It gives us an early glimpse outside the curtailed orthodox world of the literati.

Kaltenmark, although he studied the *T'ai-p'ing ching* for more than twenty years, refrained from publishing any of the results of his research until he wrote this article. That was due to the nature of the book. It is written in a peculiar language, often colloquial and repetitious. Some passages (like the *Shih-ts'e wen*) are so cryptic that Kaltenmark leaves them untranslated. Clearly he feels that the *T'ai-p'ing ching* is comprehensible only after the whole of it has been examined and considered. Yet even after doing so he has remained hesitant to draw conclusions about it. Some of his conclusions did not emerge until the conference discussion, which is reproduced after his article. The article itself is the fullest treatment of the *T'ai-p'ing ching* to appear so far in a Western language.¹⁰

In the two centuries following the end of their first rebellions, the Taoists became respectable citizens—so respectable that they seem to have been trying to outdo the Confucians in their condemnation of heresy and heterodoxy. Yet much of what they condemned can barely be distinguished from what they embraced. This anomaly is the theme of the next article, by R. A. Stein. He points out that there was continuous interpenetration of belief and practice among the different levels of society. This created a problem for people in the upper levels who wished to distinguish themselves from hoi polloi in matters of religion as in other matters. One lower-level practice was the "bloody sacrifice" of uncooked

10. It is briefly discussed in Vincent C. Y. Shih, "Some Chinese Rebel Ideologies," *T'oung Pao* 44:150-226 (1956); in Timoteus Pokora, "On the Origins of the Notions T'ai-p'ing and Ta-t'ung in Chinese Philosophy," *Archiv Orientalni* 29:448-54 (1961); in Wolfgang Bauer, *China und die Hoffnung auf Glück* (Munich, 1971), pp. 175-86; and in Yü Ying-shih, "Life and Immortality in Han China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25:84-86 (1964-65). Yü agrees with Kaltenmark about the early composition of the *TPC*, whereas Shih, Stein, and others date it as Six Dynasties. The controversy about whether it is an early work with later accretions or a later work incorporating earlier sections reminds one of the story about "Three in the Morning" in *Chuang-tzu* 2, 4.

meat to the divinities being worshipped. This kind of sacrifice was characteristic of what the upper-level Taoists called *yin-ssu* 淫祀, which Stein prefers to render as "excessive cults." (Another translation might be "promiscuous cults.")

Bloody sacrifices were not the only practice to which upper-level, orthodox Taoists objected. Like the Confucians, they believed that a man should worship solely his own ancestors and the gods of his own locality, and that he should eschew the worship of "foreign" gods or of any gods at all on days other than the appointed festivals (see Stein, pp. 66-67, 68, 78). Both these principles were flouted in the "excessive cults"; and so, when the orthodox Taoists had the power, they sometimes suppressed them and actually destroyed their temples (pp. 58, 67-68, 81). Sometimes they did not; and little difference can be seen in those they suppressed and those they allowed to continue. When suppression did occur, they justified it by saying that the offending cults had exacted from the people ruinous expenditures for sacrifice. (This is the same argument used for the same purpose today by government officials in both Taiwan and the Chinese mainland.)

Orthodox Taoists felt that such cults not only competed with their own but were embarrassingly similar. Yet they could not successfully resist the upward force of penetration of lower-level practices. Stein shows how a few such practices, such as religious banquets, were probably borrowed from the heterodox Taoists by the orthodox. Recalling Kaltenmark's article, one might ask: to which of the two categories—orthodox or heterodox—did the author or authors of the *T'ai-p'ing ching* belong? Stein, who dates it later than Kaltenmark, does not offer an opinion. He notes in passing that the *T'ai-p'ing ching*, like the *Pao-p'u-tzu*, condemns sacrifices to the divinities who cause illness or take possession of people, especially sacrifices to local, uncanonical gods (p. 62). On the other hand, it seems significant that whereas the *T'ai-p'ing ching* looks favorably on barbarians, some of the texts quoted by Stein warn against the mixing of Chinese with foreigners (p. 63). Perhaps future research will identify the social milieu which produced works as different as the *T'ai-p'ing ching*, the *San-t'ien nei-chieh ching*, the *Shen-chou ching*, and other Taoist scriptures frequently referred to by the authors of this volume.

The third article is by H. Miyakawa, an eminent authority on religion in the Six Dynasties, especially Taoism. He originally submitted to the conference a longer paper entitled "The Origin of Sun En's Rebellion and

its Relation to the Local Cults in the Lake P'o-yang Region." The editors felt that it comprised two separate articles on rather different topics, and so they decided, with the author's permission, to publish the second part only. One reason was that Sun En's rebellion had already been described in Western literature,¹¹ whereas the cults discussed by Miyakawa in this volume will be unfamiliar to readers who do not have access to the original Chinese sources.

The rebellion of Sun En in A.D. 304 was the third great uprising in Chinese history in which Taoists played a leading role. It offers another illustration of the elusive affinity between Taoism and rebellion, an affinity that has worried Chinese governments down through the early 1950s. Miyakawa suggests that Sun En's brand of Taoism was connected with the thaumaturgy of his father's master, Tu Chiung, and argues that this in turn was related to the cults of the tutelary divinities of the great P'o-yang Lake, which lies in northern Kiangsi and has its mouth on the Yangtze River. In the Six Dynasties especially, this lake afforded communication by water between east and west, north and south. Merchants and other travelers of the time believed that they could only cross it after propitiating the deities under whose authority it fell. Describing these deities takes Miyakawa into some curious byways of the history of religion in China. There was, for example, a belief in pythons as dangerous as the Scylla of the *Odyssey*—except that whereas Scylla had to thrust her long neck down to snap up the crewmen of Odysseus, the Chinese python could inhale them from a distance, or it could appear as a five-colored cloud onto which the victim would decorously step. Thus the horrible content of a legend was lost in its decoration, rather as in modern Chinese opera.

Miyakawa's conclusions can be read at the end of his article, but it may be helpful to supplement them with what he stated in the course of correspondence. The Sun En rebellion, he wrote, was a fratricidal war "fought between members of the orthodox Cheng-i Taoist school and its dissenters, a heterodox sect led by the Suns. . . . The Suns' religion had many points in common with shamanism, but it was at the same time reinforced by the Taoist doctrine transmitted from Tu Chiung." Here again is the theme explored by R. A. Stein: conflict between orthodox and heterodox Taoists. In this case, the heterodox Taoists do not seem to

11. See Werner Eichhorn, "Description of the Rebellion of Sun En and Earlier Taoist Rebellions," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 2.2:325-52 (1954) and "Nachträgliche Bemerkungen zum Aufstande des Sun En," *ibid.* 2.3:463-76 (1954). Miyakawa disagrees with Eichhorn on several points.

have favored bloody sacrifices of uncooked meat, nor does Miyakawa cite any instance in which their temples were destroyed by orthodox Taoists. Rather, the latter—or orthodox Buddhists—seem to have taken over certain temples and evicted the deities who “resided” there.

Taoist orthodoxy reached one of its peaks—of official acceptance, at least—under the Northern Wei ruler T'ai-wu (424–452). For the first time in Chinese history Taoism became the established religion of the land, espoused by the emperor himself.¹² Soon after he took the throne, T'ai-wu grew interested in the revelations of a Taoist recluse named K'ou Ch'ien-chih, and in 425 he bestowed on K'ou the title of “Celestial Master.” This title had originally been used by the Three Changs who led the Five-Pecks-of-Rice in western China two centuries earlier. In 440 T'ai-wu himself assumed the reign-name “Perfect Ruler of Great Peace” (T'ai-p'ing Chen-chün 太平眞君), thus appropriating the T'ai-p'ing phraseology that had been used by the other Three Changs, who had led the Yellow Turban rebellion in eastern China. By now, the descendants of the two groups had merged in a common religion, and Taoist priests (*tao-shih*)¹³ led the same kind of parishes in the same kinds of practice throughout much of China, east and west.

To this religion K'ou Ch'ien-chih added a superstructure of elaborate state rites designed to make the Northern Wei capital into the New Zion of Taoism. Naturally this brought him into competition with the Buddhists, who had been favored and supported by the two previous rulers of the dynasty. The emperor's closest adviser was Ts'ui Hao, the man who had originally recommended K'ou Ch'ien-chih to the court and remained his friend and patron. Ts'ui saw in Buddhism an obstacle to his dream of recreating an ideal Confucian society with everyone in his place. Therefore he persuaded the emperor to issue the series of decrees (A.D. 444–446) that brought about the first great persecution of Buddhism in China, when many monks were killed and monasteries destroyed. Some scholars have characterized Ts'ui as a narrow Confucian, but in fact he had many links with Taoism too—including an ancestor who was brother-in-law and successor to the Taoist rebel Sun En!

The intricate details of this story are clearly and elegantly presented by R. B. Mather in his article “K'ou Ch'ien-chih and the Taoist Theocracy

12. Earlier emperors like Wen-ti and Ching-ti had been interested in the teachings of Lao-tzu. In A.D. 166 the Emperor Huan personally made a sacrifice to the god Lao-tzu in the imperial palace: see Anna K. Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao tseu dans le taoïsme des Han* (Paris, 1969), pp. 36–38.

13. There is no satisfactory uniform translation of *tao-shih* 道士. It can refer to either married priests or celibate monks. The editors have usually left the term romanized.

at the Northern Wei Court 425-451," of which many of the details will be new to Western readers. The article's particular merit is that it utilizes an unusual episode in Chinese court history to flesh out what had been happening to Taoism as a whole from the third through the fifth centuries. Among the people there were communal religious feasts, rites of penitence, and sexual rites. On the part of the Taoist orthodox—the new orthodox—there were the promulgation of codes of conduct and the suppression of heterodox cults and practices (sexual rites as well as way-side shrines). At various levels of society there were utopian longings, sometimes focused on the notion of an ideal society in the West, toward which Lao-tzu had supposedly disappeared a thousand years earlier.

One current of Taoism that has not been mentioned so far is alchemy. The most famous early authority on Chinese alchemy was Ko Hung (fourth century), a part of whose *Pao-p'u-tzu* has now appeared in English translation.¹⁴ Another somewhat later alchemist was T'ao Hung-ching (456-536). He is usually thought of as a great scholarly compiler and codifier of Taoist texts, particularly of the Mao Shan school. The beginnings of the Mao Shan school were described in a paper contributed to the Tateshina conference by Michel Strickmann, "The Mao San Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy," which is to be published in the sinological journal *T'oung Pao*. The paper published here, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching," is complementary to that article, and the two together open up the whole field of Mao Shan studies, which until recently has almost been terra incognita for the Western reader—almost, but not entirely. G. Bertuccioli, who was unable to attend the conference, has published an account of his visit to Mao Shan in 1947, fully annotated and illustrated both with his own photographs and woodcuts from the *Mao-shan chih* 茅山志 of 1671.¹⁵

As the centuries passed, Taoism became ever more intertwined with popular practices such as divination, geomancy, and astrology. Until now scholars have emphasized the utilization of astrology in the art of government. It is stated in the classics that the imperial astrologer observed the stars and planets connected with the different fiefs so that "their pros-

14. J. R. Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine, and Religion in the China of 320; the Nei P'ien of Ko Hung (Pao P'u Tzu)* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969). The fullest treatment of Chinese alchemy is in Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 5, pt. 2 and 3 (Cambridge University Press, 1974, 1976). The bibliography directs the reader to almost everything available on the subject in Western languages, including the article by Strickmann here introduced.

15. See G. Bertuccioli, "Reminiscences of Mao Shan," *East and West* (Rome), n.s. 24.3-4:3-16 (September-December 1974).

perity or misfortune could be ascertained. He made prognostications, according to the twelve years (of the Jupiter cycle), of good and evil in the terrestrial world . . . In general he concerned himself with the five kinds of phenomena, so as to warn the emperor to come to the aid of the government, and to allow for variations in the ceremonies according to the circumstances."¹⁶ What this passage represents is the *ideal* of astrology in the Han dynasty. Then and later the *practice* was a little different. Its purpose was not "to warn the emperor to come to the aid of the government," but to enable his ministers better to restrain him from folly. That is, they would cite heavenly portents as arguments against imperial actions of which they disapproved.

Yet astrology was important to the common people too. This is demonstrated for the first time by C. L. Hou's article, "The Chinese Belief in Baleful Stars," in which he discusses three such stars or constellations. With regard to each, he first describes the modern beliefs and practices in Taiwan and then traces their history back to the Han dynasty. As a sinologist native to Taiwan (though trained in Paris), Hou is able to offer rich and authentic details of local customs. One of the more striking passages in the present volume is his description of how the Taoist priest addresses the gods of the baleful stars—with scarcely veiled contempt, as if they were silly children rather than great and dangerous divinities (Hou, pp. 198–99). The priest's contemptuous manner is surely meant to show that he is stronger and superior to the demons—otherwise would they not take revenge on him? Here we see, perhaps, one of the ways in which the Taoist priesthood reinforced both its status in the community and the need for its services.

At other points in Hou's article the data presented suggest how exorcism could serve as a premodern form of psychotherapy. Suppose, for example, that a peasant who is worried about his wife's approaching confinement hears the yelp of a dog and recognizes it as a sign of the approach of White Tiger, the demon-star who devours foetuses in the womb (p. 210) and who "lies in wait by the bed and the door . . . behind the stove and in front of the well" (p. 212). Perhaps the peasant then goes to an almanac or a soothsayer and gets confirmation of the danger. All his fears for the safety of his wife and child come to the surface of his mind and

16. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 5:190. Needham is here quoting *Chou-li* 周禮 5:86 translated by Edouard Biot, in *Le Tchou-Li ou Rites des Chou* (Paris, 1851), 2:113–16. The editors have changed the tense. Needham has little to say in volume 3 about the political use of astrology. He refers his readers to H. Bielenstein, "An Interpretation of the Portents in the *Ts'ien Han Shu*," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 22:127 (1950) and Ho Peng Yoke, *The Astronomical Chapters of the Chin Shu* (Paris, 1966).

coagulate, as it were, around White Tiger. He may feel more afraid than he did before, but after he has performed a rite like "Leave-taking outside" (p. 199), he feels less afraid. Thus his belief (or half-belief) in White Tiger has helped him to exteriorize and cope with an inner fear that he had no other means of coping with. Hou himself suggests this when he speaks of a rite's "efficacy in allaying those anxieties of which the demons are no more than personifications created by the popular imagination" (p. 227).

At the other end of the Taoist spectrum from peasants and soothsayers lay the celibate monks of the Ch'üan-chen sect, whose monasteries began to be set up on a Buddhist model in the thirteenth century. The most important was the White Cloud Monastery (Po-yün Kuan) in Peking. How it operated in the 1940s is described by Y. Yoshioka in his article "Taoist Monastic Life." Yoshioka lived there himself as a lay guest from 1940 to 1946, gaining experience unequalled among those who have written about Taoist monasticism in Western languages.¹⁷ What he gives us is not a theoretical picture based on textual research, but the actual practice as he observed it at this monastery in specific years. After his return to Japan, he read newspaper accounts of the bizarre event he reports at the end of his article: the monks of the White Cloud Monastery burned their abbot alive.

G. Bertuccioli was in Peking at the time and visited the monastery ten days after this happened. He was told that both the abbot and the prior had been killed by the other monks and then cremated in a pyre in the temple courtyard. The civil authorities sentenced the two instigators to life imprisonment, but the rest of the monks involved were allowed to return to the monastery. This was because they could cite a clause in its code of rules stating that if the abbot sold off monastic property without the consent of the monks, he should be burned. In this case the abbot was said to have been selling monastic property to maintain an expensive concubine. Such behavior would have been as shocking to Taoists as to Buddhists, not only to other celibate monks but to their lay supporters.¹⁸

17. Peter Goullart's *Monastery of the Jade Mountain* (London, 1961) and John Blofeld's *The Secret and the Sublime* (London, 1973) were not intended to be scholarly treatments of Taoist monasticism. The authors neither made nor recorded any systematic observations of the monasteries they stayed in. H. Hackmann's *Die Dreihundert Mönchsgebote des Chinesischen Taoismus* (Amsterdam, 1931) includes detailed materials but does not reflect much if any personal observation.

18. Lay devotees gave financial support to monks partly in order to share in the merit the latter accumulated through their abstinence. Therefore monastic licentiousness was a