

Daoism in China

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The original meaning of Dao 道 was “path.” Laotse 老子 understood Dao as the source of all things, and after his time still other meanings such as “method” appeared. Precursors of Daoism can be found in the shamanism of antiquity and the idea of eternal life of the Qin-Han period (221 BCE–25 CE). The concept of *yin* and *yang* and the theory of the five elements (which both developed ca. 300 BCE) also had an influence on Daoism. But although the Daoist religion uses the terms of the Daoist philosophies and regards Laotse’s *Daodejing* 道德經 and the works of Zhuangzi 莊子 to be canonical scriptures, the religion differs significantly from Daoist philosophies. For the most part, their connection is only the name, which was used by the Daoist religion as a recognized placard in order to achieve wider propagation.

Daoism as a religion emerged only long after the lives of the two Daoist philosophers Laotse and Zhuangzi and it took a long time to establish itself in China. The religion is said to have been founded by Zhang Ling 張陵 during the reign of the Emperor Shun of Han 漢順帝 (r. 125–144 CE). Zhang Ling venerated Laotse as the true founder of the Daoist religion and the *Daodejing* as its holy scripture. According to tradition, Laotse appeared to Zhang Ling while he was meditating in a cave on the Heming 鶴鳴, and instructed him to be a master and lead the people back to the correct path. Subsequently Zhang Ling trained many students to become Daoist priests and treated the sick with his healing powers. He had patients brought into a quiet room in which they had to confess their transgressions. These confessions were then written down by a Daoist priest. This confession, which was related to their illness, was offered to heaven in three ways: placed on a mountain, buried in the ground and sunk in a river.

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In subsequent generations, the position of the spiritual leader of the Daoist religion was inherited and the seat of the leader was moved from Heming to Mount Longhu (Lunghu-shan 龙虎山, Dragon Tiger Mountain) in Jiangxi 江西.

In 1949 the Daoist leader went into exile in Taiwan. However, since 1980 Mount Longhu has again become full of life, as I saw with my own eyes in 1998. The residence of the leader has been renovated and the Chinese government is interested in letting the Daoist religion spread. As a result, today pilgrims are again coming to Jiangxi.

Various factors were important for the emergence of the Daoist religion. It initially developed out of shamanism and the folk religions of the time. In Chinese antiquity the rulers in heaven (Di 帝) were worshiped, as was nature, especially mountains, rivers, thunder and stars. Ancestor worship also played a large role in the development of Daoism. A forerunner of Daoist amulets is found in the way that offerings were presented to the ancestors by priests or shamans. This took place in a special manner, the shamans receiving a sign from each spirit that was then written down.

Legends about the *shenxian* 神仙, the immortals, and sorcery are also basic elements of Daoism. The belief in *shenxian* can be considered one of the most fundamental features of the Daoist religion. Immortality is described as having the following traits: immortals look like normal persons, immortality is attainable, and immortality lends supernatural powers that allow a person to take on other forms, move mountains, cause rain to fall and accomplish other miraculous things. The belief in *shenxian* probably emerged in the fifth century BCE. Magicians (*fangshi* 方士) of that time professed that one could find a key to immortality on the islands in the ocean. The first emperor of the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE) even sent out ships to look for this key as did Emperor Wu 漢武帝 of the Han dynasty (r. 140–88 BCE).

As mentioned above, another source of the Daoist religion was the original Daoist philosophy. Both Laotse's *Daodejing* and the work of Zhuangzi influenced the Daoist religion. An example is found in the chapter *Zaiyou*: "He who cares for his body and can save his energy will live forever."¹ And a final important basis for the Daoist religion was Confucianism, especially the concept of loyalty and reverence.²

¹ Cf. Guo 1986, chap. 11, p. 173.

² Cf. Ren 1991, p. 14f.; Zhang 1996, p. 19.

Another factor that must be mentioned with regard to the emergence of Daoism is the historical or social environment in which it emerged. The social conditions of the period were quite favorable for the religion appearing, whereby three aspects are significant: 1) The Han rulers were deeply superstitious and believed in omens and spirits. They thus tended to distance themselves from the strictly rational and intellectual world of the Confucianists. This made for fertile ground for the Daoist religion's development. 2) The idea of immortality had already fascinated a long line of emperors, as mentioned above. During the reign of Emperor Wu, a number of magicians were trained to this end. This aspiration of the rulers to immortality was also emulated by the general population. 3) At the end of the Han dynasty (ca. 200 CE) a number of wars were fought that made the life of the people ever more intolerable. They sought refuge and shelter in religion. The Daoist religion as propagated by Zhang Ling offered the longed-for relief. To spread his teachings he used the *Taipingjing* 太平經,³ the "peace text," a text that describes the means for society to return to harmony.

Daoism is a pantheistic religion. Its cosmos not only includes a spiritual ruler, but also the "three pure wise ones" *sanqing* 三清 (Illus. 1a-1c) as well as a string of other spirits who float in heaven, or live on or below the earth. In addition to these, there are many *xianren* 仙人, immortals, who move in heaven, or live on mountains, islands or other special places. There is, however, a well-established hierarchy between the spirits and the immortals. Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536), in his *Zhenling yeweitu* 真靈業位圖 (Catalogue of the Ranking of the Spirits and Immortals), listed 688 spirits and classified them according to seven degrees.⁴ The system of degrees mirrors the feudal or ruling system of the period. These spirits or heroes were adopted from Chinese folk religion, sagas or even Buddhism.

³ The *Taipingjing* is extant in three versions, by Gan Zhongke 甘忠可, Yu Ji 于吉 and Zhang Ling 張陵, but all three are incomplete. In the Ming Era (1368–1644) only 57 of the original 170 volumes were still extant. The work portrays a broad band of traditional Chinese ideas, including, among other things, *yin* and *yang*, the theory of the five elements, astronomy, prophecies concerning the world of spirits, as well as descriptions of the social conditions in China around 200 CE. The work, regarded to be the fundamental scripture of the Daoist religion, is most likely not the work of a single author, but rather a collection of texts by various authors. In the following I refer to the standard edition of Wang 1985.

⁴ Tao 1985, vol. 5, pp. 0019–32; Cf. also Min 1994, p. 799.

Of the few texts from the early period of Daoism that have come down to us, the most important are the *Daodejing* and the *Taipingjing*. With time, however, Daoist texts and texts about Daoism became more and more numerous. By 1457, in the Ming period, a total of 5,485 volumes had been written, but since this time no new works have been added to the corpus of Daoist writings.

Although Daoists regard the *Daodejing* their main text, it does not fulfill all Daoist needs with regard to a holy scripture. Therefore additional texts were produced, of which the oldest and most important is the *Taipingjing*, which dates to 130 CE. It was allegedly revealed to one of the authors, Yu Ji 于吉, by an immortal. The most important topics may be summarized as follows: First, *yuanqi* 元氣 (the original power) is the source of the world but it is subordinate to the Dao. *Yangqi* 陽氣 (male power), *heqi* 和氣 (harmony) and *yinqi* 陰氣 (female power) are derived from *yuanqi*. These three *qi* (powers), corresponding to heaven, earth and human beings, must be in harmony with one another in order for peace and stability to prevail in the world. Natural phenomena are a reflection of the politics and state of the current society. Natural catastrophes occur when political affairs are not in order, and can be prevented only when such affairs are well ordered, as, for example, desisting from capital punishment and the rich donating some of their wealth to the poor.

Next, a system of *shenxian*, supernatural beings, exists. It is divided into six categories, of which *shenren* 神人 occupy the highest position, followed by the *zhenren* 真人, *xianren* 仙人, *daoren* 道人, *shengren* 聖人 and *xianren* 賢人.⁵ Each type of supernatural being has a specific function. In order to help heaven rule the world, the supernatural beings communicate with heaven, to which the *shenren* and *zhenren* are closest.

Third, human beings must take responsibility for the transgressions and sins of their ancestors and relatives. Because of this concept, humans must diligently strive to do good deeds. The responsibility of the individual extends to the whole society. Ultimately all humans are exhorted to do no evil so that the requirements for harmony are fulfilled and the world remains in order.

On one hand the *Taipingjing* asserts that human beings have a predetermined destiny that is subject to the power of fate, and on the other

⁵ Wang 1985, p. 289.

hand it emphasizes that one can master one's fate through one's own actions.⁶ It is, however, also stated that very few persons can become a *shenxian*, not even one in ten thousand.⁷ But if a person always performs good deeds and strives for the Dao, he or she can reach their personal best. For certain chosen ones who strive for the Dao, the metamorphosis into a *shenxian* will be successful, but in any case, the average person who strives for the Dao will live a long life. Even simpletons, if they strive for the Dao, will be granted a relatively long life,⁸ and thus it is clear that in any case striving for the Dao is worthwhile. In order to reach the Dao and become immortal, the following points must be observed: One must be loyal to one's rulers, honour one's teachers and revere one's parents. In this case *xiao* 孝, reverence, is of particular importance. In the *Taipingjing* it is stated: "No one who strives for the Dao will succeed in attaining it if they lack piety."⁹ In addition to moral requirements, the care of the body and soul is important: they should both be strengthened through mental and physical exercises. An immortality potion will be given from heaven to the person who has earned it through exceptional achievements. One must test one's conscience, repent one's transgressions and reprimand oneself daily, both in the morning and in the evening. One must be honest at all times. In addition, there are other commandments for immortality, but all of them will not be listed here.¹⁰

Taken as a whole, the *Taipingjing* delineates an ideal world in which justice, peace and harmony prevails, a world that will exist when human beings behave in the manner described. The ideal world of the *Taipingjing* prompted many followers to strive for the Dao.

Another important early Daoist text is the *Zhouyi cantongqi* 周易參同契.¹¹ It was written in 142 CE and concerns the production of an immor-

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., p. 438.

⁸ Ibid., p. 289.

⁹ Ibid., p. 656.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 717.

¹¹ The *Zhouyi cantongqi* is said to have been composed by Wei Boyang 魏伯陽 around 200 CE. The work deals with alchemy and provides a method for the actual production of an immortality potion. Its three parts deal with the *I Ching* "Book of Changes," the thoughts of the Yellow Emperor and those of Laotse. The *I Ching* determines the exact point in time that is favourable for the manufacture of the immortality potion. The thoughts of the Yellow Emperor and Laotse form the basis for the "production" within the human body of an (immaterial?) "inner potion"

tality potion. If translated literally, its title can have a number of meanings. The text deals with alchemy, describing chemical substances, their volumes and weights. It also describes details about making such a potion, including the temperature of the fire, the potion's effects, etc.

A primary goal of Daoist believers is a long or, if possible, eternal life, which should be attained in one's own body. According to the Daoist religion, anyone can reach this goal if various methods are followed and particular exercises are performed. These include a special diet, breathing exercises, meditation, specific medications and the performance of Daoist religious services. Over time, these methods resulted in guides for longevity, as well as important practical works in medicine, chemistry and pharmacology. The rituals in the Daoist religion are based on the idea that one's life is dependant on one's own behavior. Whether one's life is short or long is not only dependent on heaven, destiny or an outside power, but on human beings themselves and how they shape their lives. A person can thus lengthen his life and even reach immortality by practicing various exercises. This is the particularly positive Daoist concept of life.

But Daoists do not merely want to lengthen their life, they want to become an immortal, a *xianren*. In addition to magical potions, the Daoist religious way of thinking is also essential here. The Daoists derived the possibility of immortality from the mystic character of the Dao and its eternal nature. The Dao itself cannot be visualized. It is endowed with its own vital energy and its own will power. The Dao created everything in the world and exists within all things, including human beings. One can reach the Dao only if one follows certain rules and performs certain exercises. If one attains the Dao one also attains the mystic vital energy and, like the Dao, will have eternal life. The possibility of humans to continue to live as an immortal is explained with the help of the theory of *jing* 精 (primary matter, being), *qi* 氣 (breath) and *shen* 神 (spirit). In the Daoists' opinion, the three factors *jing*, *qi* and *shen* are the fundamental factors of human life. If one dies young it is because the *jing* was spent, the *qi* exhausted and the *shen* wasted away. However, if one knows how to be frugal with these powers and takes care of them,

that should confer immortality. The alchemy section unifies all three parts (the word *can* means "three"). The work is composed in the form of a poem and is very difficult to understand; numerous commentaries exist, the most famous being that of the philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). Cf. Zhu 1989, pp. 1f.; Qing 1988, pp. 123ff.

it is possible to attain immortality. The Daoist methods should enable the spirit and body to live forever. With these methods the individual should be able to overcome the boundaries of life. According to the Daoist concept it is possible to achieve immortality through transformation. Master Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343) said: “Transformation is a normal part of heaven and earth. Therefore, the dead can be revived and one can transform a man into a woman.”¹² One is able to transform oneself into another shape such as a bird or another creature. In the Daoist point of view, life can be prolonged through the ingestion of herbs or certain medicines. If one finds the right medicine, this will also enable one to have a long life. Master Ge Hong adds: “One can care for the body with herbs and medicine so no diseases can develop from within nor infect it from without. In this way one can have a long life.”¹³

The Daoist schools are as diverse as the sources of Daoism themselves. Only the two most important of these schools of Daoist religious thought can be dealt with here. The first school calls itself Zhengyi-pai 正一派, the “correct” or “true school”. It developed out of the Tianshi-dao 天師道 school and is based on Mount Longhu in the Jiangxi province. Monasteries are of no special importance in this school; its followers are allowed to have a family. The leadership of the Tianshi School is hereditary. Its followers revere the *shenxian*, the immortals and the spirits. They paint magical paintings and pray using magic formulas in order to beckon the spirits and banish evil demons. In Daoist religious services, in which prayers are said, good fortune is summoned and bad luck is warded off. The patriarch, the highest religious leader of the Zhengyi-pai school, is called the “heaven’s master of Zhang” Zhang Tianshi 張天師. Zhang is venerated as having been the founder of the Daoist religion in the later Han period. The title was bestowed by the emperor and is hereditary.

The second school calls itself the “School of All Truths”, Quanzhen-dao 全真道. It was founded by Wang Chongyang 王重陽, who was originally a Confucianist, during the Jin 金 dynasty (1115–1234). After having met a *xianren* he gave up his vocation and converted to the Daoist religion. He attempted to combine Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. For this reason he required his followers to recite the works *Daodejing*,

¹² Cf. Ge 1986, Chpt. 16, p. 71. The *Baopu zi* by Ge Hong is a supplement to the *Zhouyi cantongqi*. It contains above all a detailed description of breathing exercises that must be observed when producing the immortality potion.

¹³ Ibid. Neipian, chap. 3, p. 8.

Xinjing 心經 (the Buddhist Heart Sutra), and *Xiaojing* 孝經 (the Confucian classic on filial piety). Above all he adopted a great deal from Chan Buddhism. The Quanzhen School does not concern itself particularly with magic formulas or alchemy. It requires its adherents to follow a monastic life. They must accept all forms of insult and selflessly help others. Murder and sexual intercourse are forbidden. In their place one is required to fast and sleep very little. All desires are to be eradicated. Only then can one recover one's original spirit. Often the followers of this school live many years as hermits in caves on mountains where they practise rigid discipline. *Jing*, *qi* and *shen* (primary matter, breath, spirit) are made stronger through meditation and other exercises in order to reach heaven by passing through the fontanel. This is the goal of this school. On the way, the body is left behind and can decompose with no further thought.

The Daoist Association of China resumed its activities with China's opening to the West in 1980. This organisation represents the interests of the followers of the Daoist religion in China. In the same year renovation began in Beijing on the "White Cloud Monastery," Baiyunguan 白雲觀 (Illus. 2 and 3), built in 739. It was reopened in 1982. It is a monastery of the Quanzhen School. In the same year, twenty-three monasteries were chosen as major Daoist monasteries, including the above-mentioned Baiyun monastery and the residence of Master Zhang on the Longhu-shan. This is regarded as the seat of the Zhengyi School. Its last spiritual head, Zhang Enbo 張恩溥, the leader of the sixty-fourth generation, died in 1969 in Taipei. At present only his pupil is active at the residence. Through these activities the Daoist religion is slowly experiencing a renaissance in China. Contacts to Taiwan and other regions have been renewed. By 1992 many large monasteries or temples had been reopened, about four hundred in total, mostly in large or middle-sized cities. Over a thousand small monasteries had been reopened. In that year about twelve thousand Daoist priests of the Quanzhen School lived in these monasteries. In addition there were about fifty thousand Daoists of the Zhengyi School, living primarily with their families, and about ten thousand youth acolytes of the same school. In the meantime these figures must be higher.

The development and spread of Daoism was always dependent on the favour of imperial patrons and their milieu. The Tang and Song rulers, for instance, identified strongly with Daoism, supported the Daoists financially and helped them achieve high respect. At the same time the

Daoists were always loyal to the respective rulers and always considered themselves to be their subjects. Daoism, especially the Quanzhen School, strived for synthesis with Confucianism and Buddhism. It was tolerant towards Buddhism, despite the fact that Buddhist and Daoist dogma are far removed from one another. Buddhism is striving for a future nirvana, Daoism for paradise in the here and now. However, a bond between the two positions is particularly useful in a world which is becoming ever closer. Daoism is a particularly receptive religion and has always been able to adapt itself. Following setbacks in the attempts to prepare an immortality potion, it began to concentrate on meditation and the strengthening of the spirit in order to attain immortality.

The Quanzhen School, which developed in the Yuan period, signified a reform with respect to the Zhengyi School. It demanded considerably more discipline from those who had dedicated their lives to Daoism, a monastic life in a monastery or the life of a hermit on a mountain. According to the Daoist concept, the *shenxian* also live in the earth, in mountains and in rivers. Thus, humans make contact with the *shenxian* on the earth and also in the mountains, such as on the five holy mountains which include the Emei-shan and the Qingcheng-shan. These mountains are venerated and considered holy, because people believe that *shenxian* live there or that they are the place where Daoists have attained immortality. It is said that the founder of the Quanzhen School, Wang Chongyang, attained immortality on Mount Hua, and Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, one of the "Eight Immortals",¹⁴ on Mount Zhongnan. Consequently, mountains have become the object of pilgrimages.

The belief in a close relationship between humans and the spirits reaches into the distant past in China. The idea that spirits live in homes in the form of stove spirits, or that there are spirits of wealth or of doorways has been held since early times. The idea that immortals inhabit the world around us has emerged from the Chinese mentality that has been shaped by realistic and pragmatic thinking. Accordingly, one does not want to enter paradise only after death, but rather here

¹⁴ The "Eight Immortals," Li Tieguai 李鐵拐, Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 and others, appear in China for the first time in the sixth century. They were used as figures in theatre pieces and on occasion were given the leading roles. The "Eight Immortals" were a favourite motif in porcelain painting of the Ming period, for example for birthdays and weddings. Due to this they became well known everywhere, and even today they still enjoy great popularity in China. One can often still find small porcelain figures portraying the "Eight Immortals".

and now. This idea most likely has to do with the living conditions in China, conditions that are dependent on the environment. It is well known that the Chinese culture emerged from the catchment-basin of the Yellow River. Life in this area, because of the adverse natural conditions, was extremely difficult. Hot summers turned to cold winters and periods of drought alternated with times of flooding. From earliest times humans had to battle with the powers of nature to ensure their survival. Daily life meant daily struggle. Hence the wish for a pleasant life already in this world is understandable. As documented in the earliest texts, the desire for long life and wealth was already formulated in Chinese antiquity. Immortality was seen to be eternal life in this world. This indicates an acceptance of the real world in which one yearns to continue living.

The resilient and untiring fighting energy of these people enabled their survival in this region. This is part of the Chinese heritage that has become the Chinese tradition. It is just this tradition that has been a moving force in the economic expansion since 1980. That which has been accomplished in China can be accredited to this fighting spirit and to pragmatic thinking. Daoism has been built on a realistic foundation. Even if its goal is immortality, one is satisfied with attaining long life and remaining healthy. In addition to the spiritual and physical exercises of the individual, good deeds also play an important role. The accumulation of good deeds is important for one's descendants, who profit from them. Then again, one's fellow citizens also profit. This accumulation of good deeds is called *jide* 積德. It is said that good deeds will be rewarded in heaven. For this reason there is a strong incentive for such behaviour. Society profits from it.

The Daoist concept of justice was often the moving force behind the numerous peasant uprisings against corrupt leadership and social injustices. In these uprisings the peasants carried banners bearing the names of Daoist spirits or gods. Thus, Daoism can be regarded as a benefactor of the masses and it recruited many followers in this way. However, Daoism has not only helped people as a religion; its contributions to medicine, pharmacy, Qigong 氣功, etc., have also resulted in many benefits.

To conclude I would like to outline a few more fundamental Daoist concepts, and show how they were not only of importance in the past, but are also important in the present and will be in the future.

The first important concept is that of *dao fa ziran* 道法自然. Literally this means: "The Dao follows the *ziran*." But what does *ziran* mean? In this context it is not a synonym for nature, but rather an equivalent of the expression, also of importance, *wuwei* 無爲, which means "not interfering." To be more accurate, *ziran* is the passive form of *wuwei*. It is a tenet of the Dao or a form of the Dao that is influenced neither by humans nor by nature. With respect to this *ziran-wuwei*, in Dao the natural development and course of things is perceived as not needing interference.¹⁵ The principal of harmony in the relationship between humans and nature derives from this concept. Humans should maintain a harmonious relationship with the environment (nature), follow the laws of nature, and not pursue their own greed as that would seriously upset the balance between humans and nature. *Ziran* is the main concept of Daoism. One who abides by this concept will guide all things in the proper direction.

The next important concept is the above-mentioned *wuwei*. As already stated, this means "not to interfere". In Chapter 37 in Laotse's *Daodejing* it reads: *Dao chang wuwei er wu bu wei* 道常無爲而無不爲. This translates as: "The Dao never acts, but there is nothing it does not do."¹⁶ *Wuwei* is the most important principle of Daoism and is derived from the thought *dao fa ziran*, which means, as explained above, that the Dao follows the natural course of events. This natural course is conversely *wuwei*. Accordingly, one lets affairs develop in their own way. For this reason Laotse says: *Wo wu wei er min zi hua* 我無爲而民自化. This means: "Although I do not act, the people step forward themselves."¹⁷

It is important here to note that *wuwei* does not mean that one should do nothing at all. Rather it means that one should not guide the course of events artificially, one should not apply any force to them. In other words, one should leave things in peace, should let them develop according to their own laws and not desire to influence them in a particular manner or to steer them in another direction. The interpretation of *wuwei* in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 expresses this even more clearly: "With respect to *wuwei*, humans should let things take their own course. Only then should one act oneself." Thus, *wuwei* means that one should let things develop in their own individual manner.¹⁸

¹⁵ Wang 1986, Vol. 3, Chpt. 17, p. 10; Chpt. 64, p. 39.

¹⁶ Ibid., Chpt. 37, p. 21.

¹⁷ Ibid., Chpt. 57, p. 35.

¹⁸ Gao 1986, Vol. 7, Chpt. 1, p. 8.

Next follows the thought *fan zhe dao zhi dong*¹⁹ 反者道之動, which means: "The Dao moves by returning." This is a further important Daoist principle, namely, that movement does not advance forward, but rather returns to its original starting point. This starting point is the Dao. According to the Daoist opinion, humans have moved ever further from the Dao because of various influences of the world. An adult has long lost the ideal condition of a small child. For the Daoist it is therefore important to return to this ideal condition. Then one becomes reunited with the Dao. Daoists also believe that this return, namely the renunciation of fame, wealth and any kind of pleasure, will ensure a long life, if not even immortality. Daoists have observed in nature that plants and animals have different life spans. Turtles, cranes, pine trees and cypress trees all live for quite a long time. They all have a longer life span than humans. From this observation they have come to the conclusion that life spans are relative. In their opinion, since humans are the highest living creature, their life span should be very long and potentially they can be immortal.

The Chinese philosopher Jiang Shen 蔣伸 (799–881) was of the opinion that *fan zhe dao zhi dong* illustrates the Daoist trait of searching for immortality within oneself. Daoists do not take the view that humans must control nature in order to attain longevity. On the contrary, humans should regulate themselves to lengthen their lives. The Daoist sciences and practices do not aim to contain nature, but rather to control the human ego. It is questionable whether one can actually attain longevity in this way. However, in any case this idea may be a possible alternative to present-day success-oriented and profit-centered lifestyles.

In China today Daoism is experiencing a revival, and in some areas, especially in the southern provinces, one could even speak of a renaissance. In these areas Daoist priests are dealing with taking care of the ill, with funerals, etc. Today there are even Daoist newspapers and societies. Scientific research is also taking an interest in Daoism and there is a collection of new scholarly literature.

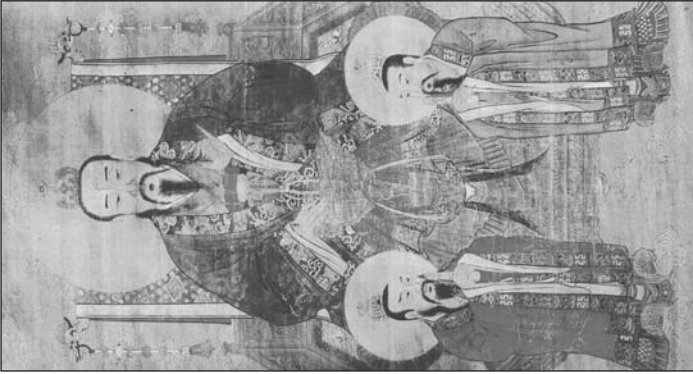
Since its founding, the Daoist religion has concentrated on serving the masses. It became the support and salvation for many peasants. For this reason it has survived through the long Chinese history despite many hurdles. In the Chinese countryside today, new problems are de-

¹⁹ Wang 1986, Chpt. 40, p. 25.

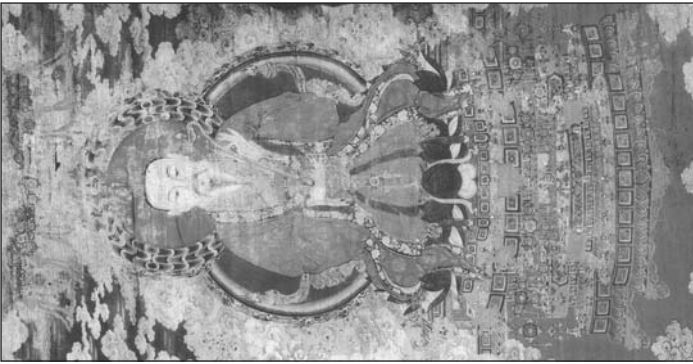
veloping because of globalization. The Daoist religion can also offer its assistance here. However, not only the masses of peasants find solace in Daoism, but it is also a refuge for many intellectuals in times of becoming disoriented or unsuccessful. With its help one can retreat into nature or into one's home in the hope of being able to unify oneself with heaven and the Dao. One can also cherish hopes of being able to become a *zhenren* (a Daoist saint).

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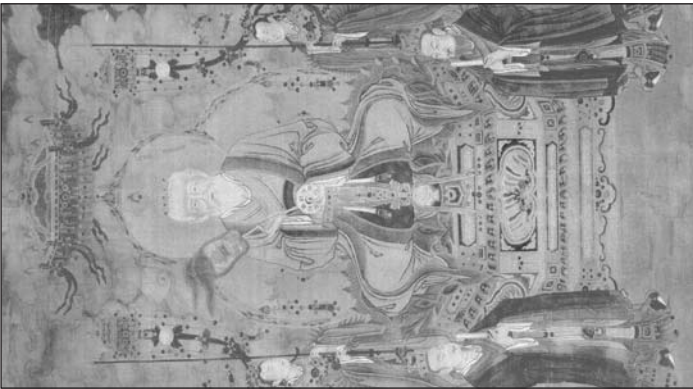
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Ill. 1a:
 Yuqing Yuanshi Tianzun
 玉清元始天尊



Ill. 1b:
 Shangqing Lingbao Tianzun
 上清灵宝天尊



Ill. 1c:
 Taiqing Daode Tianzun
 太清道德天尊

Illustrations 1a–c: The Three Pure Ones of Daoism

- a) The Jade Pure Celestial Lord of the Primordial Beginning
- b) The Supreme Pure Celestial Lord of the Numinous Treasure
- c) The Grand Pure Celestial Lord of the Tao and its Virtues

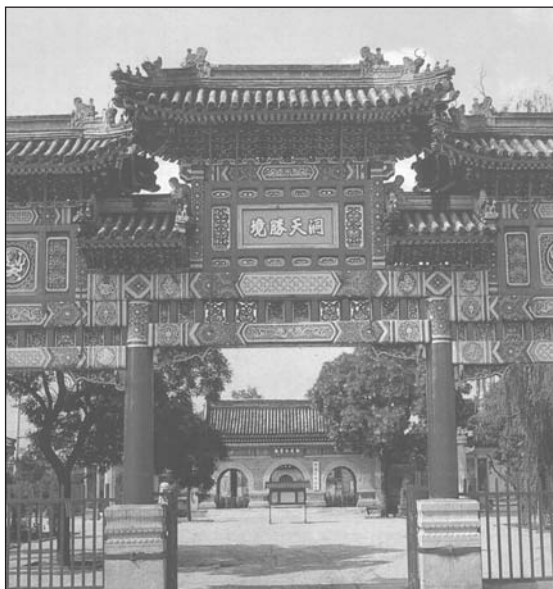


Illustration 2: White Cloud Temple, Beijing
Baiyunguan 白雲觀, Entrance Gate



Illustration 3: White Cloud Temple, Beijing
Baiyunguan 白雲觀, Hall of the Three Pure Ones
and the Four Guardians 三清四御殿

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