

Devoting Filial Piety to Celestial Spirits: The Ritual Patterns of Paternity in the Prehistory of Daoist *Lingbao* Tradition

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Abstract

Filial piety plays a significant role in Chinese thoughts and history. However, its meaning and practice were open to interpret and the concrete actions to embody it were subject to change. When it became more and more religious in the Eastern Han, filial piety inspired various religious communities, to embed filial piety in their ritual practice. Therefore, to investigate the practices associated with filial piety beyond the rhetorical devices in Confucian texts provides a unique perspective to observe the interaction between Confucianism and Daoism. This paper begins with scrutinizing the symbolic meaning of filial piety in a *jiao* ritual in the Daoist *Lingbao wufu xu* and remarks on its metaphorical usages. Then it traces the concept of paternity, in which filiality intrinsically constitutes an essential part, in the three early religious texts that contain many Daoist characteristics, and analyzes the similar role it plays in aiding the ritual practices in these texts, and points out the different patterns these texts apply to understand the paternity. I argue that religious communities in the Eastern Han consciously used the multivalence of paternity to create a shared world in the rituals that was constantly negotiated with the normative Confucian convention, thus producing a significant milieu from which the *Lingbao* tradition grew.

Keywords: Filial piety, Early Daoism, *Lingbao* tradition, Daoist ritual, paternity

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Filial piety played a significant role in shaping Confucian ethics and state ideology, and was also used by Chinese religions. The inclusion of filiality transformed Chinese Buddhism from a foreign religion to a Sinicized one, where filial piety was more an essential element of Chinese Buddhism than a mere Buddhist form of Confucian idea.¹ Due to the doctrine of inherited evil (*chengfu* 承負), Daoists in the early medieval period intended to view familial bonds as an obstacle to attain transcendence; however, by adopting the Buddhist notion of *karma*, they treated filial piety with positive value in order to obtain merit. Filial piety began to form extending value to the cosmic realm when the salvation of ancestors was considered as a premise of one's own transcendence.²

The previous studies have revealed that Chinese Buddhists and Daoists agents actively practiced filial piety in their own religious contexts; nevertheless, they treat filial piety as a normative social virtue that solely functioned to maintain familial relationship. This approach overlooks the religious aspects of Confucianism, imagining Confucian masters as purely rational thinkers and Confucianism as a practical system of governance. Scholars in Confucianism have proved the otherwise.³ This paper hence takes the religious aspect of Confucianism as a point of departure, and focuses on how filial piety, in the realm beyond family, metaphorically or socially supports self-cultivation, shapes religious community, and brings ritual communication with the supernatural. I will argue that religious communities in the late Eastern Han intentionally used the multivalence of filial piety to create a shared world in their rituals that constantly negotiated with the normative social convention in one way or another. In this progress, Confucian ideas and praxis that centered around father-son relationship, including filial piety, were modified in their practices that were far beyond familial concerns. The religious

¹ Ping Yao, "Tang Women in the Transformation of Buddhist Filiality," pp. 25-45.

² Livia Khon, "Immortal Parents and Universal Kin: Family Values in Medieval Daoism," pp. 91-109.

³ For a general overview of the religious aspect of Confucianism, see Rodney Taylor and Gary Arbuckle, "Confucianism," in *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 54, no. 2, pp. 348-349. Studies on this topic can be found from: Howard Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty*; Lei Wen, *Jiaomiao zhiwai: Sui Tang guojia jisi yu zongjiao*, pp. 61-71; Tian Hao, *Zhu Xi de siwei shijie*, pp. 236-258.

communities behind these practices that bore many Daoist features formed a significant milieu in which the Daoist *Lingbao* tradition grew.⁴

1. Introduction: Filial Piety in an Early Daoist Jiao Ritual

Filial piety had played an essential part in Chinese society and religion. As Confucianism became the dominant state ideology since the middle of the Western Han, filial piety became the very basis of all other virtues. The filial sons were rewarded with official promotion whereas punishment was conducted to the unfilial. Eastern Han witnessed the progress in which filial piety became more and more religious.⁵ By the mechanism of the stimulus and response (*ganying* 感應), filial actions were considered to be returned with supernatural rewards.⁶ For example, reciting the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiaojing* 孝經; hereafter *Xiaojing*) was even

⁴ Both Confucianism and Daoism are broad categories. The origin of “Confucianism” dates back to the Jesuits writings in the sixteenth century and there is certainly cultural differences between the term and its original name, *ru*, in Chinese context. Here I use the term Confucianism and *ru* as virtually interchangeable, generic terms that signify the religio-ethical tradition that dominated China and other parts of East Asia. On the other hand, I agree with Robert Campany who suggests to imagine Daoism as repertoires of resources and as imagined communities. These two features often function contrastively and form a counterbalance to each other. People are free to draw on divergent repertoires that reside in different traditions while still being fully aware of the idea of distinct religious communities that may have continuously contested with one another (Robert Campany, “On the Very Idea of Religions (in the Modern West and in Early Medieval China),” pp. 287-319). Particularly, I follow Gil Raz’s “polythetic definition of Daoism,” which allows the inclusion of early texts, practices, and lineages that were important for Daoism in the creative period of the Six Dynasties (Gil Raz, *The Emergence of Daoism: Creation of Tradition*, pp. 1-37). This definition provides an excellent conceptual tool to understand the Daoist attributes manifested in the evidences analyzed here.

⁵ I use the term “religious” to signify the phenomenon that the actions recognized as embodying the filial piety went beyond family. That is, it signifies the selfless devotion to the welfare not of one’s parents but of the supernatural. This feature has been noticed by Tadao Yoshikawa, *Rikuchō seishinshi kenkyū*, pp. 547-555.

⁶ Donald Holzman, “The Place of Filial Piety in Ancient China,” pp. 185-199.

considered to be so powerful to suppress riots.⁷

Filial piety is fully elaborated as a practical notion in the *Xiaojing*.⁸ The book prescribes filial obligations for the people from all social strata. The obligations have three indispensable elements at its core in common: ancestral worship, reproduction, as well as affection (*ai* 愛) and respect (*jing* 敬) to parents.⁹ Paternity plays a crucial role here. For instance, it states that, “Requiring both affection and respect, the service to father is considered as the means by which one learns to service mother and to service lord”, “The highest form of filial piety is the veneration to one’s father and the highest veneration is to match him with the Heaven”.¹⁰ The religious veneration of father as a means of communicating with the Heaven has its root in ancient religious belief.¹¹ As remarked by Keith Knapp, while filial piety had its core remained constant over times, the particulars of it were often subject to change.¹² Indeed, the religious understanding and practice of filial piety was one of the particulars that were open to interpretation and modification.

It is against this backdrop that I investigate filial piety in the Daoist context. The *Preface of Five Talismans of Most High Numinous Treasure (Taishang Lingbao wufu xu* 太上靈寶五符序; hereafter *Wufu xu*), one of the earliest *Lingbao* scriptures dating to the late 3rd century, records an early Daoist libation ritual (*jiao* 醮; hereafter *jiao*).¹³ The ritual aims to transmit to the practitioner the Five Talismans

⁷ It was Xiang Xu 向栩 who suggested that just reading the book to the rebellious people, they would automatically withdraw, see *Houhan shu*, 81. 2694. For how this belief was represented on the painted stones, see Jiang Sheng, *Han diguo de yichan: Hangui kao*, pp. 233-242.

⁸ The date and author of the text are unclear, however, its impact on the Han society is certain.

⁹ Kaji Nobuyuki 加地伸行, *Kō kenkyū* 孝研究, p. 294.

¹⁰ “資於事父以事母而愛同，資於事父以事君而敬同。故母取其愛，而君取其敬，兼之者父也”，“孝莫大於嚴父，嚴父莫大於配天，” *Xiaojing zhushu*, 2. 24, 5. 36. My citations of other classics in the *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 are also from this edition.

¹¹ Donald Holzman, “The Place of Filial Piety in Ancient China,” p. 192.

¹² Keith Knapp, “The *ru* reinterpretation of *xiao*,” p. 197.

¹³ The ritual has been received deep and thorough studies from which my own largely benefits. See Max Kaltenmark, “Ling-pao 靈寶: note sur un terme du taoïsme religieux,” pp. 559-588; Kristopher Schipper, “Vernacular and Classical Ritual in Taoism,” pp. 21-57; Charles Benn, “Daoist Ordination and Zhai Rituals in Medieval China,” pp. 309-339.

(wufu 五符), the numinous celestial writs that lead the primordial pneuma to circulate freely and generate various living beings. In the myth associated with its transmission, the Five Talismans were first revealed from the Little Laid of East Sea (Donghai xiaotong 東海小童) to Ling 陵,¹⁴ the Perfected of Zhong Mountain (zhongshan zhenren 鍾山真人). He then transmitted the Five Talismans to Yu 禹. In another lineage of the transmission, Zichang 子長, who received an instruction from Han Zhong 韓眾, or the Transcendent of Huolin (Huolin xianren 霍林仙人), deciphered the ancient *kedou*-style script of the Five Talismans to the recognizable characters.¹⁵ The ritual for the transmission is elaborated here in Ling's tone.

The symmetrical structure of the *jiao* ritual may be summarized as:

- A. Establishment of the altar
- B. Summoning the deities
- C. Offering of ale (with incense)
- D. Request
- C* offering of ale (with incense)
- B* Sending off the deities
- A* Dismantling the altar¹⁶

Prior to outlining the instruction of ritual performance, Ling gives a theoretical exposition that informs both the meaning and performance of the *jiao* ritual. Particularly, he recites Zichang's pivotal words 要言 that:

The actions of libation and incantation are listed on the left. All those who are intent on the Way and pursuing longevity should reduce [the cost for] cloth and food to pay filial piety to the celestial spirits. If one's sincerity has been exhausted, then who can say one cannot obtain the Way? [In order to]

Stephen Bokenkamp, "Minor Ritual Matters: Gesture and Meaning in Early Daoist Jiao Rites," pp. 217-226. Gil Raz, *The Emergence of Daoism*, pp. 105-117.

¹⁴ Ling may not refer to Zhang Ling 張陵, the legendary founder of the Celestial Master, because here he made a transmission in person with Yu.

¹⁵ In the secular sources, Han Zhong was the man dispatched by the First August Thearch of the Qin Dynasty to search for the mystical isle Penglai in 215 BC, see Stephen Bokenkamp, "Li Bai, Huangshan, and Alchemy," p. 10.

¹⁶ Kristofer Schipper, "Reihō kagi no tenkai," pp. 225-226.

prepare [yourself] as a master in chief,¹⁷ who would in person experience the spirits, [I] speak the reality¹⁸, and [I] hope [you] be cautious! ... Request the celestial officials [to descend] by lips and teeth, talk the transmission by crimson heart.¹⁹ ... If in this way the perfected numinous cannot make the ultimate faithful to be transcendent, or fail to resurrect the decayed bones under the spring and soil, should Zichang and I thus feel regret in the Cloudy Han river? It is just that one's sincerity cannot be always exhausted, and the pursuance of longevity also cannot be predicted. If [in this case], one still desires the response of extended [lifespan], and hopes for the response from the celestial perfected, it is a waste of effort and therefore shall end in vain.²⁰

其醮祝之儀，陳之于左。諸志道求生者，宜薄衣食而致孝于天靈。苟誠之所竭，孰云不得道乎？備為師帥，親驗其神，故復言情，將慎之焉。……請天官於脣齒，言受傳於丹心。……若此，真靈不能使至向獲仙、復朽骸於泉壤者，陵與子長豈當以抱惡於雲漢中乎？但方寸不盡，求生不測，而望長延之對，以此希天真之報，亦復費其功夫，故為徒勞也。

The remark here is stunning unique in the history of early medieval Daoism. While medieval Daoist did understand practice of family values, including filial piety, as a cosmic endeavor,²¹ few of them considered filial piety as the meaningful basis on which communication with deities depended. The filial piety here also

¹⁷ *Shishuai* is an official tile in the *Zhouli*, where it refers to the leader of a standard military unit of 2500 soldiers. Even though there was a long history of *shi* 師 in Celestial Master and *fangshi* tradition, *shishuai* in Daoist text is of extreme paucity. Here I translate it literally as master in chief, which may connote a master with high authority in the early Lingbao Daoist community.

¹⁸ “Those without *qing* do not use up their words,” 無情者不得盡其辭 Zheng Xuan comments that *qing* means reality 情猶實也 (*Liji zhushu*, 60. 986).

¹⁹ The metaphor refers to the greatest degree of sincerity.

²⁰ DZ 388, 3.3b-4b.

²¹ Livia Khon, “Immortal Parents and Universal Kin: Family Values in Medieval Daoism,” p. 92.

fundamentally differed from its contemporary or late Daoist burial practice for the deceased family members, where fears for the pollution and danger from the dead were the crucial components.²²

This instruction of paying filial piety literally comes from the *Analecets*, where Confucius eulogizes that Yu devotes filial piety to the ancestral spirits by reducing the costs of his own food and clothing 菲飲食而致孝乎鬼神.²³ According to Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166), a scholar-official in the Eastern Han, this means a sacrifice with rich and undefiled foods 祭祀豐潔. The concept of filial piety in the Western Zhou was once closely associated with the act of feeding ancestors. Even though the notion was reinterpreted as the obedience to the living patriarch during the Warring States,²⁴ this ritualized culinary service was still widely practiced in the Chinese society.²⁵ Therefore, although the object of filial piety is changed from ancestors to celestial spirits, the emphasis remains to be the self-deprivation of one's premier life-giving substance for the sake of ritual offerings.

Filial piety metaphorically provides a way for the *Lingbao* Daoist practitioners to understand and experience a religious ritual in terms of social obligation. As an influential practical notion, filial piety generated important impact on the daily life in the Han. It would be natural for them to conceive the communication with the celestial spirits in a similar way of feeding parents. Filial piety is central to the *jiao* ritual here, because it motivates the practitioner to follow the model of Yu to present with rich and undefiled offerings. This is the very decisive factor of ritual efficacy. As Ling explicitly interprets, one who completes the sincerity achieves transcendence; if one fails to do so, then all ritual efforts shall be in vain.

Slightly after the *Wufu xu*, the *Jade Instruction of the Red Writs of the Numinous Treasury of the Cavernous Mysterious of the Most High* (Taishang

²² For the studies of these practices, see Stephen Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety: Daoism and the Birth of Rebirth in China*, pp. 33-59; Peter Nickerson, "Let Living and Dead Take Separate Paths: Bureaucratization and Textualisation in Early Chinese Mortuary Ritual," pp. 10-40; Zhang Xunliao and Bai Bing, "Donghan muzang chutu jiezhuqi he Tianshidao de qiyuan," pp. 49-53.

²³ *Lunyu zhushu*, 8. 73b–74a. A similar phrase is also recited in the *Shiji*, 2. 51.

²⁴ Keith Knapp, "The Ru Reinterpretation of Xiao," pp. 195-222.

²⁵ See Robert Campany, "Eating Better than Gods and Ancestors," p. 103.

dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing 太上洞玄靈寶赤書玉訣妙經; hereafter *Chishu yujue*) was redacted. The scripture serves as the commentary to the *Perfected Script in Five Tablets Written in Red Celestial Writing on the Original Commencement and the Five Ancient Lords* (*Yuanshi wulao chishu yupian zhenwen tianshu jing* 元始五老赤書玉篇真文天書經; hereafter *Chishu yupian*), one among the early fifth-century *Lingbao* corpus that “narrates the origins of the scriptures in the ethers at creation and reveals the organizing rubrics of *Lingbao* cosmology and ritual”.²⁶ More specifically, it emplaces the Perfected Script into praxis by synthesizing new ritual systems consisting of discrete origins, purposes, and meanings. In the “Jade Instruction of Summoning the Perfected by Libation for the Five Thearch of the Numinous Treasure of the Original Commencement” (*Yuanshi lingbao wudi jiaoji zhaozhen yujue* 元始靈寶五帝醮祭招真玉訣), a ritual module that constitutes the system, a new *jiao* ritual is proposed with a cluster of action, ritual offering, verbal incantation, and progressive order.²⁷ Through the comparison between these units and their counterparts in the *Wufu xu*, it is certain that this ritual here is almost isomorphic with the old *jiao* ritual discussed above.²⁸

However, a scrutiny of the changes made in this new ritual reveals that the meaning of ritual is intentionally redesigned. Its ritual instruction is revealed through the Dao:

The Dao speaks: as regards the Perfected Script in Five Tablets Written in Red Celestial Writing of the Numinous Treasure, each tablet quells one direction, they are all the writs of the Self-spontaneity of Primordial Commencement. The Five Ancient Lords and Five Thearchs guard them. numinous officials in the five directions are in charge of the proscription that thrice a year all the transcendents are to be delivered to be perfected.

²⁶ Stephen Bokenkamp, “wupian zhenwen,” in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, vol. 2, pp. 1060-1062.

²⁷ For the progress in which discrete clusters of meanings and practices from different ritual contexts come to composite a complex Daoist ritual scheme, see also Gil Raz, “Ritual Theory in Medieval Daoism,” pp. 407-424.

²⁸ Lü Pengzhi, *Tangqian daojiang yishi shigang*, pp. 86-88; Gil Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, p. 115.

According to the old norms of the Mysterious Rules²⁹, superior officials of all the perfected, as well as the transcendents in the five marchmounts, once every three years respectfully offer the Five Thearchs of the Numinous Treasure and the numinous officials with scattered flowers and burning lamps, and with fragrant hot water and sweet fruits. The presentation to the celestial perfected aims to actualize the numinous pneuma. If the learner in a later time can always fulfill this, then the Five Thearchs of the Numinous Treasure would be moved by the finest sincerity, and the numinous officials in the five directions would confront [the learner] with delight and pleasure. All rituals are not about the lavish or the austere [offerings], but from where the intention manifests. If there is a ultimate reality, then human and deity mutually move. Therefore [I] record the categorized precepts, [you] should keep it in secret and practice.³⁰

道言：靈寶赤書五篇真文，篇鎮一方，皆元始自然之書。五老與五帝侍衛，五方靈官掌錄禁限，一年三開，眾仙度真。玄科舊典：上官諸真人、及五嶽神仙，三年一奉靈寶五帝靈官，散花燃燈，香湯甘果，上獻天真，以存靈氣。後學常能爾者，則靈寶五帝感乎精誠，五方靈官當之喜欣。凡禮無濃薄，意從中來。苟有至情，人神感焉。故書其品戒，祕而修行。

The Perfected Script in Five Tablets is the main object that the ritual aims to transmit. Its shape of archaic script resembles that of the Five Talismans in the *Wufu*

²⁹ When Daoist scriptures were made proliferated in succession in the early 5th century, the regulation on the transmission developed. This new genre was called *ke*. In the Shangqing corpus, there was the invention of the *Siji mengke* 四極明科 as well as the *Jiuzhen mengke* 九真明科. They functioned exclusively to regulate the transmission of a certain corpus of scriptures. Later, these *kes* themselves also evolved into an indispensable constituent of transmission, see Chang Chaojan, *Xipu, jiaofa jiqi zhenghe: Dongjin nanchao daojiang shangqing jingpai de jichu yanjiu*, pp. 276-310, particularly pp. 281-295. For the similar development in the *Lingbao* tradition, see DZ 425, *Shangqing taiji yinzhū yujing baojue* 上清太極隱注玉經寶訣.

³⁰ DZ 352, 2. 20a–b.

xu. In fact, the Perfected Script in Five Tablets is no more than a minor variant version of the Five Talismans.³¹ However, this text does reformulate the old *jiao* ritual in several important ways. It first and foremost introduces the sacred origin of the Perfected Script, which is guarded by the Five Thearchs and the Five Ancient Lords. Their assistant celestial officials are in charge of transmitting the talismans to the potential adept who would consequently become the Perfected 真人. Once every three years, the transcendents who have already been appointed to the celestial position should practice a *jiao* ritual to move the celestial deities descend and present them with offerings.

The similar *jiao* ritual practiced by the Lingbao learners in this world is an imitation of this celestial model. To obtain the Dao, the practitioner should fulfill the requirement of ritual actions, including scattering flowers, burning lamps, and offering fragrant waters as well as sugary fruits. Indeed, rigorous performance is stressed here. Ritual, as the instruction here states clearly, is not about lavish offerings, because intention is manifested only through ritual action itself. Obviously, this is an attack on Ling's instruction where proper ritual offering is the premise of ritual efficacy. Not surprisingly, there is no reference to filial piety in this detailed ritual instruction in the *Chishu yujue*.

It is thus an interesting contrast between the emphasis of filial piety and that of ritual action in the *Lingbao* ritual development. That is, the *Wuxu fu* thinks highly of filial piety whereas the *Chishu yujue* completely rejects it. This discrepancy might be the result of a complex process of textual redaction of the *Lingbao* corpus. However, it is much more likely that the revised, innovated, and reinterpreted ritual praxis comes from some important theoretical consideration. Noticeably, the significant role of Yu in the *Wufu xu*, who serves the head of the lineage of transmitting the Five Talismans and the model of practicing filial piety, also disappears in the *Chishu yujue*. The *jiao* and other Daoist rituals in the other *Lingbao* texts also never use the similar application of filiality. It is hence interesting to examine the religious discourses and practices associated with filial piety and paternity prior to the date of the *Wufu xu*, observing what aspects were shared by the early *Lingbao* practitioner, and where they differed.

Like other practical virtues, filial piety was embodied within concrete social

³¹ Stephen Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures," pp. 455-456.

relationships (*lun* 倫). Living in a patrilineal society, the Han people would be expected to emphasize the father-son bond far more than other relationships. A practitioner's communication with celestial spirits might share important characteristics with son's interaction with father in terms of expressing affection, showing obedience, and reaffirming obligation. In following parts, I will examine three religious texts with highly Daoist attributes in the late Eastern Han where father-son relationship was metaphorically appropriated in highly differentiated ritual patterns to describe and understand practitioner-deity relationship.

2. Filial Piety to Lord Fei: A Master-father Analogy

The Stele of Lord Fei 肥君碑, erected in 169 CE and excavated from a tomb near Luoyang in 1991, is our first main evidence.³² Its upper body is inscribed with inscription, and there are three hollows at the bottom. Several objects were also found at the tomb, some of which might function ritually along with the stele, such as a fictile base and a fictile bird-head.³³ The stele was erected by Xu Jian 許建, a son of Xu You 許幼 who was a gentry holding a grandee of 9th order. Its inscription presents a firsthand outlook of a local family-centered religious community. As an evidence of a rare religious practice, it “sheds light on one sort of milieu in which Daoism developed.”³⁴

The inscription consists of the prose 文 and the verse 辭. The first half part of the prose introduces Fei Zhi's birth, self-cultivation and political involvement at the court, and in the later half his lineage and the connection to the Xu family are narrated. It is told that he was a native of East Anle 安樂 in the Liang 梁 county of

³² To list but a few of important studies on the stele, Hsing I-tien, “Donghan de fangshi yu qiuxian fengqi—feizhi bei duji,” pp. 49-61; Wang Yucheng, “Donghan Feizhi bei tansuo,” pp. 34-41; Yu Wanli, “Donghan feizhi bei kaoshi,” pp. 95-101; Kristopher Schipper, “Une stèle taoïste des Han orientaux récemment découverte,” pp. 239-247; Gil Raz, *The Emergence of Daoism: Creation of Tradition*, pp. 38-91; Huang Zhanyue, “Feizhi bei ji xiangguan wenti,” pp. 59-64.

³³ Henan sheng yanshi xian wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, “Yanshi xian nancaizhuang xiang han Fei Zhi mu fajue jianbao,” pp. 37-42.

³⁴ Gil Raz, *The Emergence of Daoism: Creation of Tradition*, p. 53.

Henan 河南 prefecture, and initially made his fame by the solitary asceticism of residing on a jujube tree. Summoned by the emperor, he dispelled the calamitous omen of accumulated red vapor and then was endowed the title Officer in Waiting of the Lateral Court.

Fei Zhi also established significant relationships with other religious practitioners. We are informed that as early as when he practiced the solitary asceticism, groups of scholars came to gather around him. Zhang Wu of Wei County was his master, and he made friends with Yanzi of Qi, Huang Yuan of the Coast, and the legendary Master of Red Pine. The linages that signify both “this world” and “the other world” coexist within the groups connecting with Fei Zhi in one way or another.³⁵ However, the concrete outline of religious community did not emerge until he taught You as the transcendent master (*xianshi* 仙師) at Xu’s house. On the surface, it seems that the interaction between the lord and the Xu family was confined to him and You; however, the prose’s ending section and the verse together reveal the master-disciple relationship proceeded to the next generation of this family:

You’s son Jian,³⁶ with the byname of Xiaochang, who is kind-hearted and is of filial nature, constantly think about the spiritual numen. In the second year of the *Jianning* reign period when Jupiter was in *yiyou*, on the 15th day, the *bingwu* day, of the 5th month, a day of *zhijian*, Xiaochang set up the spiritual tablet for the lord. From dawn till dark, the whole family was with respect and care, and dared not to relax their reverence. Respectfully [we] present to Lord Fei, [may you] consume what we have in the four seasons. The transcendent has been retired in peace, dignified as a hidden dragon³⁷.

³⁵ Gil Raz, *The Emergence of Daoism: Creation of Tradition*, pp. 68-69.

³⁶ As noticed by several Chinese scholars, the mention of the given name Jian’s father, or You, suggests that it is quite plausible that the text of inscription, while certainly was under the consent of Jian, may not directly be composed by him in person because it alludes the father’s name, which conflicts with the rule of name taboo that an exemplary child should never make mention of. This may indicate the writer of the inscription came from the outside of the Xu family.

³⁷ The *Qian* entry in the *Book of Change* states that “Nine at the beginning means: Hidden dragon. Do not act.” Originally, *qianlong* means “creative force is still hidden beneath the

Though [we] wished to pay a visit to you, nowhere can the way and path be followed. Sincerely [we] establish this stone, to fully express our reverence. [We] exhibit and recount what is laid out above, in order to enlighten and encourage the ignorant. The verse goes:

How brilliant and beautiful, the former divine lord's illustriousness!

Also [he] got a great fame, of being ascended afar and being remembered.³⁸

[We] sons and grandsons are merely standing, reverently looking upward and losing whom [we can] count on.³⁹

Therefore, [we] inscribe this stone to convey [our] feelings and principle.⁴⁰

earth and still has no effect” and “symbolizes a great man who is still unrecognized.” (Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, p. 7.) Here it refers to the master who has been transcendent and thus concealed himself.

³⁸ Both Raz and Campany translate *jianji* as “look at the filaments in the sky.” (Gil Raz, *The Emergence of Daoism: Creation of Tradition*, p. 56; Robert Campany, *Making Transcendents: Ascetic and Social Memory in Early Medieval China*, p. 229) However, gazing at the cosmic filaments has little to do with the grand fame he generated, which makes the two sentences in this verse less coherent; on the other hand, *jianji* itself, as a passive participle, was generally understood in the sense of “being remembered/recorded/memorized” and widely used in the Han, such as “His administrations have been all recorded,” 治皆見紀 “He was well known and remembered,” 知名見紀 “being diligent yet not being remembered,” 勤不見紀 “being recorded on the chapter of the strange” 見紀妖篇. An example in which *jianji* is tied with fame is available in *Hanshu*, “The county [he governed] was quiet and peaceful, he made the good people famous and was fond of the gentry. [He] was memorized in the Yinchuan region and his name was only second to Huang Ba.” 郡中清靜，表善好士，見紀潁川，名次黃霸 (*Hanshu*, 70.3268.)

³⁹ Raz reads *wushi* as “without hindrance,” and suggests that “Master Fei has nothing on which he depends”; Robert Campany follows his translation (*Creation of Tradition*, p. 56, n. 49; *Making Transcendents: Ascetic and Social Memory in Early Medieval China*, p. 229). However, here I read it literally as losing dependence, a typical euphemism showing the grief of losing parents, see my discussion below.

⁴⁰ As rhymed verse, this line should also follow the format and consists of two short sentences, each with four characters. One graph that should go along with the latter sentence may be missed. However, the extent to which the missing graph hinders our understanding could be reduced much lower if we consider the nature of the verse in inscription as the rhymed

May [you] occasionally [reappear even] in vague shapes, bestowing us with auspicious blessings.

幼子男建，字孝萇，心慈性孝，常思想神靈。建寧二年，太歲在己酉，五月十五日丙午直建，孝萇爲君設便坐，朝莫舉門恂恂不敢解殆。敬進肥君，餽順四時所有。神仙退泰，穆若潛龍。雖欲拜見，道徑無從。謹立斯石，以暘虔恭。表述前列，啓勸僮蒙。其辭曰：

赫赫休哉，故神君皇。

又有鴻稱，升遐見紀。

子孫企予，慕仰靡恃。

故刊茲石達情理。

願時仿佛，賜其嘉祉。

The courtesy name of the son as Xiaochang 孝萇, literally as filial to Chang, i.e., Lord Fei who had the courtesy name of Changhua 萇華, indicates a unceasing impact that the master generated on the Xu family. This name must be endowed by You to his son when he was alive.⁴¹ The usage of the byname in the inscription here does not only suggest that the family recognized the conferral of byname as a glory, but also indicates a particular religious connection within this growing family-centered community. It is evident that Jian carried on the role that his father played as the head of the household, and consequently set up the spiritual tablet for the lord. Less obvious, however, is that the patriarch was meanwhile the head of this religious community. We are told that, because of his disposition of being kind and filial, Jian was able to spiritually connect with Fei Zhi by constantly thinking of Fei's spiritual numen 常思想神靈. While Jian might not have necessarily receive any precise transmission from Fei Zhi in person, this spiritual connection indicates

paraphrase of the prose. Here, the ending part of the prose, which states the purpose of erecting the stele, and the verse here, which also claims the same motivation, should mutually illuminate each other. That is to say, "emotion" in the verse corresponds to the expression of reverence stated in the prose; by the same token, "principle" is consonant with the ritual obligation that the family had fulfilled for Fei Zhi.

⁴¹ Yu Wanli, "Donghan feizhi bei kaoshi," p. 98.

the continuation of the lineage within this local cultic association after the death of its founder.

Other Xu family members also paid filial piety to Fei Zhi. Addressing themselves as Fei Zhi's sons and grandsons, the Xu family expressed their grief and reverence in the verse by using traditional rhetoric for mourning deceased patriarch. "Reverently looking upward" usually functioned to signify the admiration paid to one who has distinguishing talent or virtue, and "losing one can count on" was a common expression of mournful feeling for the passed away. For example, in a poem memorizing his father, Cao Pi 曹丕 wrote that he lost whom he could look upwards and rely on 靡瞻靡恃 after the death of Cao Cao.⁴² The phrase was also applied by the author of the entombed epitaph of Zhang Lang 張朗 (d. 300 CE).⁴³

Nevertheless, expression of grief was not the only purpose that the Xu family erected the stele. As Campamy remarks, the inscription shows a high degree of resemblance to the transmitted hagiography, which does reflect the full awareness of the maker(s) of the stele as an endeavor intended to reach wider audience.⁴⁴ If we further consider its structure as spiritual seat 座,⁴⁵ as well as its adoption of physical feature as stele that conventionally functioned to advertise the inscription,⁴⁶ then it would be more convincing that the stele does not only attest to the continuous existence of this family-centered community, but also to the endeavor to maintain and enlarge it by means of spreading what Campamy terms "hagiographical persuasion".⁴⁷ As the members of the religious community, Jian and Xu family took pains to bring back the master's reappearance, and to instruct and exhort the young members. This kind of obligation, along with the emotions expressed above, were

⁴² Guo Maoqian, *Yuefu shiji*, 30.448.

⁴³ Zhao Chao ed., *Han Wei Nanbei chao muzhi huibian*, p. 11.

⁴⁴ Robert Campamy, *Making Transcendents: Ascetic and Social Memory in Early Medieval China*, pp. 231-233.

⁴⁵ Kristopher Schipper, "Une stèle taoïste des Han orientaux récemment découverte," p. 239.

⁴⁶ As Qing scholar Ye Changchi 葉昌熾 (1849-1917) sums up, stele normatively functions as eulogy to merit, memorial of achievement, records of events, reservation of letters (*Yushi*, *Yushi yitong ping*, pp. 180-181). All of these features may result from the impetus to draw attention to the inscription on stele.

⁴⁷ Robert Campamy, *Making Transcendents: Ascetic and Social Memory in Early Medieval China*, p. 230.

the main motivations for erecting the stele. As the inscription succinctly puts, the stele aims to convey the feelings and the principle to the full extent 達情理。

The Eastern Han witnessed a large number of stelae erected by disciples (*mensheng* 門生) to honor their masters. As noted by Patricia Ebrey, “Later Han social and cultural life was imbued with the cult of filial piety which glorified subordination to parents, and many of the features of the father-son relation were transferred to the teacher-student one.”⁴⁸ In the commemoration for his father’s master, Jian created a particular practice of filial piety by directly glorifying the master as the father, which must develop through the local praxis of filial piety of the day. To fit the new need of religious aspiration, this very practice, spreading with the aid of the network connecting those linked to the former patron-client relationship between the master and his father, should also have been with the consent of the local community as well as other potential audience of the inscription. It was in the combination of emotion and obligation that this local religious community understood filial piety, which was as much a socially sanctioned familial virtue as a religious aspiration bounded in familial relationship.

3. From Great-grandson to Son: Changing Family Identity

Family was both a social institution that organizes familial members and a set of abstract familial relationships. In a family, one might maintain multiple relationships with other members. When the new relationships appeared and the old ones perished, the relationships one hold might also change accordingly. As the closest familial relation, the father-son relationship was constantly stressed over those between other family members. In this section, I would analyze that in a process of self-cultivation, how father-son relationship is dynamically created between the religious practitioner and the supreme deity.

An Eastern Han text, the *Middle Scripture of Laozi* (*Laozi zhongjing* 老子中經; hereafter *Laozi zhongjing*) is the main evidence of the section.⁴⁹ Its current version

⁴⁸ Patricia Ebrey, “Patron–Client Relations in the Later Han,” p. 535.

⁴⁹ Kristopher Schipper, “Le Calendrier de Jade–Note sur le Laozi zhongjing,” pp. 75-80; “The Inner World of the *Lao-tzu chung-ching*,” pp. 114-131; Henri Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, trans. by Frank Kierman, pp. 355-357; Kusuyama Haruki, *Rōshi densetsu no*

in the Ming Daoist canon shows its nature as a supplement to the *Daode jing*.⁵⁰ In the less complete yet possibly more original Dunhuang version, the scripture begins with “Laozi says” 老子曰, which indicates the text was believed as a revelation by the Lord Lao.⁵¹ The scripture lists various cosmic and body deities that are hierarchically and genealogically organized, explains the exact correspondences between the two, and gives methods to meditate them in order to be self-cultivated.⁵² The main deity is portrayed as follows:

The Primal Lord of Limitless Great High is the Lord Dao. He has but nine heads on his body. Sometimes he transforms into nine persons, who all wear pearl clothes in five colors and headgears of nine virtues. He is the son of the Upper and Upper Great One; [or] not the son [literally], just the self-spontaneity of the primordial pneuma.⁵³ He lives precisely in the purple

kenkyū, pp. 141-142; Maeda Shieki, *Shoki Dōkyō kyōten no keisei*, pp. 281-288; Liu Yongming, “Laozi zhongjing xingcheng yu handai kao,” pp. 60-66. Here I follow Schipper to treat the *Laozi zhongjing* as an Eastern Han text.

⁵⁰ Kristopher Schipper, “Inner World of the *Lao-tzu chung-ching*,” p. 117.

⁵¹ Ōfuchi Ninji does not include this text in his catalogue on Dunhuang Daoist scriptures. For a short introduction of the text, see Wang Ka, *Dunhuang daojiao wenxian yanjiu*, p. 191. For the unique features of Dunhuang edition, see Liu Yi, *Shen'ge yu diyu: hantang jian daojiao xinyang shijie yanjiu*, pp. 79-82.

⁵² Schipper's entry of “Taishang Laojun zhongjing,” in *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 1, pp. 92-93.

⁵³ This definition of the relationship between Taiyi, the supreme deity in Han religious landscape, and the Dao reflects an interesting tension between the rising belief on the Dao and the traditional religion of the Han. On the one hand, the placement of Taiyi as the father of the Dao respects the principle of the dominant religious tradition in the Han, where Taiyi was the supreme. On the other hand, it uses the typical Daoist notion of spontaneity to interpret the relationship, that is, Taiyi does not generate the Dao; instead, they are either the primordial pneuma itself or its self-spontaneity, hence the two are identical. In this way, the *Laozi zhongjing* skillfully highlights the Lord Dao as the main character in the scripture, and the Great One somehow becomes a *deus otiosus*. This is a very good example of how early practitioners of the Dao, or Daoists if we consider the scripture as a Daoist text in a strict sense, reinterpreted and redefined Han religious discourse, by which they made their own texts.

clouds above the practitioner, and lodges under the floral canopy. When visualizing him, the practitioner should speak that: “O the Most High Lord Dao of Illustrious Heavenly Upper Therach, your great-grandson, this humble practitioner such and such, is fond of the Dao, and prays for longevity. Feed me and rear me, defend me and protect me. Noxious beasts and fierce animals encountered would all be submissive. Let what I act be completed and what I request be obtained.”⁵⁴

無極太上元君者，道君也，一身九頭，或化爲九人，皆衣五色珠衣，冠九德之冠。上上太一之子也，非其子也，元炁自然耳。正在兆頭上紫雲之中，華蓋之下住。兆見之言曰：“皇天上帝太上道君，曾孫小兆王甲好道，願得長生。養我育我，保我護我。毒蟲猛獸見我，皆蟄伏。令某所爲之成，所求之得。”

The appearance of nine heads in one body as well as its transformation into nine persons originate from the mythology of the Luminary of Human 人皇. An early allusion to the deity can be found in a weft text— *The Preface of Calendar of Fates in the Chunqiu* (*Chunqiu mingli xu* 春秋命曆序). According to Song Jun’s 宋均 (d. 76 CE) commentary, the nine heads refer to the nine brothers who divided the Pangaea into the nine prefectures.⁵⁵ In the Epoch of Nine Heads 九頭紀 when they ruled, the political institution and ethics first commenced.⁵⁶

In the words incanted to the Lord Dao, the practitioner addresses himself as

⁵⁴ DZ 1168, 18. 2a-3a.

⁵⁵ Li Fang et al., ed., *Taiping yulan*, 78. 492. A disciple of Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200), Song Jun was active in commenting the weft texts in the end of the Eastern Han, which is contemporaneous with date of the *Laozi zhongjing*. Moreover, the similar image can be found in the description of the Middle Luminary of Human 中人皇 in the DZ 640 *Badi miaojing jing* 八帝妙精經, where the deity is described as having nine heads on the body of dragon. The practitioner is supposed to visualize the image in order to subjugate the demons and suppress evil people.

⁵⁶ It is recited by the Tang scholar Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 in his preface of *Zhouli*. The source comes from a text called *Douji* 斗機, probably the weft text *Yundoushu* 運斗樞, see *Zhouli zhengyi*, 3a.

“great-grandson”. In addition to the full name (by the format of *Wang Jia* 王甲), one employs here two kinds of self-references—*wo* 我 and *mou* 某. While one was supposed to use *wo* as a proper self-reference to those who were from the same or lower social status, the employment of *mou* by addressing one’s own given name expressed much more respectfulness than that of *wo*. As a result, *mou* was applied only to the elders in family or to the lords.⁵⁷ Therefore, the two self-references within one incantation seem likely not to be compatible, if not conflicted.

Nevertheless, here *wo* may not function as a first-person pronoun, but as the reference to the religious object that practitioner should continuously visualize and ultimately obtain at the end of self-cultivation. As in the other contemporary religious texts, *wo* was usually not differentiated with its synonym *wu* 吾.⁵⁸ In the persona of Laozi, the scripture defines that “*wu* is the son of Dao, and people have that too, not only me”.⁵⁹ As body deity, *wu* dwells inside the stomach tube of the practitioner with the byname of Zidan 子丹. His mother, the Jade Lady of Mysterious Light (Xuanguang yunü 玄光玉女), feeds him, and his father Lingyang 陵陽 protects him. Cosmically corresponding to the Pole Star, Lingyang is actually the Lord Dao.⁶⁰ The practitioner, it is instructed, should visualize his own height as same as that of Zidan and practice the same actions as Zidan, such as taking the Yellow Essence and Red Pneuma and drinking the Sweet Spring. After nine year’s practice, he would ascend to the heaven to pay respect in audience to the Lord Dao. In other words, the visualization of Zidan transforms the practitioner into the Perfected Zidan who is eventually able to reporting to his father, that is, the Lord

⁵⁷ For example, the *Baihu tong* 白虎通, a collective work which assembled the main ideas of the Late-Han Classical studies, states that the self-reference by given name is to respect and serve other people 尊事人者也. See Chen Li, *Baihutong shuzheng*, p. 406.

⁵⁸ The two did have different usages in some pre-Qin texts, see Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar*, pp. 76-77.

⁵⁹ “吾者道子之也，人亦有之，非獨吾也，” DZ 1168, 18. 7b. To make sense of the sentence, the sequence of the character “子” and “之” should be versed or there should be a noun such as *wei* 謂 after the “之”. It is also worth noticing that different usages of *wu* in this sentence.

⁶⁰ DZ 1168, 18. 3a.

Dao.⁶¹ Therefore, the coexistence of the two self-references makes sense only if they are used in the dynamic progress of self-cultivation in which the practitioner grows from the great-grandson of the Lord Dao to his son. That is, *mou* refers to the practitioner himself whereas *wo* signifies the object of cultivation that the practitioner aims to achieve. As the scripture explicitly states, if Zidan had been *wu*, and *wu* had transformed into the practitioner himself, then the practitioner would have obtained the Dao.⁶²

The progress of becoming Zidan is thus implicitly metaphorized as changing family identity from great-grandson to son. These two identities clearly shared divergent familial statuses in the Han. For instance, the “Mourning Attire” in the *Rites and Ceremonies* regulates that a son should wear the attire made of the rawest linen (*zhancui* 斬衰) for the deceased father in the length of three years, whereas a mourning great grandson wears the sewed rough-linen attire (*zicui* 齊衰) for only three months. The father-son relationship was not only more important but also more intimate. We are not unfamiliar with the notion of making close the kinships 親親, one of the most fundamental principles of Confucian ritual. It is by the state of being closer to the Dao that the progressive stage of cultivation makes sense. As the scripture puts concisely, the practitioner respectfully visualizes the deities, and are intimate with them.⁶³

4. Fix the Mind on Your Father: A Lord-father Analogy

Filial piety centered at the ideology of the Han dynasty. The posthumous titles of the emperors were embedded with the epithet of filiality. Not only policies were concretely made to encourage the filial sons and daughters, but also filial piety became a category of official appointment and a criterion of evaluating official's fitness to that position. As a result of the fusion of filial piety and patriotic duties, an analogy between the ruler-subject and the father-son relationship developed. In this

⁶¹ As Puett points out, here Zidan is actually Laozi himself, see his “Becoming Laozi: Cultivating and Visualizing Spirits in Early Medieval China,” pp. 238-248.

⁶² “子丹者吾也，吾者，正己身也。道畢此矣，” DZ 1168, 19. 8b.

⁶³ “敬存諸神，與之相親，” DZ 1168, 18. 11b.

section, I will show how a messianic image of Laozi was made in a Daoist community, and how rulership and paternity was associated.

A manuscript copied at Chang'an 長安 in the 8th year of the Daye 大業 reign period (612 CE) and later brought to Dunhuang, the *Scripture on the Transformation of Laozi* (*Laozi bianhua jing* 老子變化經; hereafter *Laozi bianhua jing*) was a product of a Daoist community which was active in the Sichuan basin in the latter half of the second century.⁶⁴ The scripture outlines the history of Laozi as a counselor to rulers and his contemporary role as a savior who is teaching people to survive the impending catastrophes. Its content contains two main sections: the former part delineates the transformations of Laozi from the ancient times to the Han, and the latter part, in the persona of Laozi, gives a sermon that instructs the practitioner to be saved from calamities by mediation.

As Schipper has shown, the concept of changing “is one of the basic ideas of Taoism and one of the keys for understanding it. It finds its natural expression in the ways Lao Tzu’s body is envisaged and also constitutes the principal theme of the myths and legends concerning Lao Tzu.”⁶⁵ This essential feature of Laozi’s transformation allows the scripture to draw on and rewrite a variety of previous or contemporary sources.⁶⁶ Among these sources, there is one particularly concerning with paternity. It is a poem about Wangzi Qiao 王子喬, a ancient transcendent whose popularity lasts throughout the early medieval period. The poem was selected by Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 (1041–1099) in his *Collection of Music Bureau Poem* 樂府詩集 under the category of Mutually Symphonious Songs 相和曲. Guo classifies it as Ancient Lyrics 古辭, that is, the folk music works collected by the Music Bureau 樂府 that was reformed at 112 BC by Emperor Wu. The lyrics were

⁶⁴ Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, *Dōkyō to Bukkyō Daiichi*, pp. 12-15; Anna Seidel, *La Divinisation de Lao Tseu dans le Taoïsme des Han*, pp. 60-73; Ōfuchi Ninji, *Shoki no Dōkyō: Dōkyō shi no kenkyū, sono ichi*, pp. 316, 360-362; Stephen Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, p. 165, n. 25; Su Jinren, “Dunhuang yishu Laozi bianhua jing shuzheng,” pp. 130-155; Barbara Hendrichke, “Early Daoist Movements,” p. 147; Liu Yi, *Jingtian yu chongdao: Zhongguo jingjiao Daojiao xingcheng de sixiangshi Beijing*, p. 415; Kikuchi Noritaka, *Shinjūkyō kenkyū: Rikuchō Dōkyō ni okeru kyūsai shisō no keisei*, pp. 135-40.

⁶⁵ Kristofer Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, p. 116.

⁶⁶ Anna Seidel, *La Divinisation de Lao Tseu dans le Taoïsme des Han*, pp. 92-102; Ma Chengyu, “Dunhuang ben laozhi bianhua jing sixiang yuanyuan luekao,” pp. 9-12.

played with the music of the Wei and Jin dynasties 魏晉樂所奏, which probably indicates its date. The whole poem reads:

Wangzi Qiao!	王子喬！
Harnesses white deer and roams amid the clouds.	參駕白鹿雲中遨。
Harnesses white deer and roams amid the clouds.	參駕白鹿雲中遨。
Come and descend from your travel.	下遊來。
Wangzi Qiao!	王子喬！
Harnesses white deer,	參駕白鹿，
Above he reaches the clouds,	上至雲，
Roams and rambles.	戲遊遨。
Up to... ⁶⁷	上建逋陰廣里，
[he] walks upon the close and high. ⁶⁸	踐近高。
Reaching the transcendents' palace,	結仙宮，
[he] passes to pay respect to the Three Platforms. ⁶⁹	過謁三台。
To the east [he] roams above the Four Seas and Five Mountains.	
	東遊四海五嶽上。
[He] passes <i>Penglai</i> , and the Pavilion of Purple Cloud ⁷⁰ .	過蓬萊，紫雲臺。
The Three Kings and Five Emperors are not worth to deserve [his] order,	
	三王五帝不足令，

⁶⁷ This line is probably corrupted. Wang Yunxi 王運熙 suggests Guangli as a place in Luoyang (“Handai de suyue he min’ge,” *Yuefu shi shulun (zengding ben)*, p. 230)

⁶⁸ This line describes the transcendent’s amazing capacity in traveling in the clouds.

⁶⁹ Three Eminences refers to rest six stars in Big Dipper below the modern Dubhe. Inside each Eminence, the distance of two stars are so close that those were recorded as facing each other 兩兩相比, see Chen Zungui, *Zhongguo tianwen xue shi*, p. 267. For its astrological information, see *Shiji*, 27.1293–94; Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void: T’ang Approaches to the Stars*, p. 115.

⁷⁰ *Ziyuntai* may refer to a place near or in the paradisiacal island of *Penglai*.

[He would rather] order our Sagely Regime to meet the Great Peace:

令我聖朝應太平：

[If you] foster people as sons then they would serve the father as the [spiritual]
luminous.⁷¹

養民若子事父明，

Ultimately [you] would obtain the utmost Heavenly Fortune,

And the everlasting peace and health.

當究天祿永康寧。

The Jade Ladies sit in circle and play flutes and pipes.

玉女羅坐吹笛簫，

Alas! The sage is traveling to the eight directions,

嗟行聖人遊八極，

chirping, crying, and holding in mouth with blessing,

[he] flies at sides of the hall.⁷²

鳴吐銜福翔殿側。

May the sage rulers partake [the offerings] for a myriad of years.

聖主享萬年。

Mournful chant:⁷³ may the emperor extend his life span.⁷⁴

悲吟：皇帝延壽命。

⁷¹ Kirkova reads Wangzi Qiao as the subject here (Zornica Kirkova, *Roaming Into the Beyond: Representations of Xian Immortality in Early Medieval Chinese Verse*, p. 303). However, it is more likely this couplet is the order that the transcendent gives to the emperor. Its meaning can be well illustrated by a passage in *Zuozhuan*, “A good ruler will reward the virtuous and punish the vicious; he will nourish his people as his children, overshadow them as the Heaven, and support them as the Earth. Then the people will respectfully support their ruler, love him as a parent, look up to him as the sun and moon, revere him as they do spiritual Beings, and stand in awe of him as of thunder.” 良君將賞善而刑淫。養民如子，蓋之如天，容之如地。民奉其君，愛之如父母，仰之如日月，敬之如神明，畏之如雷霆 *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 9. 466.

⁷² An avian image of Wangzi Qiao can be found in Cai Yong’s inscription for the Stele of Wang Ziqiao 王子喬碑, see *Quan Houhan wen*, 75. 880.

⁷³ The word might be originally an instruction for those singers, yet mixed with lyrics in later generations. Moreover, if we consider the motif of the poem as well as the happy wish for emperor’s longevity, a mournful emotion should not be very proper here. The word may be a special technical term for singing, which has little to do with mournfulness.

⁷⁴ Guo Maoqian comp., *Yuefu shiji*, 29, pp. 437-438.

Sung at emperor's court in company with the instruments such as zithers and flute, the song describes the journey of the roaming transcendent and his blessing towards the emperor. Several details of Wangzi Qiao's features here, including his mounting on a white deer, wandering in heaven, and passing the Three Eminences, precisely match the image of Laozi in the *Laozi Bianhua jing*. More importantly, like Laozi who mentors the kings, the transcendent also plays a similar role of providing assistance to the ruler.

It is worth noticing the lord-father analogy employed in the poem. As a means to obtain the celestial favor, the emperor should properly perform his duty of nourishing the people as if supporting his own children. The lord-father analogy initially emerged late in the Warring States period (453–221 BCE), as a sociopolitical model being “based on the authority of the father figure.” The cornerstone of this new notion was filial piety. As Ikeda observes, “In principle, there is no inherent contradiction between *xiao* 孝 and *zhong* 忠. This is because the relationship between father and son is seen to be the same as that between ruler and subject.”⁷⁵ This lord-father analogy was actually formulated and incorporated into the mainstream political discourse of the Han. The central court of the Han “assimilate[d] filial piety, a central value in Confucian ethics, to the loyalty of the subject to the ruler and the state.”⁷⁶

The *Laozi Bianhua jing* precisely employs this analogy in the sermon. The role of Laozi as a contemporary messianic ruler is underlined as much as the role of counselor. After listing fourteen manifestations of Laozi as a counselor to the rulers from the ancient times to the Zhou, the scripture further narrates his other three manifestations from the Qin to the Han. Here different accounts are applied to these two kinds of manifestation. As regards the former, it uses the pattern of “name of ruler+Laozi's title”, whereas the pattern is changed into “name of dynasty+Laozi's title” for the latter. This discrepancy indicates that the author of the scripture consciously distinguished the two roles, and considered Laozi not as the counselor of a specific ruler during the Qin and the Han, because this role of counselor was

⁷⁵ Ikeda Tomohisa, “The evolution of the concept of filial piety (*xiao*) in the *Laozi*, the *Zhuangzi*, and the Guodian bamboo text *Yucong*,” p. 26.

⁷⁶ Anne Cheng, “Filial piety with a vengeance: the tension between rites and law in the Han,” p. 34.

always associated with a specific sovereign.

In the further description of Laozi in the Han, the scripture begins to reinterpret his new role as an imminent ruler and savior:

In the Han he had the name as Wang Fangping...In the first year of Benchu reign period (146 CE), once more he reappeared at the Temple of Bailu and administered at Cui, with the name of Zhongyi. ...In the first year of Yongshou reign period (155CE), he once more returned to the Bailu Mountain⁷⁷, with the name of servant⁷⁸. When the Great Sage⁷⁹ asked [him], he shut mouth and did not reply. After the transformation for thirty years,⁸⁰ he established the ancestral temples on the Bailu as the lineal descent from the Heaven.⁸¹

漢時號曰王方平……大[本]初元年，復出白祿廟中，治崔號曰仲伊。……永壽元年，復還白祿山，號曰僕人。大賢問，閉口不言。變化卅年，建廟白鹿爲天傳。

As a recent study has convincingly demonstrated, the year of 185 CE, thirty

⁷⁷ The place does not correspond to any historically known mountain in the Eastern Han. Li Daoyuan's 酈道元 (466-527) *Shuijing zhu* 水經注 records a Bailu mountain which is at the northwest of modern Hui 輝 county in Henan province (Yang Shoujing 楊守敬, *Shuijing zhushu*, 9. 798; Dai Junliang, *Zhongguo gujin diming dacidian*, p. 923). In the *Yuanhe junxian tuzhi* 元和郡縣圖誌 that was compiled at 813 CE, it records another Bailu mountain at the northwest of modern Peng 彭 county in Sichuan province (Li Jifu, *Yuanhe Junxian tuzhi*, p. 772). Considered the frequency of Laozi's manifestations in the Shu region, the one near the Peng county may be more plausible the place where Bailu locates in the scripture.

⁷⁸ As Sun Qi points out, this sentence may refer to Wang Fangping's meeting with Emperor Huan. Therefore I translate the term in accordance with its basic meaning.

⁷⁹ This refers to the Emperor Huan 桓帝 (reg. 147-167).

⁸⁰ Here I read it as a past event rather than a prophecy.

⁸¹ Here I use the criticized version of *Laozi bianhua jing* by Wang Ka 王卡, who convincingly provides many other criticized versions of Daoist texts in Dunhuang manuscript, see Zhang Jiyu 張繼禹 eds., *Zhonghua daoang* 中華道藏, vol 8, p. 182a16-23.

years of transformation after 155 CE, perfectly matches the year of Wang's death in his hagiography in the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳. This date, along with the claim that Laozi is in the avatar of Wang Fangping in the Han, proves that the religious repertoire of Wang was appropriated to shape Laozi in the scripture.⁸² It is worth asking further: since the community that produced the scripture grew within the same milieu from which Celestial Master Daoism emerged,⁸³ for what purpose the scripture appropriates the religious repertoire of Wang, a local transcendent in the eastern coast region?⁸⁴ How does this appropriation add persuasiveness of the scripture? To answer these questions, we must look into the Laozi's sermon where the father-lord analogy is applied.

The sermon is given after the scripture describes Laozi's last appearance in this world at the city of Chengdu in 185 CE.⁸⁵ Here Laozi gives instructions on meditation that:

Laozi states that: My frolic has been pure, my duty has been manifested, and my governance has been completed. ... [Once] for days and nights [you] concentrate the mind on me, then I will not be suddenly leaving. If being awoken or in dreaming [you] think of me, I will automatically appear [to you] as the proof of confidence. I will rise to act in accordance with the Han, and change my body. The fools would be rejoiced and jubilated, and the wise men would receive the instruction. When the duty of the Heaven and Earth ends, I will change the dynastic fate. At current times, I am selecting the good people....If [you] want to know where I am, [you] should read the *Text of Five Thousands Characters*. Reciting for ten thousand times, [your] head would recognize the body.⁸⁶ Quickly come to my place, then I will grant

⁸² Sun Qi, "Dunhuang ben Laozi bianhua jing xintan," pp. 110-111.

⁸³ Anna Seidel, *La Divinisation de Lao Tseu dans le Taoisme des Han*, p. 65; Gil Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, p. 32.

⁸⁴ For Wang's image as a local transcendent, see Robert Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents*, p. 268.

⁸⁵ *Zhonghua daoang*, vol. 8, p. 182a.

⁸⁶ *Shen*, or body, is an important concept in *Laozi*. One should think much of the fact of having

you the essence and spirit. The children should set their minds on their father, and the father should set his mind on his children. If with languor [you] once forget [me], [I] will distance from you ten thousand *li* away. ...[I] am teaching you to practice the Dao, of the first importance is to cultivate the self. ...Fix the intently focused mind on complying with me:⁸⁷ ... By intently focusing and thinking of this, [you] will complete yourself. With constant diligence the Way shall be completed, [I] thus teach all my children that: I myself had saved [people] for six times when the Grand White horizontally flowed.⁸⁸ Quickly you shall follow me, at the Southern Marchmount⁸⁹ you shall find me. ... By means of the Han regime I

a body by utmost care, and should let nothing, be it fame or wealth, to compete with the value of body, see chap. 13 and chap. 44 of Wang Bi, *Laozi zhu*, 3: 7, 28. For an English translation, see James Legge, *The Tao Teh King*, pp. 56, 87-88. The purpose of knowing one's body, as Seidel suggests, is to visualizes the god Laozi in the interior of the body, see Anna Seidel, *La Divinisation de Lao Tseu dans le Taoisme des Han*, p. 71, n. 1.

⁸⁷ Read in the traditional *shang* tone, *fang* basically means to follow, to comply, or to conform with. However, it is also interchangeable with *fang* 仿, to imitate. The nuance here is important, see my discussion below. For the instances of the meanings, see Fu Zongbang et al eds., *Guxun huizuan*, p. 956.

⁸⁸ The Grand White refers to the Venus. In Chinese astrology, it is overall a planet of “subversion, plots, cutting edges, and executions” (Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void: T'ang Approaches to the Stars*, p. 214). A very early allusion to this observation can be found in the letter by Sun Hui 孫惠 (213-310) to Sima Yue 司馬越, who wrote that “when Grand White horizontally flowed, it is what the arms depend on.” 太白橫流, 兵家攸杖 (*Jinshu*, 71. 1882) In other words, the horizontally flowing Venus means warfare. This can also be attested in 698, the Venus crossed Barrier of Heaven, which was considered as the omen of trouble on the frontier (Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void: T'ang Approaches to the Stars*, p. 214).

⁸⁹ As been noticed, Nanyue in the early medieval China was a shifting place. It could be ascribed to different mountains in the south China, depending on the nature of sources where it is referred. In the classical texts and commentaries it often identifies Nanyue as Hengshan 衡山 in the southern Hunan province, in official sources it frequently refers to Huoshan 霍山 in Anhui province, and in early Daoist text from the early 4th century it becomes associated with Tianzhushan 天柱山, Qianshan 潜山, and Huoshan, see James Robson,

positioned myself, which myriad of people [had behold?] One who is upright and with solid core⁹⁰ may know my position. ...⁹¹

老子曰：吾教以清，吾事以明，吾政以成。……晝夜念我，吾不忽云（去）。味夢想吾，我自見信。吾發動官漢，令自易身。愚者踴躍，智者受訓。天地事絕，吾自移運。當世之時，簡滓良民。……欲知吾處，讀五千文。[誦]過萬遍，首自知身。急來詣我，吾與精神。子當念父，父當念子。怡（給）忽相忘，去之萬里。……教子爲道，先當修己。……精思放我：……精之思之，可以成己。一黽道成，教告諸子：吾六度大白橫流，疾來逐我，南嶽相求。……因漢自職，萬民見□。端直實心，乃知吾事。……

Though with obscure languages and syntax, the structure of Laozi's teaching is clear. Firstly, the practitioner is required to recite the *Daode jing* and mediate Laozi's residence.⁹² Then one would visualize a visit to Laozi in person, by which one would be endowed with the essence and spirit. After this, Laozi urges the practitioner to imitate him with fixed thoughts. Having completed the meditation, one becomes a qualified follower of Laozi and then should move to the Nanyue, where the god rules a theocracy, in order to survive the catastrophe.

Laozi's very first words in the instruction regulate the nature of this Daoist community to which the audience of the scripture belongs. His completed governance 吾政以成 suggests that the community imagined here bore a resemblance to a secular political sovereign entity. Indeed, as we can see in the last passage, Laozi established ancestral temples 建廟, a political discourse signifying to setting up one's own regime. The legitimacy of this, as same as that of its secular

Power of Place: The Religious Landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue 南嶽) in Medieval China, pp. 57-89.

⁹⁰ The metaphor here is agricultural.

⁹¹ *Laozi Bianhua jing*, p. 182b1-c5.

⁹² There is certainly no allusion about the residence of Laozi in the *Daode jing*. Perhaps there was a catechism already circulated in the community of the *Laozi bianhua jing* as same as the *Xiang'er Commentary* functioned in the community of Celestial Master Daoism.

counterpart, came directly from the Heaven 爲天傳. In this passage, it is even clearer that this theocracy was temporarily associated with the Han. However, when the final destiny of the world comes, Laozi will guide the people to pass through the paroxysms of war, disease, flood, and death. It is actually his main task at the current time to select the people who are eligible to survive the coming end time.

Similar to the notion of “seed people” in Daoist eschatology, the elect here needed to be self-cultivated to become qualified. It is in the progress of cultivation that Laozi and his followers formed the father-child relationship. The scripture places the practitioners as Laozi’s children, and urges them to set their minds on the god while promising Laozi would set his mind back to them as well. It also warns that once the practitioners once forget the lord in their minds, Laozi would depart from them. As Seidel remarks, we are not unfamiliar with a similar phrase in the document of the early Celestial Master movement. In the *Commands and Admonitions for the Families of the Great Dao* (*Dadao jia lingjie* 大道家令戒), a significant text of early Celestial Master movement that was revealed in 255 C.E. and presumably read to the communities of the faithful through Zhang Lu’s persona, the Dao warns that “if you keep your mind fixed on the Dao, the Dao will keep you in mind. If you do not, the Dao will not be mindful of you.” It further explicates that, to gain the favor of the Dao, one should “cherish life and practice the Dao with your thoughts on the True and Correct”. The very idea that one should fix minds on the Dao and keep the Dao from departing is also an important thesis in the *Xiang'er Commentary*, another document of the early Celestial Master community.⁹³

The mutual remembrance that involves Laozi and his followers here, while may have its root at the outset communal Daoist religion, makes new sense in the community behind the *Laozi bianhua jing*. First and foremost, the scripture specifies the interaction between the practitioners and Laozi, as well as its outcome. They are required to imitate Laozi with refined thoughts 精思放我. The imitation may refer to the same meditation technique of visualizing and circulating the five-colored pneuma as Laozi himself practiced.⁹⁴ The premise for them to conduct this, however, lies in the previous proscription of primarily regarding Laozi as the

⁹³ Anna Seidel, *La Divinisation de Lao Tseu dans le Taoïsme des Han*, p. 71, n. 2.

⁹⁴ For details of the meditation described in the scripture, see Gil Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, p. 31.

paternal lord. Although how exactly they understood the equivalence between the imitation of god and that of familial patriarch is unclear, it can be inferred that since filial piety had grown as the very basis for all virtues in the Eastern Han, the compliance towards father, as a common social obligation for ordinary people, must have been a significant part of their daily experiences. By means of metaphorical paternity, these experiences play a transformative and creative role that ultimately contributes to the impetus and instrument of their practice here. This kind of visualization, which entails emotion and feeling, fundamentally differs from that of more objective things such as swallowing solar beams or digesting Five Sprouts. As a result, the qualified practitioners, who are uprightly staunch and solid hearted 端直實心, can become Laozi's people 吾民 and recognize his new political position.

5. Concluding Remarks

The cases examined in this paper have shown how father-son relationship was metaphorically used for supporting self-cultivation, shaping religious community, and bringing ritual communication with the supernatural in the Eastern Han. Rooted in the common social milieu that the praxis of filial piety had become religious, the practitioners of these texts all employed father-son relationship to understand, crystalize, and ritualize the communication between practitioners and deities. However, the paternity in each specific case reflects diverse patterns and different audiences. The inscription of the Lord Fei Stele vividly shows how a deceased master has been honored and memorized as the father in the disciple's family. The composer of the *Laozi zhongjing* locates the paternity in the institution of family and uses the Confucian notion of making close the kinships to organize the process of cultivation whereas its counterpart of the *Laozi bianhua jing* combines the image of father and ruler, focusing more on the Confucian political dimension of the paternity.

These patterns constitute a spectrum that contains different degrees of Confucian components. The strongest Confucian influence manifests on the communal rite of worshipping Lord Fei that explicitly transfers and ritualizes many features of father-son relationship to that of the master-disciple. On the other side of the spectrum stands the *Laozi Bianhua jing*, where Laozi is placed in the visualization that entails the emotion of daily familial experience. Although his

image is juxtaposed with Confucian political ideas, Laozi's essential characteristic is Daoist. In the middle there is the *Laozi zhongjing*, which dynamically embeds the familial identity in the process of self-cultivation. Noticeably, the importance of family decreases in accordance with the degree of diminishing Confucian component.

These instances also provide concrete examples of practices associated with filial piety beyond the rhetorical devices in Confucian texts. In the father-son relationship that we have examined, two of them have direct or indirect relationship with *the Wuxu fu*,⁹⁵ which largely deepens our understanding of the *jiao* ritual there. On the one hand, the common praxis of sacralized familial morality may have contributed source to the synthesis of the new mixed invention in its early stage;⁹⁶ on the other hand, the removal of filial piety in later *Lingbao* tradition reflects a complex tension between the changing social context and religious discourse. Both the influx of Buddhism and the intentional rejection of unsuitable theoretic and ritual elements of Confucianism, such as blood sacrifice, slaughters of animals, and meat presentation may have contributed to the final disappearance of the metaphoric filial piety in the *Lingbao* tradition.⁹⁷

It has been a long tradition to imagine the antagonistic relationship between Daoism and Confucianism for both Daoist doctrines and practices displayed differences from their Confucian counterparts.⁹⁸ However, there are instances showing that beneath the ostensible differences are actively adopted and transformed

⁹⁵ For example, *Wufu xu* 1.18b-19b and 21a quotes different passage from chapters 34, 35, and 22 of the *Laozi zhongjing*. Also as demonstrated in the section 3, the *Laozi bianhua jing* was also composed to target people in the middle and lower branches of Yangtze River, where *Lingbao* tradition grew.

⁹⁶ Several elements, such as *fangshi* 方士 tradition, weft text, and imperial rites, are also other possible resources of the tradition, see Gil Raz, "Imperial efficacy debates on imperial ritual in early Medieval China," pp. 83-110.

⁹⁷ It is in the *Jade Instructions* that a demon, or māra, lures a faithful girl, claiming that obedience to her father in all circumstance brings the way to be transcendent. However, her determination to follow the Ten Heavens overcomes the demon and finally makes him withdraw. For a detailed outline of the story and its Buddhism origin, see Stephen Bokenkamp, "*Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures*," pp. 474-475.

⁹⁸ Shi Zhouren 施舟人(Kristofer Schipper), "Daojiao de qingyue 道教的清约," pp. 158-159.

Confucian elements. The extant version of *Taiping jing* 太平經 advocates practicing a variety of Confucian virtues to create a Daoist utopia.⁹⁹ Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406-477), the great Daoist reformist and ritual master, applies the allusions in the *Shijing* 詩經, a Confucian classic, in his invention of retreat (*zhai* 齋).¹⁰⁰ Here the *Wufu xu* provides a ritual sample, in which the early Lingbao Daoist practitioners adopted filial piety and waded Confucian ritual theory and praxis into their own. While the audience of the *Wufu xu* apparently followed this trend by devoting filial piety to celestial spirits in the *jiao* ritual, the practitioners in later times showed a break with this. Did they conceive Confucian cultural and intellectual resources as the heritage monopolized by Confucianism or as the common sources of the society? In the cases here, however, it demonstrates a complex and dynamic progress in which Daoist practitioners in generations may conceive those resource from the both sides.

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⁹⁹ R.A. Stein, “Religious Taoism and Popular Religion from the Second to Seventh Centuries,” p. 69.

¹⁰⁰ Stephen Bokenkamp, “Lu Xiujing, Buddhism, and the First Daoist Canon,” pp. 181-199.

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Abbreviation:

DZ, Work Number Index, in Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen eds., *The Taoist Canon: a Historical Companion to the Daozang*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

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DZ 352, *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶赤書玉訣妙經

DZ 388, *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* 太上靈寶五符序

DZ 1168, *Taishang laojun zhongjing* 太上老君中經

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致孝於天靈： 靈寶前史中作為儀禮模式的父子關係

吳揚*

摘要

「孝」在中國思想和歷史中扮演了極為重要的角色。但是，如何解釋和實踐孝則並無可遵循的固定模式。孝在東漢被賦予了宗教意味，這激發了早期道教儀式中採用「致孝」來定義與神靈的交流。因此，分析道教儀式中關於孝或類似話語，可作為觀察儒道交流的一個角度。本文首先分析《靈寶五符序》卷下醮儀的儀注中「孝」的象徵意義及其在醮儀中的功能。其次追溯在更早的宗教文獻中—《老子中經》、《老子變化經》和出土的「肥君碑」—相似地將信徒神靈比擬為父子的儀式話語，並分析話語背後所採用的不同模式，與所反映的不同社群。最後，本文試圖證明，東漢社會中作為宗教資源的孝的因素被融合在不同的實踐中，這構成了靈寶傳統成長的一個重要背景。

關鍵字：孝、道教、儒道交流、儀式、東漢

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