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## Revelation in Early Daoist Hagiography: A Study of *The Traditions of Lord Pei*

### ABSTRACT:

This study focuses on the methods used to compose Daoist hagiographies in China's early-medieval era (220–581 AD). We analyze different textual layers of one of this period's longest hagiographies, *Qingling zhenren Peijun zhuan* 清靈真人裴君傳, or, *The Traditions of Lord Pei, the Perfected One of Clear Numinosity*. The resulting evidence illuminates the ongoing process of revelation used by Daoist mediums; it also contributes to our understanding of the ways that Daoist writers continued to add to and edit texts after they first appeared. Furthermore, sustained attention to this one hagiography helps us better understand the central role that biography and life-writing played for early Daoists. By situating the text within its contemporary hagiographic, ritual, and literary contexts, we demonstrate ways in which revelatory literature represents a pastiche of ritual and textual conventions. The authors conclude that attention to the ritual and textual worlds found within Daoist hagiographies makes us more aware of the writers, editors, and readers who created these texts.

### KEYWORDS:

*biography, Daoism, hagiography, life-writing, ritual, textual transmission*

**D**uring China's early-medieval period (220–581 AD), Daoist scriptures were said to have been revealed over a long period of time to various mediums. Scriptures of this type were living texts that could expand and contract depending on the interests and concerns of the patrons who sponsored their composition. Thus, like most texts from the period, a scripture was not a fixed entity but something that could be altered by later mediums and scribes who could append new revelations to older layers of text. This study attempts to expand upon our understanding of this mode of composition by analyzing the textual layers in a lengthy hagiography titled *Qingling zhenren Peijun zhuan* 清靈真人裴君傳 (*The Traditions of Lord Pei, the Perfected One of Clear Numinosity*; referred to subsequently as *Traditions of Lord Pei*, sometimes *Traditions*). We are especially interested in evidence from the hagiography that illuminates the ongoing process of revelation used by Daoist mediums, the ways that Daoist writers continued to add to and edit texts after they first appeared, and the central role that biography and life-writing played in the Shangqing 上清 tradition of Daoist revelatory writing.

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*Traditions of Lord Pei* tells the life story and apotheosis of the Daoist god Pei Xuanren 裴玄仁.<sup>1</sup> Lord Pei was one of the dozen or so deities who appeared to mediums in the fourth and fifth centuries near present-day Jurong 句容, a city near the Eastern Jin 東晉 (318–420 AD) capital Jiankang 建康 (near present-day Nanjing). The scriptures, hagiographies, and liturgies created by these mediums, which were collectively called the Shangqing (Upper Clarity) revelations, were written first by Hua Qiao 華僑 (ca. 363 AD) and later by Yang Xi 楊羲 (330–386 AD) on behalf of their patron Xu Mi 許謐 (303–376 AD).<sup>2</sup> Readers of the texts can sense the world as on the brink of a great apocalypse; the knowledge bestowed by the spiritual beings in the Upper Clarity heavens would provide effective macrobiotic and meditative rituals to ward off disaster and death. Upper Clarity adepts therefore would have seen the ongoing revelation of information from spiritual beings such as Lord Pei as esoteric knowledge that would ensure a favorable afterlife, ideally enabling readers as well to transform into gods of the Upper Clarity heavens.

Hagiographies were a key component of Upper Clarity practice. They were imagined in particular as a kind of auto-hagiography because the deities, descending into the oratories of mediums such as Hua and Yang, conveyed their previous life-experiences and spiritual practices for the benefit of the patrons of the mediums.<sup>3</sup> It is likely that parts of the *Traditions of Lord Pei* were some of the earliest hagiographic materials revealed to Xu Mi's Daoist community. Lord Pei was one of the two gods who bestowed revelations to Hua Qiao in the late 350s or early 360s, when he claimed that he had made contact with two spiritual beings who served as his informants, Lord Pei and Lord Zhou (Zhou Yishan 周義山). Thanks to the fifth-century postface of Zhou Yishan's

<sup>1</sup> Lord Pei's hagiography occupies an entire fascicle of the Song-era *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (*Seven Tallies of the Cloud Bookcase*). For the latter, we use the *Sanjiaben* 三家本 version of the *Zhengtong Daoist Canon* (published 1988, by Wenwu chubanshe [Beijing], Shanghai shudian [Shanghai], and Tianjin guji chubanshe [Tianjin]). In this article, we will refer to this and other *Yunji qiqian* texts in the *Zhengtong Canon* by the text numbers assigned in Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 2004; hereafter referred to as *DZ*) 3, pp. 1393–1440. Thus, Lord Pei's hagiography is *DZ* 1032, j. 105, pp. 1a–26b. For more on Pei's hagiography, see Isabelle Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing dans l'histoire du taoïsme* (Paris: Publications de l'École française d'Étrême-Orient, 1984) 2, pp. 375–83; and Yoshioka Yoshitoyo 吉岡義豊, *Dōkyō kyōten shiron* 道教經典史論 (Tokyo: Dōkyō kankōkai, 1955), pp. 377, 391.

<sup>2</sup> The texts of this tradition are also called the Highest Clarity or Shangqing texts. See Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1997), pp. 275–302.

<sup>3</sup> For an excellent overview of the other five hagiographies written by Yang Xi, see Xie Conghui 謝聰輝, "Xiuzhen yu jiangzhen: Liuchao Daojiao Shangqing jingpai xianzhan yanjiu" 修真與降真, 六朝道教上清經派仙傳研究, Ph.D. diss. (Taiwan shifan daxue, 1999), pp. 145–53.

hagiography, it is fairly certain that Hua was the medium responsible for producing the work, namely, *Ziyang zhenren neizhuan* 紫陽真人內傳 (*Esoteric Biography of the Perfected of Purple Yang*). This same postface indicates that Lord Pei had begun dictating his hagiography to Hua Qiao before Xu fired the medium. This makes it likely that existing parts of the hagiography were revised and adapted by Yang Xi after he became Xu family's new medium in 363.<sup>4</sup> Yang continued to receive revelations and minor scriptures from Lord Pei and by 370 had also produced a version of Pei's hagiography.<sup>5</sup> As we shall see below, *The Traditions of Lord Pei* has many layers of exegetical and explanatory material in addition to its lengthy biographical narrative. The presence of multiple authors helps explain, at least in part, these layers and why the text as a whole seems to lack a coherent structure.

As we argue below, the different layers reflect the ways in which texts were revealed, recorded, transmitted, and copied by early-medieval Daoists.<sup>6</sup> Nearly all Upper Clarity revelations emerged while a medium combined shorter revelations or pronouncements (*gao* 誥) into hagiographic texts (*zhuan* 傳), and finally into longer scriptures (*jing* 經). The gods who transmitted this sacred information to adepts were merely the transmitters, not the authors of the texts. These divine beings often formed a teacher-disciple relationship with adepts, and a human medium could carry on conversations with many different deities, even in the same séance. As the conversation between mediums and gods went on over time, the length and complexity of the scriptures expanded along with the conversation.<sup>7</sup> The text of *Traditions of Lord*

<sup>4</sup> Glimpses of Pei's early correspondence with Maoshan mediums are also found in "Dao-shou" 道授 ("The Transmissions of the Dao"), collected in *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (*Declarations of the Perfected*); see *DZ* 1016, j. 5, pp. 1a-17a.

<sup>5</sup> See *DZ* 1016, j. 2, p. 18b. For an overview of Yang's role as advisor, see Isabelle Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing dans l'histoire du Taoïsme* (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1984) 1, pp. 107-111; Michel Strickmann, "The Mao Shan Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy," *TP* 63.1 (1977), pp. 3-5; and Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1997), pp. 131-36.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the discrepancies and inconsistencies in this text, see Chen Guofu 陳國符, *Daozang yuanliu kao* 道藏源流考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1949), p. 12; Manfred Porkert, *Biographie d'un taoïste légendaire: Tcheou Tseu-yang* (Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1979), p. 15; Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing* 2, p. 298, and idem, "Shangqing," in Fabrizio Pregadio, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Taoism* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 921. In a recent study, Chang Chao-jan 張超然 has rekindled interest in the complicated textual history of Pei's hagiography; he argues that the different textual layers represent how readers as early as the late-4th c. adapted and revised Yang's texts into new ritual environments. See his "Chuanshou yu jiaocai: *Qingling zhenren Peijun zhuan*" 傳授與教材, 清靈真人裴君傳中的五靈法, *Huaren zongjiao yanjiu* 華人宗教研究 1 (2013), pp. 113-15.

<sup>7</sup> This idea was first suggested by Michel Strickmann in his *Le Taoïsme du Mao Chan: Chronique d'une Révélation* (Paris: Collège de France, 1981), pp. 14-15. For a more a more substantial study on the accretive form of composition in early Daoist scriptures, see J.E.E. Pet-

*Pei* represents an intermediate form in a scriptural process, one that preserves clues to debates about efficacy of specific ritual forms and locations for practice. By situating the text within its contemporary hagiographic and ritual contexts, we also conclude that this kind of revelatory literature is a pastiche of ritual and textual conventions. Seen in this way the accretive and overlapping parts of *Traditions* sheds light on the ritual and textual worlds that shaped its composition.

#### THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF AN INNER HAGIOGRAPHY

Although modern scholars refer to stories concerning Daoist saints as “hagiography,” there is no equivalent Chinese term for texts that fulfilled functions within the Chinese tradition similar to those of their European counterparts. In collections such as the Song-period *Yunji qiqian* and bibliographies such as the *Sui shu* 隋書 treatise named “Jingji zhi” 經籍志, hagiographical texts are simply labeled as *zhuan* 傳, which can be understood in different contexts to mean memoir, biography, tradition, transmission, or commentary. The *lie zhuan* 列傳 of Sima Qian’s 司馬遷 (146–86 BC) monumental historical classic, *Shiji* 史記, is often cited as the earliest extant example of the term *zhuan* being used to designate a record of individual lives. The *lie zhuan* were often veritable anthologies, merging biographical details with other material such as memorials, letters, poems, prose, and speeches by or about the subject into a didactic life-narrative.

By the beginning of the early-medieval period, *zhuan* were also assembled into anthologies that were independent of overarching historical narratives. New genres of biographical writing also emerged, chief among them independent biographies (*bie zhuan* 別傳), which account for nearly a quarter of all the historical texts recorded in the “Jingji zhi” just mentioned. Most of this material reflects the social changes of the post-Han world and were concerned with matters related to local political elites rather than affairs of state. Anecdotes related to the talents, accomplishments, and personal character of prominent family members were recorded and used to attract the patronage of powerful local elites.<sup>8</sup> Thus, by the time of the composition of *Traditions of Lord*

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tit’s and Chao-jan Chang’s *Library of Clouds: Rewriting Daoist Scriptures in the 4th and 5th Centuries CE*, forthcoming from the Chinese University of Hong Kong Press.

<sup>8</sup> For an analysis of the familial focus of biography about the period, see Keith Knapp, “Personal Loyalties: The Virtue of *Zhong* 忠 in Early Medieval China,” paper presented at the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Southeast Early China Roundtable, Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Florida, November 10, 2007. For an analysis of the use of *biezhuan* in the recommendation system, see Li Chuanyin, *Wei-Jin Nan Bei Chao shiqi shixue yu zhengzhi de guanxi* 魏晉南北朝時期史學與政治的關係 (Wuhan: Huazhong ke zhi daxue chubanshe, 2004), pp. 100–2.

*Pei*, a didactic or moral valence had become a seminal feature of Chinese biographical writing, because their authors employed archetypal tropes to highlight specific kinds of behavior and character traits.

One way that *Traditions of Lord Pei* stands out among the various *zhuan* of the early-medieval era is that its text allegedly came from the god himself. Unlike other forms of biography, which often wove together anecdotes, direct speech, and examples of writing from the subject, early readers imagined *Traditions* as a kind of divinely-revealed autobiography dictated to Pei's human disciples.<sup>9</sup> However, the process of transmission (i.e., the translation of heavenly texts into earthly copies) was not assumed to be exact despite the conceit that they were dictated to the medium. The transmission of Upper Clarity texts happened in piecemeal fashion: some parts of scriptures were related in short pronouncements (*gao*), while others were embedded in hagiographies (*zhuan*).<sup>10</sup>

The assumption of divine origin and transmission may help explain the text's unusual structure. The layers of addendum, with their explanations and contradictions, leave little doubt that *Traditions of Lord Pei* has been added to over time. Such editing went beyond simply filling in lacunae or correcting what might be thought of as textual errors – a process common to all texts during the period.<sup>11</sup> Because the text was supposedly left unfinished by Hua Qiao, it may have been a convenient site for more extensive elaborations and further revelations about its core contents, as they took on new importance within the community. We see evidence for this throughout the text in moments when particular techniques or sites of ritual practice seem to be reprioritized or gain greater importance. Furthermore, its layered structure suggests that future editors declined to clean up the narrative, possibly because each layer of a Daoist scripture was information thought to have been obtained through heavenly revelation, or because its layered structure did not pose a significant challenge for medieval readers who were used to the accreted nature of such manuscripts. It suggests the primacy of the life-narrative that begins the text, and the way in which

<sup>9</sup> At the beginning of this text, in the subtitle, the text is identified as collated (*zhuan* 撰) by Pei's disciple Deng Yunzi 鄧雲子. He also appears in *DZ* 1032, j. 105, p. 8a, which describes Pei's travels to Mount Taihua and living there with Deng.

<sup>10</sup> Chang Chao-jan has demonstrated that Tao bolstered his argument by culling these revelations with passages from Mao Ying's hagiography, titled "Mao sanjun zhuan." See his "Xipu, jiaofa ji qi zhenghe: Dong Jin Nanchao Daojiao Shangqingpai de jichu yanjiu" 系譜教法及其整合, 東晉南朝道教上清派的基礎研究, Ph.D. diss. (Cheng-chi University, 2008), pp. 89–112.

<sup>11</sup> See Xiaofei Tian, *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Record of a Dusty Table* (Seattle: U. Washington P., 2005), pp. 7–10.

authors respected and preserved the biography even as they attested to, expanded, or clarified it with their own material.

Upper Clarity mediums referred to hagiographies like *Traditions of Lord Pei* as *nei zhuan* 內傳, “inner, or esoteric, traditions.” There is no definitive answer for when or why certain esoteric texts came to be designated as *nei zhuan*.<sup>12</sup> Some evidence suggests that the term was used in the context of political history before religious communities adopted it. Two Han-period histories, *Yuejue shu* 越絕書 and *Wu-Yue chungiu* 吳越春秋, both of which recount the Warring States-period conflict between the states of Wu and Yue and Wu’s eventual defeat, use the term, though its meaning in both texts is unclear. In *Wu-Yue chungiu*, the designation *nei zhuan* appears in the titles of memoirs for rulers from the state of Wu, such as Helü 闔閭 (r. 514–496 BC) and his son Fuchai 夫差 (d. 473), while the memoirs for the rulers of the state of Yue are designated as *wai zhuan*. Given that the putative author of the text, Zhao Ye 趙曄 (ca. 25–56) was originally from a region ruled by Yue, the designation of the Wu biographies as *nei* appears to have had little relationship to regional identity. The term is even more unevenly applied in the earlier *Yuejue shu*, where it is used for memoirs related to both Wu and Yue. In addition, it uses the term *nei jing* 內經 as a designation for several chapters.

An exchange at the end of *Yuejue shu*’s first chapter – between the author/editor and an interlocutor – suggests that the designations *nei* and *wai* largely refer to the content of the chapter and the breadth of the sources. “Someone asked, why are some [chapters] called classics, some commentaries, some inner, and some outer 問曰：或經或傳，或內或外，何謂？” The author replied, “Classic [sections] discourse on events, while commentary [sections] speak to meaning. Outer chapters are not written by any one person, and their content is wide-ranging, or sometimes not related to matters at hand, but draw on related material to provide meaning 經者，論其事，傳者，道其意，外者，非一人所作，頗相覆載，

<sup>12</sup> The *Sui shu* “Jingji zhi” designates nine texts as “inner traditions” and records them as a group in the context of the biographical collections of Liu Xiang and Ge Hong. They are, in the order listed there: *The Inner Tradition of Han Emperor Wu* (*Hanwu neizhuan* 漢武內傳); *The Inner Tradition of Mao Ying* 茅盈 [aka Mao jun 茅君] (*Taiyuan zhenren dongxiang siming Maojun neizhuan* 太元真人東鄉司命茅君內傳); *The Inner Tradition of Wangjun as Recorded by His Disciple Wei Huacun* 魏華存 [ca. 252–334] (*Qingxu zhenren Wangjun neizhuan* 清虛真人王君內傳); *The Inner Tradition of Lord Pei* 清虛真人裴君內傳; *The Inner Tradition of Zhang Daoling* (d. 156) (*Zhengyi zhenren santian fashi Zhangjun neizhuan* 正一真人三天法師張君內傳); *The Inner Tradition of Ge Xuan* 葛玄 (ca. 164–244) [uncle of Ge Hong] (*Taiji zuo xiangong Gejun neizhuan* 太極左仙公葛君內傳); *The Inner Tradition of Ma Mingsheng* 馬鳴生 (*Xianren Majun yinjun neizhuan* 仙人馬君陰君內傳); *The Inner Tradition of Yin Xi* [disciple of Laozi] (*Guanling neizhuan* 關令內傳); and finally *The Inner Tradition of Wei Huacun* (*Nanyue furen neizhuan* 南嶽夫人內傳).

或非其事，引類以託意。”<sup>13</sup> Here the author suggests that the outer or *wai* sections of the text draw from a wider range of sources to elucidate broader principles. John Lagerwey, in his translation and analysis of *Wu-Yue chungiu*, concurs with this assessment, suggesting strongly that the *nei* chapters are so named because they relied on fewer sources that were not widely circulated, whereas the Yue material drew upon more disparate sources and so was considered *wai*.<sup>14</sup>

As a spatial metaphor, the terms inner 內 and outer 外 frequently connoted differences in values among social, political, and ideological spheres, though not always in predictable ways. The terms designated a distinction between private and public spheres, as in the context of gender distinctions, in which the space of wives and concubines was designated as interior vis-a-vis the outer sphere of public, male action.<sup>15</sup> Many prose works from the late-Warring States and early-imperial periods, such as *Zhuangzi* and *Huainanzi*, were divided into *nei* and *wai* sections, with the inner section generally – but not always – understood to represent the core teachings or superior teachings of the author.<sup>16</sup> By Ge Hong’s 葛洪 (283–343) era, the term appears to have been regularly used to designate communities of believers or traditions of texts.<sup>17</sup> Ge Hong himself divided his *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 into inner and outer sections, with the *neipian* 內篇 concerned with Daoist (*dao* 道) topics of immortality, transcendence, elixirs, and talismans, while the *waipian* 外篇 essays covered classicist (*ru* 儒) topics such as literature, government, and the vagaries of good fortune and success in the political sphere.<sup>18</sup>

*Neizhuan*, as an existing term, was thus not only a designation that connoted esoteric content but also hinted at the larger process of

<sup>13</sup> Liu Jianguo 劉建國 and Huang Junlang 黃俊郎, eds., *Xinyi Yuejue shu* 新譯越絕書 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1997), p. 15. For an alternate translation, see Olivia Milburn, *The Glory of Yue: An Annotated Translation of the Yuejue shu* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 75–76.

<sup>14</sup> See John Lagerwey, “A Translation of the Annals of Wu and Yüeh, Part I,” Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1975), p. x. See also Jianjun He’s translation *Wu-Yue chungiu, The Annals of Wu and Yue: An Annotated Translation of the Wu-Yue Chungiu* (Cornell: Cornell U.P., forthcoming 2021).

<sup>15</sup> The chapter “Inner Regulations” (“Neize” 內則) of the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) discusses the regulations of the household, dividing young women and men according to their spheres of activity; see Wang Wenjin 王文錦, ed., *Liji yijie* 禮記譯解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 2001), j. 20, p. 363.

<sup>16</sup> See Julius Tsai, “Reading the ‘Inner Biography of the Perfected Person of Purple Solarity’: Religion and Society in Early Daoist Hagioigraphy,” *JRAS* 3d ser. 18 (2008), p. 195.

<sup>17</sup> See also Robert Ford Campany, “On the Very Idea of Religion (in the Modern West and in Early Medieval China),” *History of Religions* 42.4 (May 2003), p. 308.

<sup>18</sup> See Yang Mingzhao 楊明照, ed., *Baopuzi waipian jiaojian* 抱朴子外篇校箋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), j. 50, p. 698. See also Tsai, “Reading the ‘Inner Biography,’” pp. 195–96, for discussion of Ge Hong’s work in the context of *nei* and *wai*.

how prior material was retold in a new form for a new audience. As Gil Raz has noted, Daoism in the fourth and fifth centuries grew out of new forms of communal practice, including cultic centers dedicated to specific adepts.<sup>19</sup> Simultaneously, earlier figures who had over time become emblematic of particular practices were incorporated into the narratives of later adepts and became one way in which authors consciously responded to and sublimated earlier techniques into new traditions, integrating the subject, in this case a transcendent figure from older traditions, into the Upper Clarity textual tradition.<sup>20</sup>

Authors of *neizhuan* thus may have used the genre to provide a literary frame for texts, anecdotes, techniques, and other material that was not widely circulated or well known. Similar to the biographies found in the Standard Histories, the primary appeal of these texts lay in their usefulness as collections of material which, divorced from its previous context, was reinterpreted in the form of a life narrative for a new audience. *Neizhuan* may have drawn upon earlier sources, sometimes claiming to be the work of a single author, and the reimagined material subsequently circulated within the space of the initiated. As biographies, they also served a commentarial function, demonstrating how one receives and uses scriptures; they provided a template for the qualities of character and practice that marked one for success. In a departure from the life-narratives such as those Ge Hong, which were aimed at a wide audience, hagiographies like *Traditions of Lord Pei* used teachings as didactic material for an inner circle of readers.

#### THE DIFFERENT LAYERS OF LORD PEI'S HAGIOGRAPHY

*The Traditions of Lord Pei* preserves fragments of texts and specific techniques not attested elsewhere. Several sections of the text are devoted to elaborations and explanations of specific practices; other sections explain or compare different variations among the techniques. The present redaction begins with a primary, auto/biographical account

<sup>19</sup> According to Raz, *Liexian zhuan* provides some evidence for this practice during the Han period. Of the 70 biographies collected by Liu Xiang, almost half refer to a shrine or other cultic site as being established in honor of the adept. *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 and other sources also describe the cultic veneration of practitioners of techniques of longevity during the 1st c. Steles dating from the 2nd c. describe small cultic centers centered on a single family as well as adepts who received more widespread veneration. Cultic centers venerating individual adepts suggest that as the reputation of individual practitioners grew, they became part of the public domain; see Gil Raz, *The Emergence of Daoism: Creation of Tradition* (New York: Routledge Press, 2012), p. 46.

<sup>20</sup> For an overview of how stories about adepts were circulated and redeployed in new contexts, see Robert Ford Company, *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 2009), pp. 222-43.

of Lord Pei, which ends in his apotheosis, and “appendices” of varying length that discuss in more detail topics covered in the life-narrative such as celestial geography, texts received by Lord Pei from transcendents, recipes for specific herbs and fungi, and so forth. The outline of the hagiography is as follows (numbers are the page numbers of the *Yunji qiqian* edition [*juan* 105], as explained in footnote 1):

*Section 1:* A biography of Pei Xuanren (1a–10a).

*Section 2:* A brief section on celestial geography, including an elaboration of mountains and caverns mentioned in the biography (10a–11a).

*Section 3A:* Master Jiang’s 蔣先生 visualization techniques as transmitted to Zhi Ziyuan 支子元 (11a–11b). *Section 3b:* The Benefits of the Oratory (11b–12a).

*Section 4:* The importance of the Autumnal Equinox (12a–15a).

*Section 5A:* An elaboration on the technique for consuming luminescence and rising to the sun and moon as taught to Lord Pei by Taisu Zhenren 太素真人 (15a–19b). *Section 5b:* Further details about the Solar and Lunar Visualizations (19b–22b).

*Section 6:* A list of scriptures and talismans that Lord Pei received from transcendents (22b–24b).

*Section 7:* Two sets of recipes for poria and sesame that were transmitted to Pei (24b–26a).

The inner hagiography begins with the story of Pei’s pilgrimage with two friends to a Buddhist monastery on the northwestern frontier of China. According to the author, Pei’s family venerated the “Way of the Buddha” and Pei from an early age read scriptures. During this pilgrimage, Pei meets a master of meditative and pharmacological arts, Zhi Ziyuan 支子元. In this early passage, Pei’s biographer provides his date of birth, salient characteristics, and physical description. In biographies of important individuals in premodern China, writers often drew attention to peculiar physical traits as part of a motif of signaling greatness early on; this foreshadowed the individual’s eventual historical significance through the physiognomic signs.

Zhi Ziyuan goes on to detail five esoteric rituals thought to enable Pei to extend his life by hundreds of years. These are as follows: 1. actualizing the five planets 五星 to summon their spirits; 2. sexual techniques that can be practiced by men and women; 3. a technique to purge the body of the three corpses (*sanshi* 三尸); 4. summoning spirits through *yin* virtue (*yinde* 陰德); and 5. seeking absolution and recording one’s name on transcendent registers (*xian lu* 仙錄). Most of these

techniques were meditative exercises to be conducted in a *jingshi* 靜室, that is, an oratory – a private space for ritual practice.

The description of these five techniques is longer than the rest of the biographical section. One reason for such length is the detailed descriptions of different but overlapping rituals. These rituals were to be practiced in different places, both in chambers and in remote, outdoor locations, but as the author asserts, these varied options typically resulted in similar, if not identical results for the adept. The variations are always introduced with the rhetorical formula, “There is another technique 又一法.” Zhi Ziyuan begins his instructions for the fourth technique, for example, with a semi-monthly purification rite that could be performed inside an oratory. The technique starts with a ritual bath that would prepare Pei to establish communication with Daoist gods. To this, the Ziyuan appends “another technique” where the practitioner must travel in the mountains and secretly place a dog and chicken there as offerings. These actions would cause the deities to observe Pei’s actions and bestow herbs that would extend his years. There is yet a third variation where the adept would write an announcement to the gods describing his intentions and send it directly to the deities by tying it with azure strings and golden rings. The divine overseers would reward Pei’s actions by erasing the sins he had committed and promoting his position among the transcendent officials. After sending this announcement to the deities Pei was to venture into the mountains where he would discover numinous herbs 靈藥. Both options, however, secured long life for Pei.<sup>21</sup>

Although the rituals Pei learned from Zhi Ziyuan vary significantly, the writer stresses that Pei followed only one regimen after departing Zhi’s monastery: he practiced meditation 精思 within his “secluded chamber 隱室.” During this time, Pei quickly rose to prominence as an official on the metropolitan circuit, serving in government positions such as registrar (*zhubu* 主簿), regional inspector (*cishi* 刺史), lieutenant-governor (*biejia* 別駕), and cavalier attendant-in-ordinary attendance (*sanji changshi* 散騎常侍).<sup>22</sup> He also served as a military general com-

<sup>21</sup> *DZ* 1032, j. 105, p. 4a–b.

<sup>22</sup> According to Michael Rogers (*The Chronicle of Fu Chien: A Case of Exemplar History* [Berkeley: U. California P., 1968], p. 234, n. 295), this position was created in the kingdom of Wei 魏 during the Three Kingdoms 三國 period by combining two Qin offices, the cavalier (*sanji*), who rode in the imperial carriage and had the job of accepting or rejecting offerings to the emperor, and the palace attendant-in-ordinary (*zhong changshi*), who had access to the imperial sanctum and attended personally at the emperor’s side. Since the *Traditions of Lord Pei* allegedly recounts offices held by Pei in the Western Han period, mention of this position either raises the thorny issue of dating the text, or suggests that the biography of Lord Pei could be construed as evidence that the position existed earlier than Rogers assumed.

manding armies against the Xiongnu on the northern frontier of China.<sup>23</sup> While serving in his official capacity as an official, Pei developed clients among the elite of the communities he served. As registrar of Jizhou 冀州 (in present-day Hebei), for example, Pei took on lieutenant-governor Liu Anzhi 劉安之 as a close disciple, even inviting Liu to practice with him in his oratory.<sup>24</sup>

After practicing in his oratory for two decades, a transcendent accompanied by seven jade lads and seven jade maidens descended into Pei's courtyard 庭. At the time, Pei was conducting a purification ritual in his chamber, but he emerged and received the divinity. Identifying himself as Master Red Pine (Chisongzi 赤松子), the god informed Pei that he should cease practicing all of the techniques he had previously learned and focus his efforts on envisioning the Five Numina (*wuling* 五靈) in order to achieve a perfected Dao. He promised that this technique would be imparted to Pei at a later date. Pei and Liu Anzhi both responded by retiring from official life; and they dedicated themselves to the Five Numina method, embracing the well-worn trope of retirement and seclusion that permeates the life narratives of Daoist adepts. Eventually Pei and Liu settled in a cave at Mount Yangyu 陽浴山, but Liu was unable to continue his ascetic practice with any consistency and he repeatedly contacted people nearby.<sup>25</sup>

Liu ultimately departed because he was unable to withstand the rigors of social isolation, and Pei took on a new disciple, Deng Yunzi 鄧雲子. This is notable for two reasons. First, the presumed collator of the text makes an appearance in the narrative, which clarifies the timing of Deng Yunzi's connection to Pei.<sup>26</sup> Second, unlike the autobiographical

<sup>23</sup> It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when Pei would have participated in military action against the Xiongnu. If Pei was older than twenty-three, as the biography suggests, but younger than thirty, this might have occurred around 155–148 BC, during the reign of Han emperor Jing 景 (r. 157–141 BC). That point in time was a few years after a major expedition by the Xiongnu into Chinese territory in 158 BC, during the last years of emperor Wen's reign (*Hanshu* 漢書 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998] 4, p. 130), but long before emperor Wu 武 (141–87 BC) replaced the policy of marriage alliances 和親 with one of outright warfare in 134 BC (see Yü Ying-shih, "Han Foreign Relations," in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume I: The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.–A.D. 220* [New York: Cambridge U.P., 1995], pp. 386–89).

<sup>24</sup> An account of Liu Anzhi is not found in the Standard Histories, but such relationships between practitioners of esoteric arts and lay sponsors, clients, and disciples were fairly common. See Campany, *Making Transcendents*, esp. chap. 6.

<sup>25</sup> *DZ* 1032, j. 105, pp. 7b–8a. Mount Yangyu 陽浴山 was part of a cluster of mountain names like Mount Yanggu 陽谷山; all refer to the same mountains on the northern frontier of China. See Edward H. Schafer, "The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts'un at Lin-ch'uan in the Eighth Century," *Journal of Oriental Studies* 15 (1977), p. 133, n. 52.

<sup>26</sup> Deng is identified as the collator in our edn. of *Yunji qiqian*; he is also mentioned in the "Jingji zhi" bibliography section of *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975) 46,

narrative of Zhou Yishan, the *Tradition of Lord Pei* describes the adept taking on disciples or patrons prior to his transcendence.

Later on, Lord [Pei] left for Mount Taihua with his [disciple Deng] Yunzi. They entered a mysterious stone chamber within a grotto on the western [side of the mountain]. After twenty-two years, he suddenly saw five elderly men donned in turbans who had come to pay them a visit. Lord [Pei] respectfully knocked his head on the ground twice, and entreated them for divine instruction. [They] then produced divine fungi, which they presented as gifts. 君於後將雲子去，乃登太華山，入西洞玄石室裏，積二十二年，奄見五老人皆巾來詣。君再拜頓首，乞請神訣，乃出神芝見賜。<sup>27</sup>

At the end of the story detailing Pei's achievements, the writer goes on to describe how Pei abandoned his chamber in the capital and moved to a remote site on Mount Taihua 太華山. After twenty-two years of his practicing in the mountains, the five lords appeared before Pei and enabled him to undertake a series of cosmic travels. Pei ultimately arrives at Mt. Kong 空山, which is surrounded by deep water, where he encounters the Perfected One of Grand Simplicity. Pei's reception of the *Hidden Writings* on Mt. Kong receives only a single mention at the end of the biographical narrative, but, as we will see, below, other layers of text attach significant importance to this work. After receiving his final instructions for transcendence, Pei was commissioned to rule the Palace of Pure Numinosity (Qingling gong 青靈宮) and received the symbols and regalia of his office.

The narrative of Pei's apotheosis is followed by a brief description of the grotto-Heaven where Pei served as a Daoist official. Pei's palace was located within a cluster of three peaks called the Geyan Mountains 葛衍山, which was 70,000 *li* further away from the Kunlun Mountains 崑崙山, a fabled paradise far in the west of China. Pei was thought to have served as an official in the Palace of Pure Numinosity beneath one of the peaks of the Geyan Mountains. Each of Geyan's three peaks had a bureau (*fu* 府) run by Daoist gods; all three administrative centers were collectively called the Three Palaces 三宮. The dimensions of the three peaks suggest that we are squarely in the realm of geographical fantasy; at 2,700 *li* in height, each peak would be well over one

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p. 2004, as Zheng Ziyun 鄭子雲, and in the "Yiwen zhi" bibliography of *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975) 49, p. 1519, as Zheng Yunqian 鄭雲千.

<sup>27</sup> *DZ* 1032, j. 105, p. 8a.

thousand kilometers tall! Not surprisingly, the massive grotto that lies beneath the mountain holds an enormous, nine-storied fortress with palaces, jade halls, and chambers threaded with orchids. The text also describes adjacent palaces where other Daoist gods resided alongside otherworldly flora and fauna including the well-known *qilin* 麒麟 and phoenix (*fenghuang* 鳳凰), among others. The three peaks are connected by a subterranean passage.

The life story and postmortem residence of Pei is followed by a layer detailing a method in which the adept would visualize the Five Numina. The author of this section describes how adepts should envision the numina in an attempt to breathe in nourishing *qi*, describing a visualization technique used by an adept to focus one's thoughts prior to meditation. It is a technique supposedly taught to Zhi Ziyuan by Master Jiang 蔣先生. The method requires the adept to make multiple incantations in one's oratory. Between incantations, an adept closes his eyes and faces five directions, east, south, west, the direction of one's natal year, and north. One then must stop the breath, swallow saliva and click one's teeth a different number of times depending on the direction: nine times facing east, three times facing south, seven times facing west, once for the direction of one's natal year, and five times facing north.

The different number corresponds to the numbers of *qi* mentioned in each poem that return to and protect the organs of the practitioner. Each verse thus contains corresponding references to organs associated with each direction, clearly referencing the Han-period "Five Phases" (*wuxing* 五行) correlative system, as well as references to corresponding colors, stars, and other phenomena.

赤庭絳雲	Crimson clouds about the red courtyard, <sup>28</sup>
上有高真	With high Perfected [beings] above.
三氣歸心	Return the three <i>qi</i> back to my heart,
是我丹元	For this [the god] of my Cinnabar Prime.
太微綠字	The green letters of Grand Tenuity, <sup>29</sup>
書名神仙	Inscribe the names of divine transcendents. <sup>30</sup>

The last line of the section states that the recitation of these five verses is intended to precede the adept's actualization of the gods of

<sup>28</sup> This passage in *DZ* 1314 (pp. 41b–42a) reads: "In a red courtyard of the Crimson Palace 赤庭絳宮."

<sup>29</sup> "Green letters 綠字" was a phrase in traditional China to describe imperial commendations that were first engraved on a stone monument, and then covered with a lacquer coating. The adepts' name engraved on the books of heaven carry this same kind of praise from above.

<sup>30</sup> *DZ* 1032, j. 105, p. 11a.

the five directions. Presumably this refers to the first of Zhi Ziyuan's techniques described in the biographical section, in which an adept ingests the "qi of the five directions."

The brief section that follows compares rituals conducted in a courtyard, or a central courtyard 中庭, to silent incantation in the oratory, while advocating for the superiority of the latter. Here we find a noticeable shift in tone in terms of the specific locations to be used by the practitioner. While this author by no means discards the courtyard as a site for confessionals, he does depict Pei utilizing the oratory because it makes the act of confession easier, but also because it is a site reserved for more advanced adepts.

After the incantations is another layer of the text that has been inserted by a later writer, suggesting that this layer is an alternative form of the five incantations method given in the previous section. With this second method, one can use the same incantations described, above, but rather than conducting them outside in a central courtyard, the adept can simply perform the rituals in an oratory.

This technique is the way of actualizing the Five Numina by first ingesting *qi* and then making silent incantations. This method is of the same caliber as the technique for actualizing [the numina] in the central courtyard. This technique makes meditation easier since it is straightforward and not redundant. Later on, Lord Pei transmitted this [ritual] to replace the first. 此一法, 存五靈先服氣陰祝之道, 與出中庭存法等耳。此法乃逕要不煩, 又於靜思易也。裴君後重更授傳如此。<sup>31</sup>

Delivering the incantations in one's chamber, claims this writer, makes for a simpler, faster, and superior way to visualize the Five Numina. This second variant, he writes, "makes meditation easier since it is straightforward and not superfluous 逕要不煩, 又於靜思易也。"<sup>32</sup> The writer also states that Lord Pei was only aware of this method later in life and it was transmitted separately.

Curiously, there is no visualization technique for the Five Numina described anywhere in the text that requires the adept to perform it in a courtyard. Indeed, the majority of the techniques transmitted by Zhi Ziyuan are not specific regarding a location for practice. The fourth technique mentions a bed or raised dais (*chuang* 床), while the alternative techniques mention only natural settings such as locations in the moun-

<sup>31</sup> *DZ* 1032, j. 105, pp. 11b-12a.

<sup>32</sup> *DZ* 1032, j. 105, p. 11b.

tains. After learning these techniques, the text describes Pei's practice as occurring in his secluded chamber and in an oratory. However, when Pei is visited by Master Redpine the text states that the transcendent descends from the Heavens into Pei's courtyard, but it is unclear from the context whether Pei was actually practicing there.<sup>33</sup>

After his meeting with Master Redpine, Pei retreats with his disciple Liu Anzhi to stone chambers 石室 in the mountains. In section five, it is clear that the adept should practice the two techniques for imbibing solar and lunar essences while facing the sun and moon, respectively. The text is clear that one can practice this indoors in a secret room 密室 by visualizing the sun and moon in one's mind. Finally, it is possible that the author could be obliquely referencing the next section, section five, which does stipulate that the adept enter his or her courtyard to send up an announcement to the Grand Thearch Lord who is the Celestial Thearch of Northern Culmen Most High 太上北極天帝太帝君.

A similar argument about the utility of the chamber, albeit in heavily modified form, is found in *Shangqing taiyi jinque yuxi jinzhen ji* 上清太一金闕玉璽金真紀 (*Annals of the Golden Perfected on the Jade Seal upon the Golden Porte of the Great One of Upper Clarity*). The author of this scripture elaborates on Pei's hagiography by quoting from an otherwise unknown scripture titled *Dongda mingqing* 洞達命青 (*Penetrating into the Fated Azure*; probably the same text identified as *Jingming qingtū*, above), and encourages readers to meditate on the image of the entire cosmos encompassed within the body.

Even your master's silent [chamber] is within my body, which is what the sages meant by "embracing inside to understand the outside." If you are still hoping to change your ways, you will not necessarily have to go into the courtyard in addition to entering silent [meditation]. This is what it means to "observe its origins, and inspect its actions."<sup>34</sup> The Pole Star is also [embedded] in the shape of my body. You only need to be alone in your room or chamber, and meditate while lighting incense according to rituals. Then wish for good things to happen.<sup>35</sup> 師靖亦我身中，是故聖人包內知外。夫欲思改更，未必中庭并入靖也。“觀之所由，察之所行，”此之謂也。北辰亦我身形。但當獨處所住屋室，靜思按法燒香，所念乃吉。

<sup>33</sup> *DZ* 1032, j. 105, p. 7b.

<sup>34</sup> *Lunyu* (SSJZS edn.) 2, p. 4b [p. 17].

<sup>35</sup> *DZ* 394, p. 4b.

The reference to ritual sites in the *Tradition of Lord Pei* suggests that one of its authors was engaged in a similar discourse about the efficacy of ritual sites, perhaps responding to another contemporary technique for visualizing the Five Numina that required practitioners to use a courtyard. Thus it appears that the text contains clear references to debates over ritual space and practice and that there was disagreement during this period over the ideal place for ritual practice and the most efficacious forms of these rituals.

The fourth part of *Traditions of Lord Pei* offers more information about the teachings Lord Pei received from Zhi Ziyuan, his first master at the monastery. All of these teachings focus on methods to be performed on the eight nodal days 八節日, that is, the equinoxes, solstices, and the first days of each of the four seasons.<sup>36</sup> Zhi's emphasis on the nodal days resonates with his teachings earlier in the *Traditions*. In Zhi's fourth technique from section 1, he describes a method requiring an adept to raise a white dog and a white rooster, and place these animals on the Five Marchmounts on the eight nodal days. Zhi's fifth technique summarizes the importance of seasonal nodes as times when millions of Daoist gods convene to judge the merits and transgressions of humans on Earth.

The fourth section of *Traditions of Lord Pei* is itself a pastiche of quotes from many scriptures such as the *Perfected Record of Transcendent Taboos* (*Xianji zhenji* 仙忌真記), *Unadorned Sayings of the Three and Nine* (*Sanjiu suyu* 三九素語), and *Scripture of the Golden Root Watched at Night by the Divine Lad* (*Houye shentong jingen jing* 候夜神童金根經). These scriptural quotes bolster and expand on Zhi's claims about the efficacy of the autumnal equinox. An adept must also find a remote place to seek absolution for his transgressions, underscoring the solitary nature of many of these methods. It concludes by reiterating the importance of the equinox as the day of autumnal judgment 秋判, the day of distinguishing between the living and the dead.

In the fifth section, the writer appends a layer that elaborates on Pei Xuanren's training at Mount Kong towards the end of his life under the tutelage of the Perfected One of Grand Simplicity (Taisu zhenren). Pei's account of the training in the first section of the hagiography is very short. Pei claims that this Daoist god mastered methods for ascending to the sun and moon and consuming the soaring blossom of

<sup>36</sup> The eight nodal days are the "inception of spring" (*lichun* 立春), "vernal parting" (*chunfen* 春分), "the inception of summer" (*lixia* 立夏), "summer's arrival" (*xiazhi* 夏至), "the inception of autumn" (*liqiu* 立秋), "autumnal parting" (*quifen* 秋分), "the inception of winter" (*lidong* 立冬), and "winter's arrival" (*dongzhi* 冬至).

the Two Phosphors 服二景飛華上奔日月之法. After using these methods for eleven years, Pei was carried aloft to the heavens to receive his divine office. This section thus represents a significant addendum to the earlier text. The two methods discussed in this section are complementary. The first involves meditating with the power of solar rays and the Five Thearch Sun Lords (Wudi rijun 五帝日君). The second employs the power of lunar rays to draw near the Five Thearch Lunar Ladies (Yuezhong wudi furen 月中五帝夫人). These two rituals are what Pei calls the “*dao* of dashing to the sun” and the “*dao* of dashing to the moon.” According to the text, each technique requires five years of practice to result in visitations by Thearch Lords or Ladies.

Unlike the previous sections on the rites of Zhi Ziyuan, the rituals associated with the Perfected One of Grand Simplicity results in the transmission of esoteric Daoist texts, most notably *Writs of the Streaming Regalia* (*Yuyi wen* 鬱儀文) and the *Stanza on Knotted Spangles* (*Jielin zhang* 結璘章). These names refer to texts that a Perfected Being would secure upon his or her apotheosis. There are many different scriptures in the Daoist Canon that reference these texts and the rituals to absorb solar and lunar pneumas.<sup>37</sup> The author of this section thus links the figure of Lord Pei to a broader cluster of texts and practices not attested to in the biographical narrative, and strongly suggests that Lord Pei’s transcendence and apotheosis were the direct result of his acquisition of the two critical texts and not simply the tutelage of the Perfected One of Grand Simplicity. Indeed, the virtues of these two texts for the pursuit of transcendence are so great that their acquisition could be said to be the underlying goal for actualizing the Thearch Lords and Ladies. Thus, although the adept seeks interaction with the deities, it is for the cause of procuring these valuable scriptures.

The end of this section is a lengthy discussion on the importance of secrecy for this and other Daoist methods. Once again, the Perfected One of Grand Simplicity makes his point by citing from other scriptures, here the *Scripture of the Eight Immaculate [Ladies]* (*Basu jing* 八素經) and the *Middle Formula of Inner Vision* (*Neishi zhongfang* 內視中方). By stringing together these quotes, the writer is asserting the need for absolute discretion in the practice and transmission of these actualization techniques. The injunction for secrecy even extends to other adepts who may be practicing in one’s chamber *at the same time*.

<sup>37</sup> Monica Esposito has explored the various versions of these rites in the Daoist Canon, most notably *Taishang yuchen yuyi jielin benriyue tu* 太上玉晨鬱儀結璘奔日月圖 (*DZ* 435) and the excerpts of it in *Yunji qiqian* (*DZ* 1032). See her “Sun-Worship in China: The Roots of Shangqing Taoist Practices of Light,” *CEA* 14 (2004), p. 357.

All Daoist adepts can achieve these same things in their practice; you do not necessarily need to be a transcendent being. If you are in a secret room, and the sun and moon are not visible, then you can do this by actualizing [the gods] in your mind and meditating on them. You do not necessarily need to wait for the sun and moon to appear. It will be best if [the gods] appear before you and you see them; to achieve this, you only need to wholeheartedly focus your mind on this task and you can do anything. These words are very important. What is meant by “closing your eyes” is that your eyes will nearly be closed but not completely shut; this will allow you to see with a small amount of light from the sun and moon. Do [these rituals] in secrecy; do not let others to know about it. While various people might stay in your chamber, they will sit next to you and never perceive what you are doing for you are keeping your thoughts a secret. This applies to all things you do, not simply this one [ritual].<sup>38</sup>

道士行之者則是耳，不必以已仙人也。若處密室及日月不見時，但心中存而思之可也，不待見日月。要見視之爲至佳，惟精思心盡，無所不通，此言要也。臨目者，令目當閉而不閉之間也。少令得見日月之光景。密而行之，勿令人知。雖雜人同室而止，有密其思者，比肩仍自不覺。每事盡當爾，不但此一條而已。

Like the earlier parts of the hagiography, this passage argues for the utility of a secret room as a ritual space. However, the author of the passage goes even further by stressing the importance of the adept's imagination in visualizing the sun and the moon. The appearance of the sun and moon is ultimately unnecessary; one need only “wholeheartedly focus your mind” and anything can be accomplished. The complete internalization of the adept's practice is seen in the final sentence, in which the author argues that this process may be carried out in complete secrecy even while in the presence of others.

This section has a definite ending because the editor has added, “these last two entries are oral instructions that the Perfected Being of Grand Simplicity received from the Grand Thearch Lord.” This is followed by quotes from the *Hidden Writings of the Most High* (*Taishang yinshu* 太上隱書) to clarify issues of transmission, as well as the complicated textual transmission of the texts. One of the principal concerns in this layer of the text is to clarify the offerings that an adept must be prepared to make in order to receive the techniques outlined in section five. The rules are claimed to be quotes from the *Hidden Writings of the*

<sup>38</sup> *DZ* 1032, j. 105, pp. 17b–18a.

*Most High*. The Perfected One of Grand Simplicity would transmit the techniques after an adept rendered a pledge of expensive silk.

The *Hidden Writings of the Most High* states, “If you wish to practice this Dao, you do not need to strive to be the most worthy person. This, however, cannot be obtained from other humans. The mysterious rituals of the perfected officials are transmitted only to those who have been promised through revelation. [Adepts] can only be made ready for this Dao after making an offering of gold and cinabar, and the Dao can only be told after a pledge of azure silk [is made]. Any [adept] who is able to obtain [this Dao] and practice it will be ranked among the Perfected Beings.”<sup>39</sup> 太上隱書曰：“欲行此道，不必愚賢，但地上無此文耳。真官玄法，啓誓乃傳，金丹之信，道乃備焉。青帛之盟，道乃可宣。有得而行，位爲真人。”

The later part of this section acknowledges that all of these texts are included in the *Scripture of the Immaculate Numen* (*Suling jing* 素靈經), a scripture that was known during Yang Xi’s time, but was likely pieced together by editors in the fifth century. It is likely that this layer was composed by a later exegete who was trying to tie together all of these rituals and claim that they really had their origin in a different scripture.

The Perfected Beings of Grand Simplicity have hid this catalogue but have gradually revealed these two rituals. Its contents should be regarded as a secret that should never be mentioned. Even if it were circulated among commoners, how would they possibly understand its contents? Any adept who has the great fortune to come in possession of this text will be trustworthy and will relish in these techniques. If you are able to perform them there will be no need for other kinds of rituals. This is why there is not more mentioned in the text.<sup>40</sup> 太素真人猶隱其篇目，但漫云二事者，是祕諱之甚也。況世人而令知其甲乙乎？有相遇而得之者，至誠好事，仍可爲之，別有事旨，故不一二。

As the hagiography draws to a close, there are two more appendices that list various texts and items that Lord Pei received from the practitioners, gods, and perfected with whom he interacted on his spiritual path. Generally speaking, all Shangqing hagiographies contain a list of texts associated with the god, and for Lord Pei these texts and other objects are helpfully summarized in a brief section near the end of the text. Beginning with the five stanzas 五首 of oral instruction re-

<sup>39</sup> *DZ* 1032, j. 105, p. 20a.

<sup>40</sup> *DZ* 1032, j. 105, p. 22b.

ceived from Zhi Ziyuan, the bibliography also lists eighteen fascicles of scripture, eight talismans, a single register 籙, two writs 文, and a collection of miscellaneous writings. In addition, the bibliography also lists material objects and regalia given by celestial beings such as a jade seal 玉璽, two insignia 章, and bells 鈴.

The last part of *Traditions of Lord Pei* is a set of recipes for the consumption of sesame and poria. Medicinal and alchemical recipes are a common feature of the Upper Clarity hagiographies. Sometimes these recipes are featured as part of the biographical narrative, where the saint meets a master who details the contents and preparation of the recipe as part of a dialogue. The recipes contained in *Traditions* begin with a recipe for *fuling* 茯苓 (*wolfporia extensa*, or poria), a fungal body growing on the roots of pine trees.<sup>41</sup> To process poria, an adept uses an iron pot or crucible, a cauldron, mortar and pestle to first clean and grind it. Afterwards, he or she adds it to a potful of honey slowly through a sieve. Next comes the heating of the *fuling* in a double boiler; we are not told if there needs to be a lid, but we can surmise that we are not to stir the mixture, but gently rock the inner pot back and forth. Eventually the mixture will dry up and the adept is to scrape out the dried substance and use a pestle to grind the mixture into a powder, which can then be formed into pills. The recipe ends with the author stating the benefits of consuming the *fuling*-honey pills, which range from regaining your health (after 100 days of use) to long life and the ability to make your body disappear (after ten years).

A second layer of the recipe immediately follows. In it, the reader encounters more benefits of consuming the mixture. Here the author reiterates similar information but in a slightly different way: all the benefits – from a rejuvenated body, to beams of light emerging from your eyes – take one year of consuming. There is also an obvious disconnect in the sequence of numbers: we suddenly ascend to ten years of consumption of the mixture, and then suddenly return to one.

After the poria recipe comes a similar recipe for the preparation of sesame seeds. At the time of the writing of this text, the consumption of sesame seeds was a relatively new phenomenon. In fact, the word

<sup>41</sup> *Fuling* 茯苓 refers to a fungal parasite that grows on the roots of pine trees. It is glossed as tuckahoe or *Pachyma cocos*, *Poria cocos*, and fungus sclerotium (Bernard Emms Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants from the Pen ts'ao kang mu* [1936; rpt. Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1977]), p. 279, no. 838; Michel Strickmann, "The Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching," in Holmes Welch and Anna K. Seidel, eds., *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1979), p. 156. For more on the herbal concoctions featuring *fuling*, see Robert Campney, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2002), p. 310, n. 73.

used for sesame in the recipe, *huma* 胡麻, was used for a number of different plants, most commonly sesame (*Sesamum orientale*),<sup>42</sup> or otherwise flax (*Linum usitatissimum*).<sup>43</sup> Prior to the introduction of *zhima* 指麻 (or 芝麻) to designate sesame in around the eleventh century AD, it is nearly impossible to determine whether authors use *huma* to refer to sesame or flax. Given that Chinese farmers later cultivated sesame in far greater frequency and that flax is produced only in a relatively limited area of northwest China,<sup>44</sup> it seems that in the *Traditions of Lord Pei*, *huma* most likely referred to sesame.

Judged solely on the contents of *Traditions of Lord Pei*, the association between Pei and dietary regimes seems to be based upon a single passing reference to poria that occurs after Zhi Ziyuan imparts to Pei his five divine formulas.<sup>45</sup> Zhi himself never mentions either poria or sesame in the biography; the text simply states that after receiving Zhi's instructions, Pei began to imbibe poria.<sup>46</sup> Sesame (*huma* 胡麻) is never mentioned in the primary biographical narrative at all and only appears in the final section of the text as described here. That references to this dietary information circulated in other texts but were attributed to *Traditions of Lord Pei* supports the possibility that the final section of the work may have circulated as an independent tradition that became attached to the figure of Lord Pei and was eventually combined with what became this recension.

## CONCLUSION

While the various layers in *The Traditions of Lord Pei* might appear at first as jumbled and incongruous, this article proposes that the rough edges reveal differing opinions and contesting points of view that, in turn, help us learn more about life-writing in the context of early Daoist communities. In some ways, *Traditions* resembles the life-writing found in the Standard Histories. Biography and hagiography were not

<sup>42</sup> Note that this is plant is not *Sesamum indicum* as identified by F. Porter Smith and G. A. Stuart, *Chinese Materia Medica: Vegetable Kingdom* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1911), p. 404, as well as throughout the *Science and Civilisation in China* series. The confusion between these names arose after Linnaeus described two species of sesame that turned out to be a variation of leaf-shape due to prolonged daylight; C. J. P. Seegler, "Sesamum orientale L. (Pedaliaceae): Sesame's Correct Name," *Taxon* 38.4 (1989), p. 657.

<sup>43</sup> Berthold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica: Chinese Contributions in the History of Civilization in Ancient Iran* (Chicago: Field Museum, 1893), p. 292.

<sup>44</sup> Francesca Bray, *Biology and Biological Technology: Agriculture*, vol. 6.2 of *Science and Civilisation in China*, ed. Lu Gwei-Djen and Nathan Sivin (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1984), p. 526.

<sup>45</sup> *DZ* 1032, j. 105, p. 7a.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

meant to show a life as an integrated whole, but were complex texts dealing with social or political ideologies situated in the context of individual lives. As Albert Galvany suggests, early Chinese biographers freely acknowledged the performative nature of discourse, action, and gesture, and archetypal portrayals of historical figures provided the material with which the reader could judge the disposition of individuals and evaluate their actions, understanding broader principles at a human scale.<sup>47</sup> Thus the narration of the inner life of the subject was never a priority for the author, who was chiefly concerned with describing the character, qualities, and actions of the subject in socially relevant terms.<sup>48</sup> In both genres, lifenarratives were dominated by that individual's performance of a specific function or didactic role in the larger narrative.

But whereas official biographies focus on an individual's web of relations within a larger social context, hagiographies such as *Traditions of Lord Pei* situate behaviors and actions within a cosmic context. As a unique iteration of the *zhuan* form, hagiographies present a narrative setting for receiving scriptures, for providing a template to understand them, and knowing what to do with them, portraying the actions and discourses necessary to achieve transcendence in archetypal, didactic terms.<sup>49</sup> The imagined Daoist adept reading Pei's story saw not merely an exemplar of life on earth, but a host of postmortem successes awaiting him or her in the world beyond this life.

*The Traditions of Lord Pei* also differs from official biographies by shifting its narrative focus away from the biographical subject in its later sections. Although the first section of *Traditions* begins with a lengthy account of Lord Pei's transcendence, the remainder is devoted to treatises on sacred geography, ritual spaces, and elaborations on techniques taught to Pei by various masters and deities. The fifth section demonstrates the way in which a lacuna in the biographical narrative – a gap of eleven years during which Pei studied on Mount Kong – was exploited by later authors to include narrative material about additional techniques taught by the Perfected One of Grand Simplicity. Here Pei becomes a tertiary character in his own story, while in other sections such as the discussion of the autumnal equinox, Pei vanishes from the narrative entirely. In this way, *Traditions of Lord Pei* more closely cor-

<sup>47</sup> Albert Galvany, "Philosophy, Biography, and Anecdote: On the Portrait of Sun Wu," *Philosophy East and West* 61 (2011), pp. 630–31.

<sup>48</sup> Denis Twitchett, "Problems of Chinese Biography," in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Confucian Personalities* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1962), pp. 34–35.

<sup>49</sup> Tsai, "Reading the 'Inner Biography,'" pp. 196–97.

responds to the notion of *zhuan* as a commentary or tradition, encompassing more than the biography of a single subject while taking on new dimensions as a site for elaboration and debate.

A deep analysis of Pei's hagiography reveals ways in which readers and editors actively responded to their historical environs. In particular, the appended layers at the end of the biographical portion of the text were a vehicle through which later readers produced new knowledge, giving new shape and meaning to received narratives. This rewriting process parallels the textual practices of medieval Chinese historiography and biography more generally, as literati gathered and edited together disparate material to forge biographies into ideological tools. However, the mechanism for this process was perceived in different terms as revelations that emerged piecemeal from the efforts of multiple mediums working on behalf of their clients or sponsors. This analysis encourages us to see texts arranged in distinct layers as key opportunities to understand the inner workings of the scriptural process and how life-writing was deployed in the context of Daoist communities. Such writers spun increasingly complex stories concerning the powers of Daoist gods and the means of transcendence.<sup>50</sup>

Our study makes new contributions to the understanding of the concept of *neizhuan* as it appears in early-medieval China. The writers of these "inner" biographies appropriated the terminology and many of the features of contemporary historiography, but the texts are not so much "religious" imitations of a "secular" form as they are examples of the incredible range of life-writing in early China, which was flexible enough to be employed in diverse contexts. We see this study as building on Robert Campany's observation that hagiographies were "descriptive of and prescriptive for" religious life.<sup>51</sup> We find that the richly-layered *Traditions of Lord Pei* readily fits within the descriptive and prescriptive demands of early Chinese biography as a genre. The gods who supposedly transmitted this sacred information to adepts were themselves merely transmitters in turn, not the authors of the texts. These deities were said to have formed a teacher-disciple relationship with adepts, and the human mediums could carry on conversations with many different deities, even in the same séance. These jumbled layers give us

<sup>50</sup> Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, p. 90. See also Vincent Goosaert's analysis of Su Shoujian and Marshal Wen as examples of how hagiographies in later centuries similarly reflected such transmissions; "Divine Codes, Spirit-Writing, and the Ritual Foundations of Early-Modern Chinese Morality Books," *AM* 3d ser. 33.1 (2020), pp. 14–16.

<sup>51</sup> Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, p. 100.

glimpses into how a hagiography might grow and develop along with its changing ritual and literary contexts, as different readers tried to make sense of and retell the tale of Lord Pei both through Pei's voice and those of his masters.

*LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS*

*DZ* Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*