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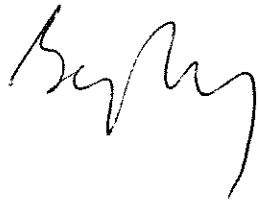
Early Daoist Biography:  
A Study of *Shenxian zhuan*

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Volume One

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
of the Australian National University  
May, 1993

This dissertation is the result of original research I have carried out myself.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beyly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B' and a long, sweeping tail.

## Abstract

This dissertation is a study of *Shenxian zhuan*, a collection of biographical records of Daoist immortals traditionally attributed to Ge Hong who lived from the end of the third to the middle of the fourth centuries C.E.

The Introduction seeks to define the term *shenxian* and discusses ideas concerning immortality in texts of the Eastern Han and Sanguo periods. It analyses the categories into which *Shenxian zhuan* was placed in early bibliographies and shows that it was first regarded as a text from a branch of history. Finally, evidence is adduced to show that in all likelihood the biographies derive from commemorative records of noteworthy local religious figures.

Chapter two discusses the textual status of *Shenxian zhuan* and the authorship of Ge Hong. It concludes that while there is evidence that Ge did compile a work of this name, it is clear that all modern versions of the text are recombinations of the Song or later. Thus, an original text is not completely recoverable. It is also argued that the *Shenxian zhuan* of this period probably contained about twice as many biographies as the modern recompiled versions.

The third chapter analyses the ideas that concern immortality contained in the biographies. It focusses on three major questions. What qualifications were necessary, if any, to become an immortal? How did one become an immortal? What special powers did immortals possess? The examination of these issues demonstrates that while there was a degree of broad agreement on major concepts, the biographies display a large measure of variation on points of detail.

Chapter four examines the narrative and structural features of the biographies and focusses on how they fit into the Chinese biographical tradition. This discussion, like that relating to ideas of immortality, shows that the biographies are characterized by heterogeneity. The narrative and symbolic structures of several biographies are analysed to show how they function.

The fifth chapter discusses the problem of biographical records in other sources of the same period of figures who appear in *Shenxian zhuan*. The appeal to historical accuracy of the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies, the different generic constraints of biographies in the official histories, records in secular collections of worthies and in records of marvels and types of editorial intervention are examined. Finally, it discusses the way some of the biographies may act as a critique of official records.

The thesis concludes with a short discussion of the later development of the Daoist biographical tradition and later careers and cults of some of the figures celebrated in *Shenxian zhuan*.

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## A Note on Translation and References

Arthur Waley noted, in *The Way and Its Power*, that there were two kinds of translation, which he called literary and philological. Literary translation is appropriate when "the main importance of the work is its beauty" and, in these circumstances, "the translator must be prepared to sacrifice a good deal in the way of detailed accuracy in order to preserve in the translation the quality which gives the original its importance." Philological translation, on the other hand, should be employed when "the importance of the original lies not in its literary quality but in the things it says..."<sup>1</sup> If the translations in this thesis were to be placed in one of Waley's categories it would certainly be the latter but, at the same time, they do not, I hope, allow philology to destroy readability. It would have been possible, of course, to encumber each passage of translation with a large amount of philological apparatus: textual notes, variant readings, alternative translations and so on, but the point of this thesis is not to produce a variorum text. Rather, for each biography a basic text for translation has been selected on grounds laid out in chapter two. These texts have been compared with the other available versions of, and citations from, the biography. Only passages that are of obscure meaning, important variants and places where I have emended the text have been commented on in footnotes to the translation. In general, my translations aim at what Waley called "detailed accuracy" while preserving, as far as possible, the tone and flavour of the originals.

Several terms used in the biographies have been translated with a single equivalent or a normal English form of that equivalent. For example, *shijie* always appears as "corpse-liberation", *dushi* as "transcending the generations", *xianqu* as "departed as an immortal", or *jin* as "inhibit". Other terms have been left untranslated. These include words like *Dao* and *qi* which have some currency in modern English and for which there is no satisfactory translation. Words for weights and measures are also transcribed. Neither accurate conversion into western lengths, volumes or weights (for example, translating "He walked one hundred *li*" as "he walked thirty three miles" or "sixty kilometres") or else arbitrary replacement of Chinese terms with western terms ("he walked one hundred miles") are acceptable. The following is a list of weights and measures used in the translations and their approximate values in the Han:<sup>2</sup>

chi	23.1 centimetres
cun	23.1 millimetres
dou	1.996 litres
hu	19.968 litres
li	600 metres

<sup>1</sup> Waley, A., *The Way and Its Power: The Tao Te Ching and Its Place in Chinese Thought* (London, 1987), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> This information in this list comes from Loewe, M.A.N., *Records of Han Administration* (Cambridge, 1967), vol. 1, p. 161.

liang	15.24 grams
sheng	199.687 cubic centimetres
shi	29.3 kilos
zhang	2.31 metres
zhong	7.984 litres

Translations of official titles follow Bielenstein's appendix to *The Bureaucracy of Han Times*.<sup>3</sup>

In general, passages in *Shenxian zhuan* are not referenced beyond noting from which biography the passage comes, as the biographies are typically short enough for location of a piece of text to be easy. In any case, a page reference to a particular passage would often encompass the entire biography and would therefore provide no useful information. Indented translations are always followed by the name of the biography in brackets. The particular text of each biography used for translation, the alternative versions and citations, the subject's place of origin, the period in which he or she was active and (where appropriate) the mountain with which he or she is associated, as well as any other textual notes to that biography are set out in the appendices.

All translations in this dissertation are my own. I have, of course, occasionally consulted existing full or partial translations of *Shenxian zhuan* biographies<sup>4</sup> as well as standard translations of other pre-modern works for normal scholarly purposes.

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<sup>3</sup> Bielenstein, H., *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 207-230.

<sup>4</sup> These translations can be found in Giles, L., *A Gallery of Chinese Immortals* (London, 1948), Guntch, G., *Das Shen-hsian chuan und das Erscheinungsbild eines hsien* (Frankfurt, 1988), Sawada Mizuho, *Retsusen den, Shinsen den, Chūgoku no koten shirizu*, 4 (Tokyo, 1988), Fukui Kōjun, *Shinsen den* (Tokyo, 1984).



## Chapter One: Introduction

This dissertation is a study of *Shenxian zhuan*, a collection of biographical records of Daoist immortals traditionally attributed to Ge Hong, who lived from the end of the third to the middle of the fourth centuries C.E. It is one of a number of collections of Daoist biographies preserved in the Daoist Canon and elsewhere. The earliest surviving collection in this tradition, and the only one to predate *Shenxian zhuan*, is *Liexian zhuan*.<sup>1</sup>

*Shenxian zhuan* celebrates the exploits of immortals; it records their extraordinary feats and their powers and capabilities that exceed those of normal people. In some instances the biographies tell of the way these figures attained the exalted state of immortality, for all of them passed from a normal human existence to a transcendent one, and why such a destiny fell to them and no-one else. Importantly, the biographies do not, in general, describe the technical background to the actions of the immortals in detail. The discussions on the preparation of elixirs, rules for entering sacred mountains and writing of talismans that are so familiar from the inner chapters of *Baopuzi*, for instance, are notable by their scarcity in *Shenxian zhuan*.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of these biographies appears to be to provide evidence for the existence of immortals and records of models for emulation, rather than to give instructions on the attainment of immortality.

Present versions of *Shenxian zhuan* that purport to be complete were recompiled during the Ming or later and usually contain about ninety biographies. There are good reasons to think that this number represents only about half of those that were present in versions circulating in the early Tang; in this thesis, for various textual reasons explained in chapter two, that number is reduced to sixty seven. These are the only biographies for which evidence can be found to date them to an early Tang version of *Shenxian zhuan*. Chapter two, "The Text and Authorship of *Shenxian zhuan*", examines in detail these and other textual issues that surround the text.

The figures who are celebrated in *Shenxian zhuan* are not, by any means, uniform. The periods in which they were active range from the most ancient of times - Baishi Xiansheng was apparently 2000 years old in the time of Pengzu - up to Ge Hong's own lifetime - Dong Weinian is recorded as being active in the time of Jin Wudi who reigned between 265 and 290 C.E. Similarly, they came from a wide geographical range, involving most of the region inhabited by Chinese people at the time. Maojun came from the north eastern region of Youzhou to the north of the Bohai sea and Feng Heng came from Longxi near modern Lanzhou while Dong Feng travelled as far south as modern day Hanoi. The breadth of range of periods of activity and places of origin can also be observed in the number of mountains with which the subjects of the biographies are

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<sup>1</sup> *Liexian zhuan* has been the subject of a major monographic study: Kaltenmark, M., *Le Lie-sien Tchouan* (Beijing, 1953).

<sup>2</sup> *Baopuzi neipian*, referred to hereinafter as *Baopuzi* (*Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, Wang Ming, ed., Beijing, 1985), is used frequently in this thesis for comparison with *Shenxian zhuan*. Chapter two presents a detailed discussion of the different ways in which the two texts refer to the same figures. *Baopuzi waipian* does not discuss matters pertinent to this thesis.

associated. It is important to note this indication that *Shenxian zhuan* was not the product of a single cult with a single holy site.<sup>3</sup>

The lack of any unifying temporal, geographic or cult feature in *Shenxian zhuan* leads, in one sense, to a primary question that underlies this thesis: what is it that brings these biographical records together in a single collection? Asking what they have in common is another way of addressing the question of what constituted the biography of an immortal at the time this collection was compiled. Three kinds of answers are given in chapters three, four and five of this thesis. Chapter three examines the biographies for the ideas surrounding immortality that they contain. Chapter four focusses on them as examples of the biographical form and discusses their narrative and symbolic structures. Chapter five begins from the observation that some of the subjects whose lives are recorded in *Shenxian zhuan* biographies also receive biographies in other texts which cannot be classified as biographies of immortals or even as Daoist works. Thus it seeks to determine what links the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies by analysing what relationship they have to other kinds of historical records.

This thesis is concerned, then, with exploring what kind of text *Shenxian zhuan* is. It is therefore appropriate to begin by determining the meaning of the title *Shenxian zhuan* and in particular the somewhat problematic term *shenxian*. This chapter proceeds to discuss ideas concerning matters related to *Shenxian zhuan* from the Eastern Han and Sanguo periods and the earliest surviving collection of biographies of immortals, *Liexian zhuan*. In the third section, the position *Shenxian zhuan* occupied in early bibliographies is examined to see in which categories of text it was thought to belong. Finally, this introductory chapter looks to the origin of the biographies and makes hypotheses about their transmission.

### The Meaning of *Shenxian*

To elucidate the meaning of *shenxian* it is necessary first briefly to investigate what was meant by *xian*. The term *xian* is not found before the late Zhou, although the ideals of long life and incorruptibility of the body may have been.<sup>4</sup> Yü Ying-shih sees the emergence of the term *xian* as linked to a new kind of immortality. In this new model, which is also related to the term *dushi*, "transcending the generations", emphasis is placed on leaving this world. Examples of this "otherworldly" immortality as Yü calls it, are Zhuangzi's famous spiritual man and the immortals who people the poem *Yuanyou* from *Chuci*. Yü sees evidence of the convergence of the earlier worldly and the later otherworldly streams of immortality thought in the attempts by Qin Shihuang and Han

<sup>3</sup> A table containing this information as well as a map of places named can be found as appendix one.

<sup>4</sup> The word *xian* is commonly written with the character 仙. The form 僊 is also found; notably, for the present purposes, when the title *Shenxian zhuan*, itself, is written in Ge Hong's biographical essay (*Baopuzi*, p. 377, see chapter two for a discussion of this passage). By the time *Shenxian zhuan* was compiled semantic distinctions did not appear to be made between them.

Wudi to attain immortality.<sup>5</sup> However, it remains unclear whether or how the people who inhabited Kunlun in the west and Penglai in the east were related to the kind of immortals celebrated in *Shenxian zhuan*. There is clearly a need for further examination of the changing conceptions of longevity and immortality in western Han times and before. Here, however, the interest lies in a later period and in the ideas contained in a specific set of biographies.

There are a number of schools of thought regarding the meaning of the term *shenxian* in the title *Shenxian zhuan*. The first regards *shen* and *xian* as two different types of being. This would suggest that the title should be read as *Biographies of Shen and Xian*. Kao's rendering *Biographies of Deities and Immortals* is an example of this.<sup>6</sup> The second considers the word *shen* as defining or qualifying *xian*. Proponents of this interpretation would maintain that *shen*-type *xian* are one of a number of different categories of *xian*. This would mean that the title would be something of the class *Biographies of Shen-type Xian*. Evidence for this reading can be found in a passage in the "*Shenjie*" section of *Tianyinzi*, a Daoist text of uncertain date but which certainly passed through the hands of Sima Chengzhen who died in 735:<sup>7</sup>

Amongst humanity they are called Human Immortals (*renxian*), in Heaven they are called Heavenly Immortals (*tianxian*), on Earth they are called Earthly Immortals (*dixian*), in rivers they are called River Immortals (*shuixian*), those that are able to perform transformations (*tongbian*) are called *shenxian*.<sup>8</sup>

Just as grammatically possible as a translation which sees *shenxian* as specifying one type of *xian*, is the interpretation by which the word *shen* can be generally applied to all types of *xian*. In this case the title would be rendered *Biographies of Shen-ly Xian*. Maspero's *Biographies d'Immortels Divins* might fit into either category. It may imply that all immortals are in their nature divine. Alternatively, it may imply that there are non-divine immortals as well as divine ones (but they are not included in this collection).<sup>9</sup> It should be remembered in this context that *shen* need not necessarily have connotations that, in the west, would be regarded as holy. It can also carry the meaning of "marvellous"

<sup>5</sup> Yü Ying-shih, "Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 25 (1964-5), 80-122 (pp.87-93). Joseph Needham differs from Yü on the existence of "other-worldly immortality". In relation to Yü's discussion of this point he writes, "If one bears in mind the conceptions of different peoples (Indo-Iranian, Christian, Islamic, etc.) there was no such thing as an 'other world' in ancient Chinese thought at all - that is why it is often so refreshing." (Needham, J., *Science and Civilisation in China*, V, II (Cambridge, 1974), p. 98).

<sup>6</sup> Kao, K.K.S.(ed.), *Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic: Selections from the Third to the Tenth Century* (Hong Kong, 1985), p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> In *Junzhai dushu zhi* (Yuan ed., *Xuguyi congshu* ed.), 3 xia:34b, Wang Gu is said to have considered that *Tianyinzi* was the work of Sima Chengzhen. Wang Gu was the great-grandson of Wang Dan (957-1017). Yu Jiayi also reports that Su Shi was of the same opinion, *Siku tiyao bianzheng*, (Beijing, 1985), 19:1219-20.

<sup>8</sup> *Tianyinzi* (Yimen guangdu ed.), 25b. Neither the *Siku quanshu* edition nor the Daozang edition (DZ 672) have the second half of this citation including the use of *shenxian*.

<sup>9</sup> Maspero, H., *Le Taoïsme et les Religions Chinoises* (Paris, 1971), p. 429; this work is translated by F.A.Kierman as *Taoism and Chinese Religion* (Amherst, 1981).

or "wondrous" as it does in the text attributed to Dongfang Shuo, *Shenyi jing*. A possible rendering of the title *Shenxian zhuan*, on this reading, would be *Biographies of Marvellous Immortals*.

Another possibility is that *shenxian* should be rendered as a single term in the title of the book. It is certainly known as a binome in texts of the Han period although it is not particularly common. *Xian* or *xianren* (using both forms of the character *xian*) are easily more numerous. It is, moreover, generally used in different contexts. While the figure or being is a *xian* or *xianren*, *shenxian* almost always collocates with techniques (*shu*) or writings (*shu*). The bibliographical chapter of *Hanshu* defines *shenxian* this way:

*Shenxian* are those who roam and seek in the beyond in order to protect the realization of their innate fate. They cleanse their thoughts and calm their minds, viewing as equal the regions of life and death, thus ridding their breasts of dread.<sup>10</sup>

All these meanings of *shenxian* are grammatically possible.

When Ge Hong described the text he had compiled in his autobiographical essay he listed *Shenxian zhuan* next to another set of biographies he compiled, the now lost *Yinyi zhuan*.<sup>11</sup> He described *Shenxian zhuan* as "biographies of those not normally listed" and *Yinyi zhuan* as "biographies of those who in their nobility refused office". It is clear from these two notes that Ge Hong regarded the subjects who received biographies within each collection as belonging to the same category. That is, all the subjects who received biographies in the latter collection were *yinyi* - the standard binome translated by Vervoorn as "hermit"<sup>12</sup> - and, by extension, all those in the former were *shenxian*. This would indicate that the first grammatically possible meaning of the title - *Biographies of Deities and Immortals* - is not correct. Moreover, if this were the meaning of the title it would also be most unusual when considered against other texts of the same period. Many follow a verb-noun pattern, for instance *Soushen ji* - *Records of Seeking Spirits* - and *Shuyi ji* - *Records of Narrating Marvels*. Others take the form adjectival qualifier-noun such as *Lieyi zhuan* - *Records of Exemplary Marvels*. However, in this period it is rare for a title to take a noun-noun form: *Yuming lu* is one of the very few and *yuming*, literally dark and bright, is a term with established connotations of yin and yang, with and without form, heaven and earth and so on. In no way can the term *shenxian* be regarded in a similar way.

Thus, *shenxian* must be considered as describing a single category of being. Strangely the term is found in only two of the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies that are considered in this thesis, those of Jie Xiang and Liu An. The relevant passage from Jie Xiang's biography reads:

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<sup>10</sup> *Hanshu* (Beijing, 1983), 30:1780. *Shenxian* occurs as a distinct bibliographical category in later catalogues beginning in the Song. On the bibliographical categories into which Daoist books were placed, see van der Loon, P., *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period* (London, 1984), pp 1-23.

<sup>11</sup> See chapter two for a discussion of this passage.

<sup>12</sup> Vervoorn, A., *Men of the Cliffs and Caves: The Development of the Chinese Eremic Tradition to the End of the Han Dynasty* (Hong Kong, 1990), p. 5.

When [Jie Xiang] heard of the *Wudan jing* he went all over the empire to seek it out but he did not find a teacher. Then he entered the mountains and refined his thoughts in the hope of meeting a *shenxian*... In the mountains he saw a beautiful girl of about fifteen or sixteen. Her face was extraordinary and her clothes were of many colours - she was a *shenxian*. (Jie Xiang)

This passage indicates that *shenxian* are, or at least can be, those beings that aspirants to immortality meet in mountains. There are several such encounters recorded in *Shenxian zhuan* but this is the only one in which the special being is called *shenxian*. Zhao Qu encountered three similar figures after his family abandoned him alone on a mountain:

Qu knew that no man walked in the dark forests deep in the mountains. They had to be spirits [*shenling*]. He explained himself, bowed deeply and pleaded with them. (Zhao Qu)

Later in the biography the same spirits are called *shenren*. The being that Liu Gen encountered was also called a *shenren* and once, simply, a *shen*. The three figures Lü Wenjing met, on the other hand, are called *xianren*, "immortals":

Lü Gong had the courtesy name Wenjing. When he was young he wanted to take the elixir. He led a male and a female slave into Taihang shan to pick herbs. Suddenly he saw three people in a gully....One of the three said "My name is Lu and my courtesy name is Wenqi." Another said "My name is Sun and my courtesy name is Wenyang." The third said "My name is Wang and my courtesy name is Wenshang"... "We three are all *xianren* of the Palace of Extreme Purity and Extreme Harmony....Gong bowed and said "It is good fortune to meet *xianren*." (Lü Gong)

Similar figures in the biographies of Shen Xi and Chen Anshi are also called *xianren*. *Shenxian zhuan* therefore has no standard way of referring to the otherworldly figures who meet seekers after immortality: in these biographies the term *shenxian* appears interchangeable with *shenren*, *shenling* or *xianren*.<sup>13</sup>

In the biography of Liu An, the book that is known today as *Huainanzi* is described as "speaking of *shenxian huangbai* matters" or alternatively "speaking of *shenxian* and *huangbai* matters". *Huangbai*, "the yellow and the white" is the common term for the preparation of gold and silver for use in elixirs, and serves as the title for chapter sixteen of *Baopuzi neipian* which is concerned with this topic. In this context, too, it is clear that *shenxian* should be taken as a binome broadly meaning "immortal" or "immortals". In other words the ways that the term *shenxian* is used in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies indicate that *shenxian* did not refer to a special kind of immortal and that figures sometimes called *shenxian* are also referred to by different terms. Thus in the biographies distinctions in terminology are not clearly made and in the title *Shenxian*

<sup>13</sup> Moreover, in the *Siku quanshu* version of Jie Xiang's biography, the second *shenxian* appears as *xianren* and in the same version of Zhao Qu's biography the *shenling* are also *xianren*. The various versions of *Shenxian zhuan* are discussed in chapter two, in the section "Modern Texts and their Sources".

*zhuan*, *shenxian* would appear broadly to have the same connotations as *xianren*, and may simply be translated as "immortals".

Furthermore, the fine distinctions that *Tianyinzi* makes in terminology are not known in *Shenxian zhuan* despite the fact that within the biographies there are both immortals who appear usually to inhabit the upper reaches of heaven as well as those who chose to stay on earth.

### Ideas of Fate and Immortality in Eastern Han and Sanguo Texts<sup>14</sup>

Chapter three of this thesis analyses ideas of immortality and related subjects as they are found in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies. It is important, therefore, to provide some context for that analysis by outlining the major strains of thought on these topics in the period immediately prior to that of *Shenxian zhuan's* compilation.

The attempt to recover these ideas is hampered by the relatively few texts that survive. Almost all of those that do survive are the products of literati culture, and religious ideas, when they are discussed, are generally criticized. This section surveys some of the material which mentions ideas of immortality and fate but before discussing these texts it is worth examining how immortality is related to what we know of Han religion at a popular level. There are, in fact, very few sources that can be used to elucidate this question; the situation is well summed up by the opening words of an article by Anna Seidel: "We know next to nothing about the religion of the common people during the Han period".<sup>15</sup> What reliable information we have derives largely from archaeology and a major proportion of that is in the form of texts found in tombs. Tomb documents cannot be expected to treat matters that are unrelated to burial and death. The most important feature of their content here is that, as Seidel points out, they do not speak about the kind of immortality usually characterized as Daoist.<sup>16</sup> This silence points, perhaps, to the lack of penetration of ideas concerned with immortals to the common people although the evidence adduced in the previous section of this chapter would appear not to lend credence to that argument. It appears more likely that the funerary context itself removes the likelihood of representations of, or appeals to, immortality in which the body is transformed as a whole. Death, and the consequent dissolution of the person into several souls, means that he or she cannot then seek the kind of immortality described in *Shenxian zhuan*. That quest must be pursued by the living who still have the opportunity to transform their mortal bodies into immortal bodies.<sup>17</sup> To be sure, notions of some kind

<sup>14</sup> On this topic see Hsü Cho-yun, "The Concept of Predetermination and Fate in the Han", *Early China* 1 (1975), 51-56.

<sup>15</sup> Seidel, A., "Traces of Han Religion in Funeral Texts Found in Tombs" in Akizuki Kan'ei, *Dōkyō to shūkyō bunka* (Tokyo, 1987), 21/714-57/678 (p.23/712). The original texts have been collected in Ikeda On, "Chūgoku rekidai boken ryakkō", *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō*, 86, 193-278.

<sup>16</sup> Seidel, "Traces of Han Religion in Funeral Texts Found in Tombs", p. 48/687.

<sup>17</sup> In the Later Han, Holzman sees "more and more [bronze] mirrors that supplement these wishes [for long life for the recipient of the mirror] with evocations of the immortals, in particular of Hsi-wang-mu

of existence beyond the tomb were current, and the idea of bodily preservation was certainly extant - the prevalence of well-preserved bodies in tombs of Han date is evidence of that <sup>18</sup> - but this "post-mortem immortality" <sup>19</sup>, to use Seidel's term, is different in kind from the immortality we find in *Shenxian zhuan*.<sup>20</sup>

The fragmentary state of the sources is well illustrated by the first text to be examined here: Huan Tan's *Xinlun*.<sup>21</sup> Huan Tan lived from 43 B.C.E. until 28 C.E. and this text only survives in citations. Two excerpts from chapter thirteen of *Xinlun*, "Bianhuo", illustrate Huan Tan's attitude to immortality and unusual phenomena. In the first, a *fangshi*<sup>22</sup> called Dong Zhongjun (who, like Wang Zhongdu, below, receives a biography

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and, later, Tung-wang-fu (or Tung-wang-kung)". (Holzman, D., "Ts'ao Chih and the Immortals", *Asia Major* (Third series), 1 (1988), 15-57 (p.24)). In reference to these mirrors, Loewe has written that the "inscriptions refer to the habits of the immortals and occasionally, to the way they wander unchecked over the universe. The same theme may be discerned in the feathered or winged men who appear quite regularly along with the animals, and in the scroll of clouds that bounds the world at its rim. The references to the Queen Mother of the West on two inscriptions lead forward to her depiction in the later type of mirrors, fashioned in high relief, which became popular after the TLV type had lost its appeal...Both the decorative details and the inscriptions of the TLV mirrors were intended to display their all powerful symbolism; for the mirrors were intended to set a man permanently in his correct relation with the cosmos and to escort him to a life in the hereafter." Loewe, M., *Ways to Paradise* (London, 1979), p. 83. Xiwangmu and later Dongwanggong in these inscriptions appear primarily to be markers of direction in the cosmos as opposed to the kind of immortals that are found in *Shenxian zhuan*. The immortals who appear roaming the cosmos are without exception nameless and live their eternal lives without contact with seekers after their state. In the one inscription translated by Loewe that speaks of interaction between mortals and immortals the mortal only watches: "If you climb Mount T'ai, you may see the immortal beings. They feed on the purest jade, they drink from the springs of manna. They yoke the scaly dragons to their carriage, they mount the floating clouds. The white tiger leads them.... they ascend straight to heaven..." (Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, p. 200).

<sup>18</sup> See Pokora, T., "'Living Corpses' in Medieval China", Naundorf, G., Pohl, K., and Schmidt, H. (eds.), *Religion und Philosophie in Ostasien, Festschrift für Hans Steininger* (Wurzburg, 1985), 343-57 on this subject. See also Loewe, *Ways to Paradise* for the archaeological evidence for Han ideas of life beyond death.

<sup>19</sup> Seidel, A., "Post-Mortem Immortality or: Taoist Resurrection of the Body" in Shaked, S., Shulman, D. and Stroumsa, G.G. (eds.), *Gilgul: Essays on Transformation, Revolution and Permanence in the History of Religions dedicated to Zwi Werblowsky, Studies in the History of Religions*, L (Leiden, 1987), 223-237 (p.227).

<sup>20</sup> Seidel discusses the relationship between post-mortem immortality and the Daoist idea of *shijie* "corpse-liberation" in her translation in "Post-Mortem Immortality or: Taoist Resurrection of the Body", pp. 232-233 where she makes the two points that "It is not one or several 'souls' that go on to be purified and then return to revive the corpse - it is unmistakably the physical body that undergoes restoration..." and secondly that "Most if not all methods of 'liberation from the corpse' imply preparatory techniques, be they meditation and macrobiotic exercises, alchemical labours with ingestion of drugs, or just 'accumulation of good deeds' as in the [*Xiang'er*] Tao te ching commentary....The post-mortem immortality of the corpse-liberated Taoist thus reveals itself as one more technique to bypass death...". For a discussion of the translation of the term *shijie*, see chapter three, note 18.

<sup>21</sup> On *Xinlun*, see Pokora, T., *Hsin-Lun (New Treatise) and Other Writings by Huan T'an (43 B.C.-28 A.D.)*, *Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies*, 20 (1975).

<sup>22</sup> *Fangshi* is a term that refers to experts in occult and other techniques of whom the writers of the standard histories, where the term occurs, disapproved. Yü Ying-shih glosses it as "necromancers" ("Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China", p. 93). DeWoskin is more expansive, describing the *fangshi* as "a group of men who made their imprint on early Chinese history with technical skills in medicine, divination and magic combined with a talent for storytelling and political persuasion...The notion of a common fang-shih type persisted long after the arts and techniques evolved into obviously distinct specialties, among which were medicine, astronomy, geomancy and music. But the term *fang-shih* itself,

in some versions of *Shenxian zhuan*) was imprisoned and simulated death. This was so effective his eyes fell in, his flesh rotted and he was infested with insects. Yet, says Huan, he revived.<sup>23</sup> In the second, Wang Zhongdu's claims to be able to withstand the extremes of heat and cold were tested and found to be true.<sup>24</sup> These two examples, and others that survive from the same chapter, appear to show that Huan accepted the reality of some marvellous occurrences yet the chapter title which Pokora translates as "Discerning Error" indicates that Huan Tan's basic attitude was critical. It appears that he did not accept that the people who performed these marvels were immortals. In one version of the Wang Zhongdu anecdote, preserved in *Bowu zhi*, the editor concludes:

Huan Shanjun [Tan] considered that Wang's nature enabled him to withstand heat and cold. Huan Shanjun considered that the Dao of immortality did not exist. It had been made up by those who loved marvels and had been handed down by people in the past.<sup>25</sup>

As clear as this statement appears, another passage of *Xinlun* preserved in the commentary to *Wenxuan* explicitly affirms the existence of immortals (*shenxian*).<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, conclusions about the content of *Xinlun* must remain tentative because of the fragmentary nature of the text.<sup>27</sup>

shaped in time by the contending factions at court, came to apply only to the less esteemed or less recognized practitioners in each field" (DeWoskin, K.J., *Doctors, Diviners and Magicians of Ancient China: Biographies of Fang-shih* (New York, 1983), p. 1). Both Yü and DeWoskin leave the term untranslated and I follow their example.

<sup>23</sup> See Pokora, *Hsin-Lun (New Treatise) and Other Writings by Huan Tan (43 B.C.-28 A.D.)*, pp. 153-155 for translations of the various versions of this anecdote.

<sup>24</sup> See Pokora, *Hsin-Lun (New Treatise) and Other Writings by Huan Tan (43 B.C.-28 A.D.)*, pp. 152-153 for translations of the various versions of the record of Wang Zhongdu.

<sup>25</sup> *Bowu zhi (Bowu zhi jiaozheng*, Fan Ning, ed., Beijing, 1980), 5:65. The second time Huan's courtesy name is mentioned, the text leaves "jun" out. It has been replaced in this translation.

<sup>26</sup> *Wenxuan*, 12:571.

<sup>27</sup> Huan Tan was also responsible for a "*Wangxian fu*" translated and studied by Pokora in his article "Huan Tan's Fu on Looking for the Immortals", *Archiv Orientalni*, 28 (1960), 353-367. This fu contains little information on Huan's attitude to immortality, although it does show some familiarity with the vocabulary of immortality-related practices. Like a considerable number of literary works from the period, it refers by name only to the two famous immortals, Wangzi Qiao and Chisongzi. References to these two immortals in literary works go back at least as far as *Chuci*. Holzman makes the useful observation in relation to Cao Zhi's ballads on the theme of immortality that the "whole 'tight-knit tradition' of ballads taking immortals as their theme is made up of adaptations of 'Distant Voyage', [*Yuanyou* from *Chuci*] just as that poem itself is a mystical version of the shamanistic, heavenly wanderings described earlier in the 'Li-sao.' Originality shows up (as is often the case in Chinese poetry) only as small variations that only the reader practised in the genre can appreciate...[These ballads] show us the immortal Wangtzu Ch'iao, mounted on a carriage pulled by a white deer, riding among the clouds over the four seas and five peaks ('Wang-tzu Ch'iao'), or another unnamed immortal, mounted on a white deer, who distributes drugs in a jade box that give health and blacken white hair ('Ch'ang ko-hsing' 2), or a hermit who, together with Ch'ih-sung-tzu, can drive us up to heaven ('Pu ch'u hsia-men hsing'). These are all themes that appear again and again in the 'wandering immortals' poems and, whether they are older or younger than Ts'ao Chih's poems, they are surely written in the same tradition...I believe I can prove, in the words of the poetry itself, that Ts'ao Chih's interest in using the theme of immortals is not always simple or straightforward, that he is not always interested in immortals as such, and that his main interest in the theme is complex, sometimes satirical, sometimes personal and emotional." Holzman, "Ts'ao Chih and the Immortals", pp. 29-31.



For Wang Chong (27-97 C.E.), the kind of immortality described in *Shenxian zhuan* was simply not a possibility. The chapter "*Daoxu*" in *Lunheng* catalogues what Wang claimed were the deceptions of those who maintained that immortality had been achieved in the past. Huangdi, for instance, could not have ascended to heaven on a dragon nor could Liu An have risen to heaven along with his chickens and dogs. Wang Chong's logic, here as elsewhere, at times is appealing to a modern scientific mind and at other times appears as a product of the sometimes bizarre ideas of his own time.<sup>28</sup> Huangdi could not have gone to heaven on a dragon because while dragons do fly into the sky, they do so to produce rain and then return to the pools where they live. Huangdi, thus, would have ended up back on earth.<sup>29</sup> Liu An could not have ascended to heaven because that would constitute flight and flying requires wings.<sup>30</sup> Wang does not doubt that some people live to extreme age - he credits Li Shaojun with this<sup>31</sup> - but denies that any of them transcended their mortality:

In this world no-one has succeeded in attaining the Dao, yet there are those who have had great longevity. When the world sees such long-lived people who have studied the Dao in order to achieve immortality, and who have reached the age of one hundred without dying, they all call them immortals.<sup>32</sup>

The conclusion to this chapter sums up Wang Chong's reasoning:

Now, to transcending the generations (*dushi*, that is, to achieve immortality<sup>33</sup>): nothing of the category of things that have blood flowing in them is not born and nothing that is born does not die. By virtue of their birth we know that they will die. Heaven and earth were not born so they will not die. Yin and yang were not born so they will not die. Dying is the result of having been born; birth is the verification of future death. Something that has a beginning is certain to have an end and something that ends will certainly die. It is only that which has neither a beginning nor an end that will live forever and never die. Man's life is like ice.<sup>34</sup> Water freezes to become ice; *qi* accumulates to become man. Ice, at the extreme, lasts one winter before it melts; a man will reach, at most, one

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<sup>28</sup> See for instance his arguments related to astronomy discussed in my "A Study of Wang Chong's Explanation of the Sun (*Lunheng*, 17, '*Shuori*')", Master of Philosophy dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1985.

<sup>29</sup> *Lunheng* (*Lunheng jiaoshi*, Huang Hui, ed., Beijing, 1990), 7 (section 24, "*Daoxu*"):315.

<sup>30</sup> *Lunheng*, 7:318.

<sup>31</sup> *Lunheng*, 7:332 gives his age as two hundred although this is disputed by the editor who considers, on the basis of information in chapter 1, section 4 ("*Qishou*") cited below, that it should read one hundred. Equally the passage translated below may be used as evidence that Wang Chong considered one hundred to be the maximum extent of a human life.

<sup>32</sup> *Lunheng*, 7:329.

<sup>33</sup> See chapter three for a discussion of *dushi*.

<sup>34</sup> The original text reads *shui* (水) water. The sense of the passage demands that this is emended to *bing* (冰) ice.

hundred years before he dies. Can a man be caused not to die? Can ice be caused not to melt? All those who study immortality techniques for methods of avoiding death are certain to fail just as they are unable to prevent ice melting in the end.<sup>35</sup>

Wang Chong's views on the cause of long lives is based on the idea of destiny or fate (*ming*). He explains that man receives two kinds of destiny at birth. The first consists of what he will meet in his life, the second of his length of life and whether he will be strong or weak. This latter destiny is dependent on the amount of *qi* received at birth but it is by no means certain that a person will live out his or her fated lifespan. A life may be shortened by encountering dangerous situations fated by the first kind of destiny received.<sup>36</sup> A proper destiny is one hundred years but one that falls short of that is still, says Wang, a destiny. It is not the case that heaven possesses long or short destinies to bestow, it simply depends on how quickly the greater or lesser amount of destiny that was bestowed at birth is used up.<sup>37</sup>

From his statement that one hundred years is a proper destiny, it would be expected that Wang would deny the possibility of living beyond one hundred. This is not, in fact, the case. Thus, he concludes:

One hundred is the proper span for a human life - just like plants reach autumn and die, which is the proper time limit for a plant's life. If a plant reaches its autumn earlier or later, this is also like people dying: some live longer than one hundred years and some die earlier. Reaching their autumn earlier or reaching their autumn later is the time limit [of those plants]; exceeding one hundred years or falling short of one hundred years is the extent of the span [of those people]. Plants sometimes die as they emerge and people sometimes die just as they have started living. Other plants sometimes survive the autumn without dying; in the same way, men may exceed one hundred, even to the point of getting to three hundred years. Tradition has it that Laozi lived two hundred years and Shaogong one hundred and eighty. Gaozong ruled one hundred years as did King Mu of Zhou. Taking the time before they started ruling into account they must have lived for one hundred and thirty or forty years.<sup>38</sup>

Here Wang Chong argues that lives that are longer than one hundred years, though possible, are somehow abnormal - even though the four figures he mentions could hardly be described in that way.

Wang Chong also maintains that the destiny received at birth is manifest in one's body. He begins the chapter "*Guxiang*" in the following way:

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<sup>35</sup> *Lunheng*, 7:338.

<sup>36</sup> *Lunheng*, 1 (section 4, "*Qishou*"): 28.

<sup>37</sup> *Lunheng*, 1:30.

<sup>38</sup> *Lunheng*, 1:33-4.

People say destinies are difficult to know. Destinies are very easy to know! How? By the bone structure. Man receives his destiny from heaven, then it is made manifest in his body. By investigating these outward signs destinies can be known, just as you can investigate measuring vessels of various sizes to see how much they can hold. The outward signs are called "bone patterns".<sup>39</sup>

The belief that a person's destiny was mapped on to their bone structure was widespread. Like Wang Chong in *Lunheng*, Wang Fu (78-163) dedicates a whole chapter of his *Qianfu lun* to the topic.<sup>40</sup> For Wang Fu a person's destiny was settled by heaven and his actions could affect the actual number of years lived.<sup>41</sup> *Baihu tong*, which purports to be the record of discussions of Confucian doctrines held in 79 C.E.<sup>42</sup>, also discusses the question of destinies.<sup>43</sup> It allows for three kinds of destiny. Destiny related to longevity, destiny related to what one encounters and destiny related to one's actions. It will be noticed that two of these three categories appeared in Wang Chong's scheme but *Baihu tong* makes explicit the effects of behaviour by elevating it to a special kind of destiny.<sup>44</sup>

Xun Yue's (148-209) attitudes to immortality and related topics can be ascertained from the name of the chapter in his *Shenjian* in which they are discussed - "Common Superstitions" (*Suxian*). Other discussions in this chapter are divination using tortoise shells and yarrow stalks,<sup>45</sup> use of astrological and calendrical theory to find significance in the time and place of certain events,<sup>46</sup> sacrifices<sup>47</sup> and so on. Ch'en Ch'i-yun has characterized Xun Yue as "the last of the Han Confucian moralists" who nevertheless in some ways showed more allegiance to "the post-Han spirit of skepticism ...than to the orthodox thinking of the majority of the Han Confucians".<sup>48</sup> The attitudes Xun displays to those topics mentioned above fit well with Ch'en's characterization. He maintains, for instance, that the benefit or harm derived from a divination depends on how the person concerned reacts to it - which depends on their moral state - rather than on the meaning of the divination itself. Another case that fits neatly within a traditional Confucian worldview is that of sacrifice, where sincerity of purpose and conformity with ritual codes are seen

<sup>39</sup> *Lunheng*, 3 (section 11, "Guxiang"):108.

<sup>40</sup> *Qianfu lun* (Wang Jipei, ed., *Qianfu lun jianjiaozheng*, Beijing, 1985), 27 ("Xianglie"):308-314.

<sup>41</sup> For more on Wang Fu's views on fate, see Chard, R.L., "Divination and Dream Interpretation in the *Ch'ien-fu lun*", Unpublished paper for the Chinese Divination and Portent Workshop (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 6-7.

<sup>42</sup> For a detailed discussion of the textual questions related to *Baihu tong*, see Tjan Tjoe Som, *Po Hu Tung: The Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall* (Leiden, 1949), pp. 1-65.

<sup>43</sup> *Baihu tong* (*Baihu tong delun*, *Sibu congkan* ed.), 8:4b-5b.

<sup>44</sup> *Baihu tong*, 8:5a.

<sup>45</sup> *Shenjian*, 3:1a.

<sup>46</sup> *Shenjian*, 3:1a-2b.

<sup>47</sup> *Shenjian*, 3:2b-3a.

<sup>48</sup> Chen Chi-yun, *Hsün Yüeh and the Mind of Late Han China: A Translation of the Shen-chien with Introduction and Annotations* (Princeton, 1980), p. 4.

as paramount. At the same time the kind of radical scepticism familiar from *Lunheng* is shown in his discussion of the meaning of the correlations of the five phases (wood, metal, fire, water and earth) which were traditionally taken to represent the directions east, west, south, north and centre:

The east rules life, but deaths there are not rare; the west rules killing, but births there are not uncommon; the south is fiery, but the people who live there do not get burnt; the north is watery, but the people who tread on that ground do not sink.<sup>49</sup>

Xun Yue's discussions of immortality and other topics that have direct relevance to this study also share these two approaches.

When Xun Yue is asked about techniques of attaining immortality he is dismissive. (*Shenjian* is one of the few texts that uses the term *shenxian*, again in the context "the techniques of becoming an immortal" - *shenxian zhi shu*). He maintains that the length of someone's life is determined by the fate endowed at birth. This is determined, in its turn, by the cycles of the cosmos. The efforts of men cannot change this. Xun Yue does not recommend an interest in immortality techniques - sages do not study them.<sup>50</sup>

After this reply, the interlocutor asks whether immortals exist. It should be noted that the word used here is *xianren*. Xun Yue maintains that, if there were, they would not be creatures of the same category as us. The possible nature of immortals is revealed in another enquiry where Xun Yue is asked if there are some humans who can transform themselves into immortals. He has never heard of any such transformations, he replies, but if there were they would be freaks, not immortals.

However, it is clear from one enquiry that he views becoming an immortal as different from living for hundreds of years. Such longevity is a "heroic feat" of which Pengzu is the exemplar. The other qualities of which there are exemplars of excellence are power, speed, strength and wisdom. Thus, living for hundreds of years is seen as an extension or exaggerated form of a normal human attribute whereas immortality is simply not possible for humans.

The attainment of great age, Xun Yue argues, depends on two factors. First, a person must be destined by nature to have a long life and secondly, that person must behave properly to live out their destined span. However, in this passage the two are interpreted to mean almost the same thing. Those who are destined to live to a great age are those who are able to put the Dao to use - and those who can put the Dao to use are precisely those in whose nature it is to live to a great age. This Dao is not, of course, the same as Ge Hong's Dao. The Dao that establishes Heaven, says Xun Yue, is the Yin and Yang; the Dao that establishes Earth is the hard and the soft; the Dao that establishes man is benevolence and righteousness.<sup>51</sup> Thus, by behaving in accordance with the Confucian

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<sup>49</sup> *Shenjian*, 3:1a-1b.

<sup>50</sup> The following discussion is based on *Shenjian*, 3:3b-4b unless otherwise noted.

<sup>51</sup> *Shenjian*, 1:1b.

virtues and at the same time being endowed with the potential for a long life, great age is possible.

Xun Yue's answer to an enquiry on nourishing one's nature (*yangxing*) is, perhaps, the most articulated response among those of interest here. He begins, as would be expected, by citing the Confucian goals: the Mean and Harmony. Nourishing the spirit and nourishing the body also give prominence to this ideal of temperance. He then goes on to display a broad knowledge of what may loosely be termed Daoist techniques:

If you practice gymnastics, hoarding *qi*, doing a circuit of the organs or internal visualization to excess then you will lose the Mean. It is possible to use them to cure disease but they are not the sage's methods of nourishing one's nature. Contraction can be used for expansion. Hoarding can be used for emptying. The internal can be used for the external. When the *qi* should be circulated but is held in check, when the body should be kept in harmony but is forced, when the spirit should be kept at peace but is restrained, it is certain that Harmony will be lost. Now, those skilled at nourishing their nature do not use any standard method, they simply attain Harmony.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, Xun Yue does not argue with the efficacy of these techniques but he insists that overuse is detrimental.

Ying Shao (active 164-c.204) in his *Fengsu tongyi* discusses the story of the shrine of the Prefect of She.<sup>53</sup> The Prefect of She that this episode concerns is none other than the famous immortal Wangzi Qiao. It describes his being called to heaven, his miraculous burial, the erection of a shrine and its efficacy in the granting of genuine requests. Ying Shao quotes Yang Xiong to the effect that Fuxi, Shennong, Huangdi, Yao, Shun, Wenwang and Confucius all died. According to Ying, this means that immortality is not possible and so he dismisses the story as a fabrication.<sup>54</sup>

The Daoist scripture *Taiping jing* of uncertain date (but which probably derives from texts of Eastern Han or Sanguo period) includes a discussion of the practice of deriving a person's destiny from their date of birth.<sup>55</sup> It describes how the cyclical signs related to year, month and day coincide to produce various destinies. A birthdate that generates the combination of the branches Chen and Xu with the stem Wu is said "sometimes to produce a *shenxian*." <sup>56</sup> Elsewhere, in *Taiping jingchao* - a Tang digest of the original text - two arrays of possible fates are listed: one ranges from one hundred and twenty years to sixty years;<sup>57</sup> the other from one hundred and twenty to fifty.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>52</sup> *Shenjian*, 3:5a-b.

<sup>53</sup> *Fengsu tongyi* (*Fengsu tongyi tongjian*, Shanghai, 1987), 2:11-13.

<sup>54</sup> *Fengsu tongyi*, 2:13.

<sup>55</sup> *Taiping jing* (*Taiping jing hejiao*, Wang Ming, ed., Beijing, 1979), 111 (section 181):546-549. See also my article "A System of Fate Calculation in *Taiping jing*", *Papers on Far Eastern History*, 41 (1990), 1-8, which includes a discussion of the relevant textual issues.

<sup>56</sup> *Taiping jing*, 111:548.

<sup>57</sup> *Taiping jingchao* (*Taiping jing hejiao*, Wang Ming, ed., Beijing, 1979), 18-34:23.

Cao Zhi (192-232), the son of Cao Cao, produced an essay concerning immortals, *Biandao lun*, sometime between 217 and 220.<sup>59</sup> In it he denies that those figures from the past and in his own day who claimed to have gained immortality, or on whose behalf such a claim was made, really did so. They are, he says, charlatans and purveyors of falsity. Some of the figures he mentions receive biographies in *Shenxian zhuan*: Liu An, Zuo Ci and Gan Shi. He concludes the essay by insisting that each person has a given span of life; some people have long spans and some short just as some people are strong and some weak. Whether you live out your entire span or half of it or you die young simply depends on how you live. Holzman has written that "It would be difficult to write a more thorough, or a more contemptuous demolition of the idea of Taoist immortality."<sup>60</sup> In this article Holzman goes on to discuss a later essay by Cao Zhi preserved only in *Baopuzi* - and which must therefore remain of doubtful attribution - called *Shiyi lun*.<sup>61</sup> This essay reveals a more tolerant attitude towards the subject of immortality, accepting that there are certain things in the world that it is not possible to understand.

These assessments of the possibility of immortality discussed above are largely negative. The existence of *Liexian zhuan*, on the other hand, points to a degree of belief in immortals among the literate classes. This chapter will conclude with a brief discussion of this text.

*Liexian zhuan* is a collection of lives of Daoist immortals, which in Kaltenmark's opinion contains seventy biographies,<sup>62</sup> and which is traditionally attributed to Liu Xiang. It does not feature in the bibliographical treatise of *Hanshu* although the first citation of a work called *Liexian zhuan* appears in Wang Yi's (c.89-c.158) early first century C.E. commentary to *Chuci*.<sup>63</sup> The first surviving attribution of *Liexian zhuan* to Liu Xiang is in *Baopuzi*,<sup>64</sup> but there are certain anachronisms in administrative geography that argue against the present *Liexian zhuan* being a Western Han text.<sup>65</sup> Nonetheless it is clear that it remains the earliest surviving collection of Daoist biographies. Short poems of praise attached to each biography date from the Six Dynasties period.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *Taiping jingchao*, 102:465.

<sup>59</sup> *Cao Zhi jijiao zhu* (Zhao Youren, ed., Beijing, 1984), pp.186-96. See Holzman, "Ts'ao Chih and the Immortals" for a detailed discussion and translation of this essay.

<sup>60</sup> Holzman, "Ts'ao Chih and the Immortals", p. 23.

<sup>61</sup> Holzman, "Ts'ao Chih and the Immortals", pp. 25-28.

<sup>62</sup> See Kaltenmark, M., *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*. See also Yu Jiayi, *Siku tiyao bianzheng*, pp. 1202-1211 and Durrant, S., "Lieh-hsien chuan" in Nienhauser, W.H., (ed.) *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (revised ed., Taipei, 1988), pp.566-567 for a discussion of the text history of *Liexian zhuan*.

<sup>63</sup> *Chuci* (*Chuci buzhu*, Hong Xingzu, ed., Beijing, 1986), p. 102. Hong Xingzu was active in the mid-twelfth century.

<sup>64</sup> *Baopuzi*, 13:242.

<sup>65</sup> See Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, p.2.

<sup>66</sup> Two sets of the *zan* are listed in the *Suishu* bibliographical treatise, 33:979.

The periods in which the immortals in *Liexian zhuan* were active tend to be more ancient than those in *Shenxian zhuan* although there are Western Han figures included among them. Three figures, Laozi, Yin Xi, the keeper of the pass through which Laozi departed, and Pengzu are recorded in both texts. The biographies themselves are short, rarely exceeding two hundred characters and often only about one hundred characters long - much shorter than those in *Shenxian zhuan* - and are in the nature of brief notices rather than biographies proper. One indication of the relative lengths of the *Liexian zhuan* and *Shenxian zhuan* biographies is that the Laozi biography in *Liexian zhuan* has one hundred and twelve characters and the *Shenxian zhuan* biography has over two thousand. Perhaps it is a function of this brevity that the *Liexian zhuan* records are not as strongly narrative as those in *Shenxian zhuan*.

Despite their brevity, many of the *Liexian zhuan* biographies contain similar kinds of information about immortality to those in *Shenxian zhuan*. There are examples of strange and wonderful physiognomy<sup>67</sup>, of the body reverting to youth<sup>68</sup>, of the ingestion of cypress products<sup>69</sup>, of solomon's seal root<sup>70</sup>, of cassia<sup>71</sup>, of yellow powder<sup>72</sup>, of stone marrow<sup>73</sup>, of muscovite<sup>74</sup> and other features of immortality-related phenomena that are familiar from *Shenxian zhuan* in *Liexian zhuan*. On the other hand *Liexian zhuan* appears less interested in the process of transformation into an immortal and explaining any reasons why some figures and not others achieved immortality. Nonetheless, it is clear that *Liexian zhuan* is the earliest surviving text in a tradition of biographies of Daoist immortals and that *Shenxian zhuan* belongs firmly to the same tradition. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the similarities and differences between the two collections in detail, but such a study, perhaps as part of a large scale examination of the development of Daoist biography in general in medieval China, would be a rewarding research topic.

### ***Shenxian zhuan* in Early Bibliographies**

The way that *Shenxian zhuan* was catalogued in early bibliographies enables us to observe the categories into which editors placed the text relatively soon after it was

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<sup>67</sup> For instance in the biographies of Wo Quan and Wu Guang, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, pp. 53, 78.

<sup>68</sup> For instance in the biographies of Rongchenggong, Qiu Sheng, Jiquijun, Chixuzi, Chang Rong, Fu Lu and Xi Fu, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, pp. 55, 81, 132, 135, 152, 163, 171.

<sup>69</sup> For instance in the biographies of Wo Quan, Qiu Sheng, Chixuzi, Duzi, Maonü and Wen Bin, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, pp. 53, 81, 135, 142, 159, 165.

<sup>70</sup> For instance in the biography of Xiuyanggong, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, p.130.

<sup>71</sup> For instance in the biographies of Pengzu, Fan Li and Guifu, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, pp. 82, 102, 118.

<sup>72</sup> For instance in the biography of Cuiwenzi, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, p. 134.

<sup>73</sup> For instance in the biography of Qiong Shu, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, p. 84.

<sup>74</sup> For instance in the biographies of Fang Hui and Xuan Su, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, pp. 58, 191.

compiled. One of the later bibliographical categories, *zhiguai*, has also come to be used to refer to a genre. Thus, the following discussion will address the difference between the ideas of genre and bibliographical category.

Durrant, in the article on *Shenxian zhuan* in the *Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, says that "Although the text was compiled for a didactic purpose - that is, to prove the existence of immortals - its lively and entertaining narratives place it squarely within the *chih-kuai* tradition that flourished during the Six Dynasties period".<sup>75</sup> Similarly, DeWoskin nominates *Shenxian zhuan*, along with Gan Bao's *Soushen ji*, Zhang Hua's *Bowu zhi*, Zu Taizhi's *Zhiguai*, Wang Jia's *Shiyi ji* and Guo Pu's *Xuanzhong ji* as the "definitive examples" of the *zhiguai* genre in his article on *zhiguai* in the same work.<sup>76</sup> Kao also sees *Shenxian zhuan* as a member of the *zhiguai* genre; indeed, he cites it as a prime example of the fifth of the six kinds of *guai* phenomena, namely thaumaturgic phenomena, in his typology of supernatural and fantastic fiction in medieval China.<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, *Shenxian zhuan* is not included among the texts listed in Fu Xihua's catalogue of *zhiguai* works,<sup>78</sup> nor is it among those that Wang Guoliang analyses in his *Wei Jin Nanbei Chao zhiguai xiaoshuo yanjiu*.<sup>79</sup>

In the works cited here, *zhiguai* - "describing anomalies" in DeWoskin's rendering - is presented as a genre in works in English or as a bibliographical classification in works in Chinese. Although these two concepts are close they are not exact equivalents. One Chinese term which can translate the English "genre" is *wenti*, literally "text form". Examples from standard works on *wenti* make clear that what is meant by the Chinese term is closer to the English "form" as in "the sonnet form" or "the limerick form" than it is to "genre".<sup>80</sup> The concern is with the rules that govern a text's composition: length of line, parallelism, tone structure and so on. There is, in fact, no Chinese counterpart to the English "genre" when it is used to describe a group of texts that, at base, have similar concerns and follow certain conventional forms of expression: such as "elegy", "revenge tragedy" or "bedroom farce". All examples of a genre, thus used, are variations on a typically, though not always, conscious model - but they can take many forms. On the other hand the Chinese bibliographical classification - like the Dewey or Library of Congress systems - occurs after the fact and may well group texts together into classes with subdivisions (*lei*) in ways that they have not been grouped before.

Thus, when DeWoskin describes *zhiguai* as a genre he reflects neither its original Chinese meaning - as a bibliographical classification - nor its meaning as a translation of

<sup>75</sup> Durrant, S., "Shen-hsien chuan" in Nienhauser, *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, p. 678.

<sup>76</sup> DeWoskin, K.J., "Chih-kuai" in Nienhauser, *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, p. 280.

<sup>77</sup> Kao, *Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic: Selections from the Third to the Tenth Century*, p. 10.

<sup>78</sup> Fu Xihua, "Liuchao zhiguai xiaoshuo zhi zunyi", *Hanxue* [Bulletin du Centre Franco-Chinois d'Etudes Sinologiques], 1 (1944), 169-210.

<sup>79</sup> Wang Guoliang, *Wei Jin Nanbei Chao zhiguai xiaoshuo yanji* (Taipei, 1984).

<sup>80</sup> See, for instance, Chu Binjie, *Zhongguo gudai wenti gailun* (Beijing, 1990).



*wenti* - a form of composition defined by a set of prosodic rules. This is not to say that he is wrong to draw attention to the shared concerns of the texts within the *zhiguai* tradition, to use Durrant's form of words. This corresponds more closely to the English meaning of genre but it does not reflect the Chinese bibliographer's logic.

While the classic references to *zhiguai* are of venerable age - Zhuangzi's "The Tall Stories of Ch'i is a record of marvels [*zhiguai*]" is cited<sup>81</sup> - and the existence of texts from the Six Dynasties with these words in, or as, their title is noted in early catalogues, the use of *zhiguai* as a bibliographical classification is first recorded in the works of the Ming bibliophile Hu Yinglin (1551-1602). In his subdivision of *xiaoshuo*, which falls under philosophy in the four-fold classification system, he lists the category *zhiguai* as one of six. The others are *chuanqi*, *zalu*, *congfan*, *bianding* and *zhengui*.

The texts he cites as belonging to the category *zhiguai* are *Soushen ji*, *Shuyi ji*, *Xuanshe zhi* by Zhang Du of the Tang and *Youyang zazu* by Duan Chengshi, also of the Tang.<sup>82</sup> Here, therefore, another discrepancy can be seen; this time between the use of the term *zhiguai* by modern authors and by its originator in the Ming. While for the former *zhiguai* is characteristically a Six Dynasties phenomenon, for Hu Yinglin two of his four example texts are from the Tang.

The late classification of *Shenxian zhuan* as *zhiguai* implies that it also belongs in the larger classification *xiaoshuo*. It is under this classification that we should find *Shenxian zhuan* in pre-Ming catalogues if the *zhiguai* label is at all appropriate. This is not, however, reflected in any of the catalogues in which *Shenxian zhuan* appears in the Song. In the *Junzhai dushu zhi* originally completed in 1151, *Shenxian zhuan* appears as the last item in the *shenxian* section (which, like *xiaoshuo*, falls under philosophy in the four-fold classification) following *Wangshi shenxian zhuan*, a collection of biographies of immortals who share the surname Wang.<sup>83</sup> Another private library catalogue from the twelfth century, the *Suichutang shumu*, lists *Shenxian zhuan* in its *Daojia* section, also a subdivision of philosophy. The works that surround it make clear that it was seen as part of a tradition of Daoist biography. The part of the catalogue that is of interest lists five collections of Daoist biographies:

*Liexian zhuan*, *Xuxian zhuan*, *Shenxian zhuan*, *Daoxue zhuan*,  
*Xianyuan bianzhu*.<sup>84</sup>

The catalogue of the imperial library completed in 1144, the *Chongwen zongmu*, lists *Shenxian zhuanlüe* (a one-chapter abridgement of *Shenxian zhuan*) in its *Daoshu* section and, like *Suichutang shumu*, it makes clear from the works listed with it that it belongs to a Daoist bibliographical tradition. The relevant entries read:

<sup>81</sup> Zhuangzi (*Zhuangzi jishi*, Guo Qingfan, ed., Beijing, 1985), 1:4. This translation comes from A.C.Graham, *Chuang-tzu: The Inner Chapters* (London, 1986), p.43. In this context *zhiguai* clearly is not a genre label.

<sup>82</sup> Hu Yinglin, *Jiuliu xulun*, xia:6 in *Shaoshe shanfang bicong*, vol. 26.

<sup>83</sup> *Junzhai dushu zhi* (Yuan edition preserved in *Xu guyi congshu*), 3 xia:35a. *Wangshi shenxian zhuan* was edited by Du Guangting (850-933) in the then independent state of Shu which was ruled by a family named Wang.

<sup>84</sup> *Suichutang shumu* (preserved in *Shuofu* (Shanghai, 1930)), 23b.

*Liexian zhuan*, *Xushenxian zhuan*, *Shenxian neizhuan* (lost), *Shenxian zhuan lüe* (lost), *Jin Hongzhou xishan shier zhenren neizhuan* (lost), *Binxian zhuan*, *Yixian zhuan*.<sup>85</sup>

The *Songshi* bibliographical treatise has *Shenxian zhuan* in its *Shenxian* section listing it after *Liexian zhuan*, Wang Bao's *Tongbai zhenren Wangjun waizhuan* and Zhou Jitong's *Xuanzhou shengqing Sujun ji*.<sup>86</sup> *Shenxian zhuan*'s classification in a *Shenxian* section is seen also in *Jiu Tangshu* where it is listed between *Liexian zhuan* and *Dongxian zhuan*.<sup>87</sup> *Xin Tangshu* has *Shenxian zhuan* between the same two texts as does *Jiu Tangshu* but lists them in the *Shenling* section of the classification *zazhuan*.<sup>88</sup> Finally, *Suishu* also lists *Shenxian zhuan* under *zazhuan* where it has two versions of *Liexian zhuan zan* preceding and *Shuoxian zhuan* and *Yangxing zhuan* following it.<sup>89</sup> These last two classifications where *Shenxian zhuan* appears under *zazhuan* are most important as *zazhuan* falls under history in the four-fold classification, not philosophy as did the categories into which later bibliographers put *Shenxian zhuan*.

The history of the way that *Shenxian zhuan* was classified in book catalogues thus shows that before the Song it was not considered to be *zhiguai*, nor even *xiaoshuo*. Before it was classified as *zhiguai*, it was classified among Daoist books - even in secular catalogues - but first was found in the section devoted to *zazhuan* - miscellaneous biographies. The *Sui shu* editors begin their discussion about *zazhuan* by tracing the growth in record keeping from the Zhou until its historical office ceased activities. The text continues:

At the beginning of the Han the agreements in vermilion script [to show faith] and the covenants [made by offering a] white horse [in sacrifice] were instituted.<sup>90</sup> Following the words of Dong Zhongshu, Wudi instituted promotion of the capable and the good and those with literary skill. The reports from the empire were first sent up to the Grand Historian and absolutely all details of good or evil behaviour were gathered up together. Sima Qian and Ban Gu made selections of them to compile [*Shiji* and *Hanshu*]. Assistant and supporting ministers and righteous and energetic gentlemen were all recorded. Yet of those whose conduct was principled and whose purity was of the highest order but who did not involve themselves in worldly affairs, *Shiji* only recorded [Bo] Yi and [Shu] Qi,<sup>91</sup> while *Hanshu* simply told of Yang Wangsun and

<sup>85</sup> *Chongwen zongmu* (*Qinding siku quanshu* ed.), 10:9a.

<sup>86</sup> *Songshi* (Beijing, 1977), 205:5189.

<sup>87</sup> *Jiu Tangshu* (Beijing, 1975), 59:1520.

<sup>88</sup> *Xin Tangshu* (Beijing, 1975), 46:2004.

<sup>89</sup> *Suishu* (Beijing, 1973), 33:979.

<sup>90</sup> See *Hanshu*, 1 *xia*:81 and 16:527 as well as Yan Shigu's gloss of the latter term on 16:528.

<sup>91</sup> *Shiji* (Beijing, 1982), 61:2121.

those like him.<sup>92</sup> The rest are omitted without record. Furthermore, during the Han, Ruan Cang wrote *Liexian tu* [Exemplary Immortals, Illustrated] and Liu Xiang, who was in charge of collating the canonical texts, instituted the writing of biographies of exemplary immortals, exemplary officers and exemplary women. In each case these biographies relied on their subjects' high ideals but they were written in a casual style so they did not find a place in the standard histories. Guangwu of the Later Han began by proclaiming that Nanyang select and write down its customs. Thus in Pei and the Sanfu there were the accounts of the venerable and resolute scholars and in Lu and Lujiang there were the eulogies of famous and virtuous former worthies. The texts of the commanderies and kingdoms were written on the basis of these. Furthermore, Wendi of the Wei wrote *Lieyi* [Exemplary Rarities] to put ghostly and unusual events in order and Ji Kang wrote *Gaoshi zhuan* [Biographies of Lofty Gentlemen] to arrange the reputations of the sages and worthies. Relying on these classifications, very many writers who followed on from them, and the categories have increased as they have been passed on. Yet also they have been mixed with untrue and absurd explanations.

If we look to the origin it probably lies in what the historical office reckoned insignificant. The officers with the responsibility for making copies cut [such things] and selected what they took to be the essentials. The accounts and the eulogies from Lu, Pei and the Sanfu have been destroyed and later writings, too, have, for the most part, been partially or entirely lost. Now we have taken what is extant and classified it into a section that we have named *zazhuan*.

Thus, the explanation for the category of *zazhuan*, in broad terms, is that over time historians have felt the need to widen their focus, gradually including more and more figures in the class of people reckoned worthy of recording. The definition of the form of the standard histories by Sima Qian and Ban Gu, the editors continue, meant that those figures considered worthy of a biography at that time were included in *Shiji* and *Hanshu*. The compilers of the later standard histories followed the form for a standard history that Sima Qian and Ban Gu had defined but felt the need to continue broadening the field of the subjects of their biographies. *Zazhuan* were those later records which did not fit into the standard history format.

These editorial notes are important as they move the focus away from seeing *Shenxian zhuan* as a text much concerned with the weird and the wonderful for its own sake to seeing it as an example of a set of biographical collections which belonged in the category of history. To be sure, the editors pause to note that some of the compilers of

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<sup>92</sup> *Hanshu*, 100 *xia*: 4258. The topic summary reads, in its entirety, "[Yang] Wangsun was buried naked. [Hu] Jian then beheaded the general. [Zhu] Yun accused Yu in the court. [Mei] Fu stabbed Feng far away. This is called ardent devotion. [Yun] Chang came close to correct behaviour. It is told in part 37 of *Yang, Hu, Zhu, Mei and Yun zhuan*."

these texts may not have had the rigorous attitude to sources that the editors of *Suishu* may have preferred but this does not lead them to query their classification. That is, at this earliest stage in the history of its classification bibliographers treated *Shenxian zhuan* as an historical text with interest beyond Daoist circles. The later classification into *Daoshu* or *Daojia* would imply the bibliographers responsible for those classifications did not take this view.<sup>93</sup>

### The Origin of the Biographies

In his autobiographical essay<sup>94</sup> Ge Hong wrote that his ancestor Ge Lu moved from Langye in the north of China near present day Qingdao to Jurong south of the Yangtze near present day Nanjing during the first century C.E. Ge Hong's grandfather served the state of Wu in official capacities as did his father until the surrender of Wu to Jin when his father served the victorious dynasty. Hong remained in his native area until the Tai'an period (304-5) when he was called upon to take a position of command against rebels led by Shi Bing. When the rebellion was quashed Hong made his way to Luoyang to collect

<sup>93</sup> In the *Suishu* catalogue many of the works that have been designated as *zhiguai* by twentieth century scholars appear in this same *zazhuan* section. This shows that the category *zhiguai* is anachronistic not only for *Shenxian zhuan* but for all those works later classified in this way. DeWoskin sees *zhiguai* as a precursor of fiction: "Long treasured as a source for historical materials, early *chih-kuai* are also studied as an important stage in the development of the literary tale, since they demonstrate features of narrative technique and authorial sensibility that have drawn attention to them as the earliest examples of fiction in China", (Nienhauser, *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, p. 280). That this historicity of *zhiguai* is a profound theoretical difficulty for DeWoskin is shown in his attempt to find a Six Dynasties example of a *zhiguai*-type text for which fictional characteristics can be claimed. DeWoskin writes "The point is often made that most of the *chih-kuai* works were classified in the 'history' section, among 'Miscellaneous Biographies', in the *Sui-shu* and *Chiu T'ang-shu* bibliographies. Only in the eleventh century, with the compilation of the *Hsin T'ang-shu* by Ou-yang Hsiu, were most of them moved to the 'fiction' list. Outside the dynastic histories, however, the association of the *chih-kuai* with *hsiao-shuo* was by no means this late, and can be dated no later than the Liang Dynasty (502-557), when librarian Yin Yün compiled a book entitled *Hsiao-shuo*. His works, a collection of previously compiled and scattered records, took much from earlier *chih-kuai*, not as commentary or historical addenda, but on their own merits. The understanding of *chih-kuai* and of *hsiao-shuo* among historians and official bibliographers seems retarded, both in view of Yin Yün's compilation and in contrast to the sophistication of Six Dynasties literary theory as it bore on poetry and other prose." ("The Six Dynasties *Chih-kuai* and the Birth of Fiction" in Plaks, A.H., *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays* (Princeton, 1977), 21-52 (p. 45)). There are several points to make about this pivotal passage in DeWoskin's article. First, as he states two pages later in relation to the *xiaoshuo* classification in the *Sui shu* bibliography, "Wei Cheng [compiler of *Suishu*] atypically includes the *Hsiao-shuo* of Yin Yün here, and its contents represent the most developed narrative style in the *hsiao-shuo* category" (p. 47). In other words the example DeWoskin wishes to cite as proving the *xiaoshuo* qualities of *zhiguai* - Yin Yün's *Xiaoshuo* - is treated in a fundamentally different way from his other *zhiguai* in the *Suishu* bibliography - it is not treated as history as the other *zhiguai* are. Its classification is only atypical if it is regarded as belonging to the same group of texts as those like *Soushen ji* or *Bowu zhi* that DeWoskin retrospectively wishes to see as a genre. Secondly, despite the fact that Yin Yün's *Xiaoshuo* may be the most developed in narrative terms in the *xiaoshuo* category in *Suishu*, it was clearly not narrative enough - DeWoskin remarks that "*Hsiao-shuo*, be the term rendered 'little talk', 'trivial explanation', 'minor persuasion', or the like, clearly belonged to the discursive rather than the narrative in a division" (p.46). Thirdly, as this last remark indicates, the term *xiaoshuo* itself did not carry the connotation of "fiction" until somewhat later.

<sup>94</sup> The autobiographical material in the paragraph comes from "*Baopuzi waipian zixu*", *Baopuzi*, pp. 369-79.

books but when he got there Hong says that rebellion broke out again. At the same time his route home was cut off by an uprising led by Chen Min. He accepted a position as military assistant to an old friend, Ji Jundao, who had been appointed Governor of Guangzhou. From Guangzhou he apparently proceeded to Luofu shan to concoct the elixir of immortality.

These travels covered an wide area but Ge was not alone in being mobile at the beginning of the fourth century. What he characterizes as rebellions and uprisings were part of the turmoil that led to the fall of the Western Jin.<sup>95</sup> In 311 attacks by non-Chinese peoples from the north and north-west culminated in their sacking Luoyang and capturing Sima Zhi, the emperor. The heir apparent, Ye, ascended the throne in 313 when Zhi was killed. Ye resided in Changan until that city too was captured in 316, and he died in captivity soon after. Sima Rui, who had been in charge of the region of Jianye since 307, was proclaimed emperor there in 318. The region south of the Yangtze, then, became a place of refuge from the troubles in the north. This had significant ramifications for religious history. As Strickmann writes:

It was then that the great families of the north, who had been won over to the missionary faith [the Tianshi Dao, or Way of the Celestial Masters] as its influence steadily increased throughout the third century at the Wei and Western Chin courts, descended on the region, bringing with them their spiritual ministrants.<sup>96</sup>

These newly arrived refugees found themselves confronted by the older inhabitants of the south with their different beliefs, represented by *Baopuzi*, about which Strickmann says, "Whatever the precise connexion of this eclectic work with the real spiritual preoccupations of the old aristocracy of Wu, the *Pao-p'u tzu* clearly comes at the end of an autonomous local tradition."<sup>97</sup> With these refugees we can plausibly imagine came their local traditions, stories commemorating local figures of religious importance, or tales of wonder workers from the Chinese courts of the third century. Such stories, in oral or written form, are likely to have been the material which was used to compile the original *Shenxian zhuan*. This hypothesis would account for the fact that the native places of the figures in *Shenxian zhuan* are so widespread and that they display, as will be demonstrated in chapter three, a considerable degree of heterogeneity in their ideas about immortality.

Commemorative records of locally important figures survive from the early centuries C.E. in the form of inscriptions on stelae or in rubbings from them. Ebrey has studied such inscriptions from the Eastern Han period. Of the 314 inscriptions she surveyed, no less than 177 were funerary. The next largest group, some 47, came from shrines and temples, a category she breaks down into three sections: gods and spirits (20), historical

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<sup>95</sup> On this period, see de Crespigny, R.R.C., "The Three Kingdoms and Western Jin: A History of China in the Third Century AD", *East Asian History*, 1 (June, 1991), 1-36 and 2 (December, 1991), 143-165.

<sup>96</sup> Strickmann, M., "The Mao Shan Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy", *T'oung Pao*, LXIII (1977), 1-64 (pp. 6-7).

<sup>97</sup> Strickmann, "The Mao Shan Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy", p. 8.

or historical-mythical figures (16) and ancestor worship (11).<sup>98</sup> One such shrine inscription which is preserved in Cai Yong's collected works describes an auspicious appearance by Wang Ziqiao. It continues, in Holzman's translation:

The local magistrate, Wan Xi of Taishan, looked into what the elders had to say about this and felt that there had been an extremely favourable supernatural occurrence. He held an inquest and believed there was sufficient evidence proving that miracles had truly taken place. He then had an ancestral temple built to rejoice the god [i.e. Wang Ziqiao]. Thereupon those who took delight in the *dao* came from distant places to assemble there. Some strummed zithers and sang of the Great One; others practiced meditation to visit their Cinnabar Fields. Those who were sick or crippled and who silently bowed and prayed for good fortune were granted it straight away, but those who were lacking in respect were struck down immediately. Thus it was known that this was a tomb of great virtue, in truth the tomb of the ancestors of the Perfect Man.<sup>99</sup>

Another stele which commemorates an immortal, and which, moreover, still survives in the Xi'an "forest of stelae", is that dedicated to the immortal Tang Gongfang.<sup>100</sup> Tang appears in the *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Li Babai, but Li is not mentioned in this inscription. Rather, Tang, a naive of Chenggu, is given an elixir by an unnamed realized man (*zhenren*). Tang then upsets his governor by refusing to teach him the Dao. In an attempt to force Tang to pass on the secret his family are arrested, and he seeks help from the realized man. As a result his family are given the elixir as well, and to keep them happy, all their household and domestic animals receive the drug. The house, animals, Tang and his family all disappear among the wind and clouds. The reverse of the stele gives the names of fifteen donors. Two are from Chenggu, near present-day Hanzhong; the remaining thirteen are from Nanzheng, the county town about thirty kilometres away. The commemoration derives from the same locality as the man himself.

These two examples of commemorative stelae and the figures that Ebrey cites for shrine and temple inscriptions demonstrate that such records were not uncommon. Given that so many texts from the period have been lost it would be surprising if there had not been many more composed. While the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies do not explicitly declare their origin in the practice of commemoration of local figures who were spiritually noteworthy, there are four biographies which do note the existence of shrines dedicated to their subjects, that is, that they were the subjects of local cults: those of Dongling Shengmu, Jie Xiang, Luan Ba and Maojun. Luan Ba's shrine, moreover, was erected

<sup>98</sup> Ebrey, P.B., "Later Han Stone Inscriptions", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40 (1980), 325-353 (p. 332).

<sup>99</sup> Holzman, D., "The Wang Ziqiao Stele", *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, 47, 2 (1991), 77-83 (pp.79-80).

<sup>100</sup> The most convenient reference for this stele is Chen Yuan, *Daojia jinshi lue* (Beijing, 1988), pp. 5-7. It is discussed by Yü Ying-shih in his article "Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China", (pp.107-8) and mentioned again by him in his later article "'O Soul, Come Back!' A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 47 (1987), 363-395 (p.388).

while he was still on official duties in the capital. These references may point to the origins of the biographies lying in commemorative records or shrine inscriptions.

Then people from far and wide erected a shrine and worshipped her. Whatever matters the common folk brought to her attention, invoking her name proved efficacious. (Dongling Shengmu)

The Former Ruler immediately disinterred [Jie Xiang's] coffin and looked inside. There was only a talisman. The Emperor pondered on this and erected a shrine. From time to time he went there himself and made offerings. Normally white cranes came and gathered on the shrine then slowly returned whence they came. (Jie Xiang)

[Luan Ba] said "My village regards me as able to exorcize ghosts and cure diseases. My students have erected a temple to me."...subsequently they heard that he had returned to Chengdu. He farewelled his relatives and said that he would not return. Young and old went into his temple to see him off. They said, "When he left there was a storm and darkness as well". No-one knows where he went. (Luan Ba)

Near and far shrines were erected to [Lord Mao] where he was honoured and served. He was present amongst the screens and he spoke with people from there. Sometimes when he came and went he was accompanied by people and horses, sometimes he was transformed into a white crane. (Maojun)

Apart from these records *Shuijing zhu* provides information on a shrine erected in honour of Liu An, the King of Huainan, on Bagong shan - the Mountain of the Eight Worthies.<sup>101</sup> Kominami Ichirō maintains that the Liu An record, in particular, shows evidence of local transmission in the rural images that appear in the story: Liu An's ascension to heaven was followed by dogs and chickens who finished off the remaining elixir and their cackling and barking could be heard from within the clouds.<sup>102</sup>

Further evidence of local transmission in some of the biographies comes from the manner in which the positions of officials are labelled. Court-based records, notably the official histories, are scrupulous in referring to officials by their exact titles. The *Shenxian zhuan* biographies are, by comparison, imprecise. A good example is in the biography of Liu Gen where three successive local officials are called the Resident Official (*fujun*).<sup>103</sup> *Fujun* was another name for Grand Administrator (*taishou*) in Han times, the *fu* being the residence of the local official in charge but it appears to be a rather generic and unspecific term with the force of "the official in charge". This indicates that the world of the biography centres on the locality. Different officials come from and go to the capital or elsewhere, and the one in charge at any given time is simply the *fujun*. In general, the

<sup>101</sup> *Shuijing zhu* (*Hejiao Shuijing zhu*, Wang Xianqian, ed., Changsha, 1892), 32:9b.

<sup>102</sup> Kominami Ichirō, "Gishin jidai no shinsen shisō: Shinsenden o chūshin toshite" in Yamada Keiji (ed.), *Chūgoku no kagaku to kagakusha* (Kyoto, 1978), 573-626 (pp. 575-82). See chapter five for a discussion of this biography, and note 56 of that chapter in particular, for earlier uses of these images.

<sup>103</sup> This term is also used in the stele commemorating Tang Gongfang.

officials who people the biographies are local Chiefs or Prefects; sometimes it is the immortal himself. Rarely is there a sense that there exists an extensive bureaucratic framework with officials moving from post to post across the empire as they pursue their careers. An exception to this is found in Wang Yuan's biography where Wang's own official career, which only consisted of a recommendation and two positions, is described in correct official terms. Yet this biography shows little interest in the career of one Chen Dan, details of which are available in the dynastic histories<sup>104</sup> - he is simply named as Lord Grand Commandant (*taiweigong*), only one of many important positions he held. The focus of this biography, in common with most of those in *Shenxian zhuan*, is resolutely local. The compilation of the original *Shenxian zhuan* and of later recom compilations will be dealt with in the next chapter.

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<sup>104</sup> See chapter five for details of Chen Dan's official career.



## Chapter Two: The Text and Authorship of *Shenxian zhuan*

The analysis of ancient written works, whether they are literary, historical or religious, relies primarily on an assessment of their history as text. A text-historical approach should not exclude other approaches. The study of a text in its historical context depends on ascertaining the date and circumstances of its composition. Often, of course this is not possible and the older or more esoteric the material the less likely it is that precise conclusions can be made. This is certainly not to say that texts whose precise history cannot be traced are to be excluded from study - if this were the case the proportion of texts from the pre-Tang period that could be regarded as within the bounds of the discipline would be small. What is required in this text historical analysis is that the available information regarding the history of the text should be assessed to determine what can be concluded about its history. In the case of pre-Tang texts such conclusions are likely to be statements of relative probability rather than certainty. Dates of composition are likely to be defined in terms of ranges of possibility and authorship is generally subject to doubt.

What is possible to analyse in old texts is the degree of unity of composition; that is, whether or not the received version or versions of the text have been subject to additions or deletions or editing of some other kind. This analysis is most important in the case of texts of which the precise circumstances of composition are unknown and where, therefore, detailed research into historical and social context is impossible. An appropriate kind of research into these texts is to focus the study on the text itself. If a text is to be approached in this way it is important to know the status of each part of the text and examine the possibility of there being different levels of text. It is also important on logical grounds to exclude from this analysis any consideration of content: if the textual study is intended to provide the best text for a content analysis, evidence other than that of content must be used in order to make textual decisions. Whatever grounds are chosen for deciding which parts of a text are to be included and which are to be excluded it is possible that genuinely original parts of the text will be excluded and rogue additions will be included. Reconstructing old texts is an inexact procedure: the most that can be expected is a degree of rigour in the method and clarity about the basis on which decisions are made.

This chapter investigates these questions with regard to *Shenxian zhuan*. It begins by examining the traditional claim of Ge Hong to be the compiler of *Shenxian zhuan*; it considers evidence that there was a *Shenxian zhuan* earlier than his and compares *Shenxian zhuan* to *Baopuzi*, a text that is unquestionably Ge Hong's which deals with material that is related to *Shenxian zhuan*. The second part of the chapter traces the history of the text through citations in commentarial literature, encyclopaedias and so on. The third section examines the modern versions of *Shenxian zhuan* and shows that they are all reconstructions. The fourth section makes certain conclusions about which biographies can be regarded as reliably deriving from an early Tang version of *Shenxian zhuan*. This section defines which biographies I use in chapters three, four and five as the basis of

discussion. Finally, the fifth part examines the condition in which these biographies have come down to us.

### ***Shenxian zhuan* and Ge Hong.**

#### Ge Hong's Authorship

The compilation of *Shenxian zhuan* is traditionally ascribed to Ge Hong who died in the mid-fourth century. This section will examine the early evidence for that ascription and will start with what Ge Hong himself wrote in an autobiographical essay:

Altogether I wrote (*zhu*) [*Baopuzi*] *Neipian* in twenty chapters, [*Baopuzi*] *Waipian* in fifty chapters, one hundred chapters of inscriptions, eulogies, poems, and *fu* and thirty chapters of military dispatches, proclamations, memorials to the throne and memoranda. I also compiled (*zhuan*) biographies of those not normally listed - *Shenxian zhuan* - in ten chapters and biographies of those who in their nobility refused office - *Yinyi zhuan* - in ten chapters. In addition I made an anthology of three hundred and ten chapters of military affairs, techniques, miscellaneous entries and oddities by copying excerpts from (*chao*) the five classics, the seven histories and the one hundred philosophers and made a table of contents.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from the material in this autobiographical essay that it was written after the fifty chapters of the *Baopuzi waipian*. The *Suishu* bibliographical treatise listing for *Baopuzi waipian* lists it as having fifty chapters but a note against this entry reads "In the *Liang* it had fifty one chapters."<sup>2</sup> This would indicate that the autobiographical essay was attached to *Waipian* (fifty plus one) by the early sixth century - a position it still occupies - although at the time the essay was written it was considered a separate entity.

The dates of Ge Hong's birth and death were for a long time a matter of some dispute. Sivin conveniently summarizes the evidence adduced by Chen Guofu and William Hung to settle the question. Ge was born in 283 and died, aged sixty one, in 343.<sup>3</sup>

Surviving texts of *Shenxian zhuan* contain a preface in which Ge Hong explains the background to the text's compilation:<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Baopuzi*, p. 377. The essay is published in this edition of *Baopuzi neipian* as appendix 1: *Baopuzi waipian zixu*.

<sup>2</sup> *Suishu* (Beijing, 1973), 34:1006.

<sup>3</sup> Sivin, N., "On the *Pao P'u Tzu Nei P'ien* and the Life of Ko Hung (283 - 343)", *Isis*, 60 (1969), 388-391. Chen Guofu's work is in *Daozang yuanliu kao*, 2nd ed. (Beijing, 1963), pp. 95-98. For William Hung's discussion see Hong Ye, "Zai Shuo *Xijing zaji*", *Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan*, 34 (1963), 389-404 (p. 397).

<sup>4</sup> This preface must be regarded with some suspicion as it is not cited in any early texts. Moreover the information it contains is not incorporated into Ge Hong's *Jinshu* biography where it could be expected to be found were it known in the Tang court library. Teng Sheng is not known elsewhere. Nonetheless there

After I wrote [*Baopuzi*] *Neipian* in twenty chapters, which discussed matters relating to immortals, my student Teng Sheng asked me, "You say, Master, 'It is possible to attain transformation into an immortal; it is possible to learn how never to die'.<sup>5</sup> Were there really people in ancient times who achieved immortality?" I replied, "Several hundred were recorded by Ruan Cang the minister of Qin<sup>6</sup> and Liu Xiang also compiled [the records of] over seventy."...Now I have copied and assembled the [records of] ancient immortals that can be found in the methods of drug therapy in the scriptures of immortality,<sup>7</sup> the writings of the hundred schools, the explanations of the former masters and the discussions of the aged erudites and made them into ten chapters.

The information regarding the works written or compiled by Ge Hong in his biography in *Jinshu* is clearly based on his autobiographical essay discussed earlier so there is no need to introduce it here.<sup>8</sup>

Among the relevant sources not written by, or directly related to, Ge Hong, Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguo zhi* is the earliest - it was completed before 429, about one hundred years after Ge Hong's death. Pei Songzhi cites *Shenxian zhuan* several times in this commentary. At the end of chapter eighteen of *Wushu*, immediately after quoting a good deal of the *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Jie Xiang, Pei writes:

I, Songzhi, consider that what was recorded by Ge Hong came close to deluding the masses. But as his writings are so widely circulated, I have selected a few of the events [from Jie Xiang's biography] and have recorded them at the end of this section.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from the biography of Jie Xiang, Pei's commentary cites the biographies of Li Yiqi and Dong Feng. These citations agree well with their biographies in both versions of *Shenxian zhuan* that have survived into modern times.<sup>10</sup>

Later in the 5th century Tao Hongjing (456 - 536) was said to have "obtained Ge Hong's *Shenxian zhuan* and studied it day and night and so mastered its ideas on

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is nothing in the preface that contradicts other sources so it has been included here for the sake of completeness. On the other hand, this compatibility does not prove the preface is genuine.

<sup>5</sup> This passage does not appear in *Baopuzi*.

<sup>6</sup> In *Suishu*, 33:982 Ruan Cang (where he is dated to the Han) is credited with a *Liexian tu*. The same details can be found in *Wenyuan yinghua* (Beijing, 1966), 502:2578-9 in Xu Nanrong's reply to Bai Juyi's *ce* under the title *Shushi baijia*.

<sup>7</sup> It may be that *Xianjing* and *Fushifang* are the names of two texts, or that *Fushifang* is a part of *Xianjing* either constituting one part of it or describing its contents, or that both are names of genres rather than specific texts. *Xianjing* is cited in *Baopuzi* but *Fushifang* is not. It is also most likely that where *Xianjing* is quoted in *Baopuzi*, it refers to a genre not a specific text.

<sup>8</sup> *Jinshu* was completed in the early Tang approximately 300 years after Ge Hong's death.

<sup>9</sup> *Sanguo zhi* (Beijing, 1985), 63:1428.

<sup>10</sup> The citation from Jie Xiang's biography in the commentary to *Sanguo zhi* contains an incident - concerning minced fish - which is not found in the *Taiping guangji* version of his biography but is found in the *Siku quanshu* version.

nourishing life."<sup>11</sup> At the time Tao - the "presiding genius of the Maoshan school of Taoism"<sup>12</sup> - was in only his tenth year by Chinese reckoning. His biography preserved in *Yunji qiqian* and written by his nephew Tao Yi, *Huayang yinju xiansheng benqi lu*, does not mention *Shenxian zhuan*. It stresses rather his mastery of the Confucian canon - *Liji*, *Shangshu*, *Zhouyi* and *Chunqiu* are amongst his reading in his tenth year according to this record.<sup>13</sup>

The most complete biography of Tao Hongjing, however, is *Huayang Tao yinju neizhuan*, compiled by Jia Song, which is preserved in the Daoist canon.<sup>14</sup> The section relevant to *Shenxian zhuan* - the first chapter - was probably completed in the Tang. It cites Tao Yi's work in more detail than the version in *Yunji qiqian*, placing extracts from it between sections drawn from a biography by Pan Yuanwen, a disciple of Tao Hongjing. Tao Yi's biography is introduced in the text under the abbreviated title *Benqi lu*. The relevant passages read:

In his eighth and ninth years he read more than one thousand scrolls and was particularly skilled at writing. He read Ge Zhiquan's (i.e. Hong's) *Shenxian zhuan* and came upon the events surrounding [the Prince of] Huainan [Liu An] and the eight worthies.

*Benqi lu* says At the house of Mr Ju, an acquaintance of the same village, there was the one scroll of the sixth chapter of Ge Hong's *Shenxian zhuan*.<sup>15</sup>

The way the editor has juxtaposed these two records implies a connexion between the story of the Prince of Huainan and the eight worthies and chapter six of *Shenxian zhuan* - a connexion corroborated by *Sandong zhunang* which cites this biography and locates it in Chapter six of its source text.

Some time after this Tao must have obtained a more complete text as he refers to the biography of Liu An, the Prince of Huainan - though he does not quote from it - in his commentary to *Zhengao*, compiled by 499. Nine figures that feature in these revelations are referred to as being from (*chu*) *Shenxian zhuan*.<sup>16</sup>

Li Daoyuan's (d. 527) *Shuijing zhu* - the last of the pre-Sui sources which survive in complete form - quotes from three biographies twice using the form "*Shenxian zhuan* says..." and once "Baopuzi's (i.e. Ge Hong's) *Shenxian zhuan* says..." The same book also tells the story of the Prince of Huainan and the eight worthies (where Liu An attains immortality) without naming its source but notes "Now in *Hanshu*, [Liu] An rebelled and

<sup>11</sup> *Liangshu* (Beijing, 1983), 51:782. The same sentence occurs in the equivalent biography in *Nanshi* (Beijing, 1983), 76:1897.

<sup>12</sup> Strickmann, M., "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching" in Seidel, A. and Welch, H.(eds.), *Facets of Taoism* (New Haven, 1979), 123-192 (p. 125).

<sup>13</sup> *Yunji qiqian* (DZ 677-702, HY 1026), 107:4a.

<sup>14</sup> On *Huayang Tao yinju neizhuan* (DZ 151, HY 300), see Strickmann, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching", pp. 142-3.

<sup>15</sup> *Huayang Tao yinju neizhuan*, shang:3a.

<sup>16</sup> *Zhengao* (DZ 637-640, HY 1010), 10:23a-25a, 13:13a, 14:18b.

was executed. Ge Hong makes clear the circumstances of his attainment of the Dao. The events are fully laid out in *Baopuzi* and *Shenxian zhuan*."<sup>17</sup>

An extra piece of evidence from before the Sui is provided in a citation from *Daoxue zhuan*, a lost collection of Daoist biographies compiled by Ma Shu of the Chen. In the record of Ge Hong from that text cited in *Xianyuan bianzhu*, the five dynasties period anthology of stories of immortals, Ge is credited with compiling *Shenxian zhuan* which is said to have had ten chapters.<sup>18</sup>

These few sources exhaust the early evidence for *Shenxian zhuan* but it is clear that a text known by this name did exist and that it was attributed to Ge Hong from an early date and by people who were likely to be well-informed.

#### An earlier *Shenxian zhuan* ?

Several sentences credited to the late Eastern Han *Fengsu tongyi* contain evidence of a text called *Shenxian zhuan* which would predate that ascribed to Ge Hong. These references come from a lost chapter concerned with clan names. The three citations read as follows:

Wo: *Fengsu tong*: after Wo Ding, the son of Taijia of the Yin. In *Shenxian zhuan* Wo Jiao is a man of Wu.<sup>19</sup>

Dongling: *Fengsu tong*: after Shao Ping the lord of Dongling of the Qin. Also in the time of Duke Jing of Qi there was a recluse of the clan Dongling. In *Shenxian zhuan* there is a Dongling Shengmu.<sup>20</sup>

Bo: *Fengsu tong*: in Chu there is a Bo Zhouli. In *Shenxian zhuan* there is a Bo He.<sup>21</sup>

Li Jianguo claims that these three citations reveal the existence of a *Shenxian zhuan* already in existence at the time of *Fengsu tongyi*.<sup>22</sup> His argument follows this course: the extant *Shenxian zhuan* includes biographies of Dongling Shenmu and Bo He. This would imply that Ge Hong borrowed from the pre-existing text that *Fengsu tongyi* used for at least these two biographies. However, since the extant *Shenxian zhuan* Bo He biography says that he was a student of Dong Feng and since Dong Feng (in his extant *Shenxian zhuan* biography) was alive in the time of Sun Quan - some generations later than the

<sup>17</sup> *Shuijing zhu* (*Hejiao Shuijing zhu*, Wang Xianqian, ed., Changsha, 1892), 32:8a.

<sup>18</sup> *Xianyuan bianzhu* (DZ 329-30, HY 596), shang:7b.

<sup>19</sup> *Tongzhi* (Shanghai, 1935), 26 (*Shizu lue*, 4):463 and *Gujin xingshishu bianzheng jiaokanj* (*Shoushan ge congshu* ed.), xia:8a. A manuscript edition held in Beijing library of Lin Bao's Tang period *Yuanhe xingzuan* (CBM 1502, roll 653), 10:19b-20a also has this citation but the 1948 Commercial Press edition leaves the whole entry out.

<sup>20</sup> *Gujin xingshishu bianzheng* (*Shoushan ge congshu* ed.), 2:2a. *Tongzhi* 24 (*Shizu lue*, 2):454 cites the sentence which mentions *Shenxian zhuan*, above, as "Also there is Dongling Shengmu who came from Guangling and married into the Du clan".

<sup>21</sup> *Xingjie* (*Congshu Jicheng* ed.), 3:102.

<sup>22</sup> Li Jianguo, *Tangqian zhiguai xiaoshuo shi* (Tianjin, 1984), pp. 197-8.

period of *Fengsu tongyi*'s composition - this lost biography must refer to another Bo He. Li concludes that first, there was another *Shenxian zhuan* extant before *Fengsu tongyi* was compiled in the Later Han; second, that two of the three biographies recorded in it were of people who have the same names as people in the extant *Shenxian zhuan* and third that the Bo He it records is a different Bo He from the one in the extant *Shenxian zhuan*.

These conclusions are based on misreadings of the texts used as sources for the reconstruction of the lost *Fengsu tongyi* chapter. The source texts cited here - *Tongzhi*, *Shizu lüe*, *Gujin xingshishu bianzheng jiaokanji* and *Xingjie* - were compiled simply by listing early examples of each surname. It so happens that in these three cases - the surnames Wo, Dongling and Bo - there are references in both *Fengsu tongyi* and *Shenxian zhuan*. The way in which these source texts have juxtaposed references to different books seems to have led to Li's confusion. The inference that *Fengsu tongyi* itself cites *Shenxian zhuan* should not be drawn. It is cited first in these texts as it is the earlier source. These source texts were all compiled in the Song or later during which periods *Shenxian zhuan* was widely available. The absence of any *Shenxian zhuan* reference in the only Tang source for the three clan names indicates further that *Fengsu tongyi* did not quote *Shenxian zhuan*. Thus it can be concluded that these citations offer no evidence that there was an early *Shenxian zhuan* or another mysterious, otherwise unknown, Bo He.<sup>23</sup>

Li Jianguo also points to certain references in *Bowu zhi* which cite *Shenxian zhuan*.<sup>24</sup> *Bowu zhi* is attributed to Zhang Hua who lived between 232 and 300 - thus predating Ge Hong. The first citation reads:

*Shenxian zhuan* says "Cypress resin enters the earth for one thousand years and it transforms into *fuling*. *Fuling* transforms into amber".<sup>25</sup>

This citation could conceivably come from a lost part of *Shenxian zhuan* but it is not found in the extant text. It does, however, also appear in *Taiping yulan* where it reads:

*Bowu zhi* says "*Xian zhuan* says 'Cypress enters into the earth for one thousand years when it transforms into *fuling*. *Fuling* transforms into amber, one name for which is river pearl."<sup>26</sup>

The attribution here to *Xian zhuan* may refer to a genre - records of immortals - rather than an actual book title; it certainly does not specify *Shenxian zhuan*.

*Taiping yulan* also has the following:

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<sup>23</sup> For discussion of the versions of the biography of Bo He attributed to *Shenxian zhuan*, as well as those of Gan Ji, Guijun and Gong Chong, see Petersen, J.Ø., "The Early Traditions Relating to the Han Dynasty Transmission of the *Taiping Jing*", *Acta Orientalia*, part 1, 50 (1989), 133-171 and part 2, 51 (1990), 173-216, especially part 2, pp. 177-192. On Bo He's biography, see also Ōfuchi Ninji, *Dōkyō shi no kenkyū* (Okayama, 1964), pp. 278, 338.

<sup>24</sup> Li, *Tangqian zhiguai xiaoshuo shi*, p. 198.

<sup>25</sup> *Bowu zhi* (*Bowu zhi jiaozheng*, *Gujinshuo congshu* ed., Beijing, 1980), 4:48.

<sup>26</sup> *Taiping yulan* (Beijing, 1985), 989:3b.

[*Baopuzi*] also has "*Laozi yuce* says 'Pine resin enters the earth for one thousand years when it changes into *fuling*. After one thousand years *fuling* changes into amber. Amber after one thousand years changes into *shidan*. *Shidan* after one hundred years changes into *weixi*.'"<sup>27</sup>

*Laozi yuce* only appears in the extant text of *Baopuzi* as something to wear suspended from the belt as a protective talisman.<sup>28</sup>

In addition *Baopuzi* has the following:

*Muzhi* sinks into the earth for one thousand years when it transforms into *fuling*. After ten thousand years *fuling* grows small trees on its top and is shaped like a lotus flower. It is called *Muweixi zhi*.<sup>29</sup>

The second citation in *Bowu zhi* reads:

*Shenxian zhuan* says "Yue rose up to reside in [the constellation Da] Chen, Tail was the lodging/ The year star fell to earth as Dongfang Shuo/ Fu Yue died and was present in this lodging/ When Dongfang was born there was no year star".<sup>30</sup>

Dongfang Shuo receives a biography in *Liexian zhuan* (although this citation is not in the extant version of that text) but is never listed as having a biography in *Shenxian zhuan*. The citation, above, looks as if it may be verse: the first three lines each have seven characters, the fourth has six - but with the obvious addition of "Shuo" following "Dongfang" this could be rectified. Da Chen is the constellation corresponding to the western Scorpio and occupies the three contiguous lodgings "Heart", "Room" and "Tail".<sup>31</sup> In the translation I assume that "Chen" is an abbreviation of "Da Chen".

A very close relative of this citation is found in Cao Zhi's (196-232) *Biandao lun* :

Now the writings on immortals and the words of the Daoist school say "Fu Yue rose up as[a star] of [Da] Chen in the Tail lodging, the year star fell to earth as Dongfang Shuo."<sup>32</sup>

The absence of half of the *Bowu zhi* citation from *Biandao lun* indicates that Cao Zhi was not the immediate source for the compiler of *Bowu zhi* but their similarity indicates a

<sup>27</sup> *Taiping yulan*, 888:1b.

<sup>28</sup> *Baopuzi*, 17:301.

<sup>29</sup> *Baopuzi*, 11:199.

<sup>30</sup> *Bowu zhi*, 9:105.

<sup>31</sup> Schlegel misidentifies the constellation Da Chen with Orion (Schlegel, G., *Uranographie chinoise; ou preuves directes que l'astronomie primitive est originaire de la Chine, et qu'elle a été empruntée par les anciens peuples occidentaux à la sphère chinoise* (Leiden, 1875), p. 145-6). See Erya (*Shisan jing zhushu* (Beijing, 1980), p. 2609) for the identification of Da Chen with these three lodgings. Needham argues that the "ancient meaning" (before 2000 B.C.E.) of "Chen" is "celestial mark-point". His source for this identification is a reference in the Gongyang Commentary to *Chunqiu* (17th year of Zhaogong, *Shisan jing zhushu*, p. 2324) where Da Chen is clearly plural being defined as "Da Huo [Antares], Fa [a star in Orion] and the Pole star" (*Science and Civilisation in China*, III (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 249-50.). This reading cannot be used to render a meaningful statement of the citation, above.

<sup>32</sup> *Cao Zhi ji jiaozhu*, p.187. See also Holzman, "Ts'ao Chih and the Immortals", p. 16.

possible common source. And in Cao Zhi's attribution to "the writings on immortals" - there is a possible explanation for the *Bowu zhi's* attribution to *Shenxian zhuan*.

Thus, there is a good deal of uncertainty surrounding the attributions of these two citations. Their attribution to *Shenxian zhuan* would be doubtful even if the source text had an unblemished textual reputation but the status of *Bowu zhi* is itself most uncertain. *Weishu tongkao* regards what we have now as a recompilation from fragments surviving in other texts.<sup>33</sup> This does not mean, of course, that the fragments used in the recompilation were consciously altered but it does mean that, at the very least, they passed through various editorial hands and were therefore subject to copying errors and inadvertent emendations. Clearly these two fragments are very weak evidence to support the case that there was an early *Shenxian zhuan*.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Baopuzi* and *Shenxian zhuan*

Ge Hong's *Baopuzi*, about which there is no scholarly dispute over either authenticity or authorship, has been widely used to illustrate the nature of ideas about immortality in early medieval China. Since *Shenxian zhuan* is traditionally attributed to Ge Hong a comparison of the two texts is necessary.

In many ways *Shenxian zhuan* and the inner chapters of *Baopuzi* are complementary in that *Shenxian zhuan* provides little detail of methods, elixirs or texts - all of which receive attention in *Baopuzi*. At the same time, *Baopuzi* is much less concerned than is *Shenxian zhuan* with lives, although it would be wrong to say that it contains no biographical material. This section examines figures who appear in both texts and will discuss the different types of reference *Baopuzi* makes to them. (This discussion is not exhaustive - references in *Baopuzi* to figures in *Shenxian zhuan* can be found in the textual appendix under each figure). In doing so Kominami Ichirō's hypothesis of the authorship of *Shenxian zhuan* will be addressed.

Some figures who receive biographies in *Shenxian zhuan* are mentioned only as part of the name of a text, method or concoction in *Baopuzi*. Thus, in *Baopuzi* Wang Yuan features only in "Wang Fangping's Realgar Balls"<sup>35</sup> and Shen Xi in "Shen Xi's Talisman".<sup>36</sup> Shen Xi's *Shenxian zhuan* biography includes reference to his talisman but Wang Yuan's makes no mention of realgar balls. Nonetheless, it is clear from the way these two items are referred to in *Baopuzi* that Ge Hong did not use the biographies as his source. Both items are described in relation to Ge Hong's time and nothing is said about their originators: some people are said to carry Wang Fangping's Realgar Balls on their belts to ward off snakes in the mountains; Shen Xi's Talisman is listed as one of many in the catalogue of texts in the possession of Ge Hong's master Zheng Yin. Jie Xiang, Peng Zu and Gan Shi, who receive some biographical attention in *Baopuzi*, also each have their

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<sup>33</sup> *Weishu tongkao* (Shanghai, 1954), pp. 875-78.

<sup>34</sup> Li Jianguo (*Tangqian zhiguai xiaoshuo shi*, p. 198) also proposes another *Bowu zhi* citation attributed to *Xian zhuan* as evidence of an early *Shenxian zhuan* but this may be discounted without further argument.

<sup>35</sup> *Baopuzi*, 17:305.

<sup>36</sup> *Baopuzi*, 19:335.



"methods" described. "Master Jie's Method" appears immediately before Wang Fangping's Realgar balls as it, too, is concerned with warding off snakes.<sup>37</sup> The method uses visualization techniques and the steps of Yu. Neither of these techniques is found in Jie's biography in *Shenxian zhuan*. "Pengzu's Method" is for gaining long life through sexual techniques.<sup>38</sup> While these techniques themselves are not found in his *Shenxian zhuan* biography it does include statements that indicate he thought sexual regimen most important. "Gan Shi's Method" is for getting rid of feelings of hunger due to dietary restrictions.<sup>39</sup> It advocates summoning the jade girls of the six *jia* and the six *ding* and drinking blessed water. While it is stated in Gan Shi's *Shenxian zhuan* biography that he did not eat or drink, neither the existence of a method nor these techniques are mentioned.

The second kind of reference in *Baopuzi* to figures in *Shenxian zhuan* is when it briefly mentions their powers. One example of this is a list of figures and deeds Ge Hong uses to refute the arguments of "run-of-the-mill Confucianists" [*suru*]. Their claim is that what the sages could not do, no-one else could either. Ge Hong says:

The men of Dang live in water,<sup>40</sup> Liangmu underwent fire transformation,<sup>41</sup> [You] Bozi could stand the greatest heat,<sup>42</sup> [Wang] Zhongdu could bear the extremes of cold, Zuo Ci did not die when he was cut up, Gan Shi desisted from grains for a whole year, Fan Yi was chopped but [the axe] did not enter him, Bie Ling's corpse floated downstream and he came back to life,<sup>43</sup> Shaoqian controlled the hundred ghosts,<sup>44</sup> [Fei] Changfang could shrink the veins of the earth, [Li] Zhongfu changed his shape to a wild duck's, Zhang Kai could create clouds and mist with his breath.<sup>45</sup> I have never heard of the Duke of Zhou or Confucius being able to do these things.<sup>46</sup>

Wang Zhongdu, Zuo Ci, Gan Shi, Fei Changfang and Li Zhongfu all feature in *Shenxian zhuan* and the *Baopuzi* information on them is, in condensed form, the same kind as that contained in their *Shenxian zhuan* biographies.

In some cases *Baopuzi* gives detailed information about figures who appear in *Shenxian zhuan*, but that information is not necessarily the same - or even compatible with - the *Shenxian zhuan* material. A good example is Li A. His *Shenxian zhuan* biography is as follows:

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<sup>37</sup> *Baopuzi*, 17:305.

<sup>38</sup> *Baopuzi*, 6:129.

<sup>39</sup> *Baopuzi*, 15:267.

<sup>40</sup> See *Bowu zhi*, 2:24.

<sup>41</sup> See the *Liexian zhuan* biography of Xiaofu, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, pp. 74-76.

<sup>42</sup> See Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>43</sup> See the citation from Yang Xiong's *Shuwang benji* in the commentary to Zhang Heng's biography in *Houhan shu* (Beijing, 1982), 59:1929.

<sup>44</sup> *Baopuzi*, 8:155 also refers to Shaoqian in passing but does not mention ghosts.

<sup>45</sup> See *Houhan shu* biography of Zhang Kai, 36:1243.

<sup>46</sup> *Baopuzi*, 12:228.

Li A was a native of Shu. Although people saw him over several generations he never aged and was unchanged. He usually begged for food in the Chengdu market but gave away whatever he received to the poor. He would leave at night and return in the morning and the market people did not know where he spent the night.

There was a certain Gu Qiang who suspected that A was a marvel and constantly served him personally. Gu tried to follow A back to where he slept - he went out into the Qingcheng mountains. Later Qiang wanted to follow him again but as he did not know the roads, and was scared of wolves and tigers, he carried his father's broad sword. A saw him and angrily said to him, "You are following me. How can you be scared of tigers?" He took Qiang's sword, struck a rock with it and broke it in half. Qiang was secretly heartbroken that it had been destroyed. At dawn A came out again. A asked Qiang, "Are you worried that your broad sword is ruined?" Qiang said, "I am really scared that my father will be angry." A then took the sword and hit the ground around about and it was restored.

Qiang followed A when he returned to Chengdu. Before they got there they happened to come across a man rushing along with a cart. A put his foot under it and the bones were run over and broken. A died. Qiang kept watch over him.

After a short time A got up and rubbed his foot with his hand and restored it to normal. Qiang was eighteen at the time and A looked about fifty. When Qiang was over eighty, A still looked the same.

A told others he received a summons from Kunlun and had to leave. He has never returned. (Li A)

*Baopuzi* mentions Li A, but what it has to say about him would seem to bear little relation to the *Shenxian zhuan* biography.

Somebody asked when the Dao of the Li family arose.

I replied: In the time of Wu Dadi [222-252] there was a Li A in Shu. He lived in a cave and did not eat. He was seen for generations and called Lord Eight Hundred Years.

When someone asked him about things A would not utter a word, but one could divine from the expressions on A's face. If he was happy, it was auspicious; if he looked grave, it was inauspicious. If A smiled there would be great blessings, but if he sighed faintly there would be deep grief. If one observed him like this nothing ever went amiss. He suddenly disappeared one day. No-one knows where he went.

Later there was a man called Li Kuan who, it is said, came to Wu speaking the language of Shu. He was able to cure disease most effectively with water he had charmed. Thereupon people from near and

far unanimously referred to Kuan as Li A and all called him Li Eight Hundred. This was incorrect.<sup>47</sup>

Ge Hong in this latter passage does not display any knowledge of the *Shenxian zhuan* biography nor does the *Shenxian zhuan* biography refer to the material found in *Baopuzi*. The powers credited to Li A in each are quite different. In *Shenxian zhuan* he shows no sign of precognitive ability; in *Baopuzi* the restoration of objects and indeed himself do not appear. Furthermore the *Shenxian zhuan* biography has no authorial intervention. The story is presented as if it is a direct record of events, whereas the *Baopuzi* passage, typically for that text, is presented as the opinions and recollections of Ge Hong. The tone of Ge Hong's comments about Li Kuan's false adoption of the name Li A - "This is not correct" - is also typical of *Baopuzi*.

A particularly good example of Ge Hong's sceptical attitude is the next passage from *Baopuzi*, which is related to the *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Li A. Here Ge Hong relates the story of Gu Qiang:

Formerly there was a man called Gu Qiang who ingested concoctions of plants. He also practised the methods of Rongcheng [gong], the Mysterious [girl] and the Unadorned [girl].<sup>48</sup> When he was about 80 he was still clear-headed and not emaciated by old age. People at the time called him an immortal, or sometimes the thousand-year-old-man. Official Ji of Yangzhou heard about him and tried to meet him at Yidu.<sup>49</sup> When he got there Gu moaned and twisted his body as if it was going to shrink - it seemed he was one who knew of the truly distant but would not disclose it completely. Thereupon, on the basis of what they had heard, busybodies gathered like echoes and attached themselves like shadows to what they had seen. Coming together and merging as clouds and fog, people competed to praise and flatter him. They presented him with food one after the other and he always had money to spare. Although Luan [Da] and

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<sup>47</sup> *Baopuzi*, 9:173-4. The section of this passage from "When someone asked him about things" to "One day later" also appears in the *Taiping guangji* version of the biography of Li A attributed to *Shenxian zhuan* (7:50). It is likely that this passage was absorbed into *Taiping guangji*'s source text from *Baopuzi*. This passage has been used in discussions of the so-called "Dao of the Li Family". See Ōfuchi Ninji, *Dōkyō shi no kenkyū* (Okayama, 1964), p. 497, Yamada Toshiaki, "Rika Dō to sono shūhen", *Tōhō shūkyō*, 52 (1978), 15-27 (p.16), Seidel, A., "The Image of the Perfect Ruler in Early Taoist Messianism", *History of Religions*, 9 (1969/70), 216-247 (pp. 231-2), Ren Jiyu (ed.), *Zhongguo daojiao shi* (Shanghai, 1990), pp. 62-64, Qing Xitai (ed.), *Zhongguo daojiao shi* (Chengdu, 1988), pp. 257-60. *Shenxian zhuan* contains a biography of a Li Babai but as is pointed out in the works cited here the name Babai - eight hundred - was a common epithet applied to different people. The Li Babai in *Shenxian zhuan* bears no resemblance to this Li Babai.

<sup>48</sup> For Rongchenggong see his *Liexian zhuan* biography, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, pp. 55-58. Xuannü and Sunü are two female spirits associated with Huangdi.

<sup>49</sup> Wang Ming quotes the opinion of the Qing editor Sun Xingyan that this refers to Ji Han of Guangzhou (*Baopuzi*, 19:352). Ge Hong's autobiographical essay in *Baopuzi waipian* says a man by this name was Inspector of Guangzhou and Ge was employed by him (*Baopuzi*, Appendix 1:375 where he is referred to by his courtesy name Jundao). Ji's biography can be found in *Jinshu*, 89:2301-2302. Yidu is modern Yichang on the Yangtse between Wuhan and Chongqing - not a likely rendezvous from either Yangzhou or Guangzhou.

Li[Shaojun]<sup>50</sup> were greatly honoured by the Han in ancient times, it did not exceed this. Gu normally took Tianmendong [Asparagus] and never dispensed with it - from which I know that he can never have had the great medicines of gold or cinnabar in his body. Yet he had some cursory acquaintance with books as he was quite well informed about antiquity. He said that he was four thousand years old and unashamedly told barefaced lies.

He said he had seen Yao, Shun, Yu and Tang and when he talked about it it was very clear - as if it were true: "It is commonly said that Yao had eight-coloured eyebrows, but this is not so. It was simply that his eyebrows arched very steeply so they looked like the character for eight. Yao had grown comparatively large and handsome moustaches. He drank more than two *hu* of wine each day. People exaggerated this and said one thousand *zhong*<sup>51</sup> but truly he wasn't able to drink that much. I saw him rolling drunk several times. He was a sage, but despite that when he was old his administrative skills were not what they had been when he was young. When I saw him expelling the four evil ones and appointing the experts and harmonizers,<sup>52</sup> he simply relied on Shun. Shun was an orphan from a humble household yet he possessed an extraordinary talent. As a recluse, he ploughed land on Mount Li, fished in Lei Marsh and made pots at the sea's edge. Nobody at that time had the ability to spot his marvellous gifts. I noticed that wherever he went he transformed the common people with his virtue. Each of his eyes had double pupils and I knew this to be a sign of great nobility. I always offered him encouragement and consolation: 'If goodness is venerated and loftiness esteemed, do not worry that you are not wealthy or honoured: the power of Fire has ceased - the essence of Yellow will arise. No-one but you was born to accept this destiny.' Even so, his father was obstinate and his younger brother despised him and they were continually trying to kill him. I was always remonstrating with them, 'This boy is destined to bring honour and blessings to your clan. Everyone within the four seas will receive his bounty - not just your family. It is impermissible to act wilfully!' Unexpectedly Yao abdicated in his favour and he remembered that what I said had turned out to be true."

He also said, "When Confucius's mother was sixteen or seventeen I predicted from her physiognomy that she would bear a eminent son. She gave birth to Zhongni who was a genuine marvel. He was nine *chi* six *cun* tall. His brow was like Yao's, his neck was like Gao Yao's, his shoulders

<sup>50</sup> The *Daozang* edition of *Baopuzi neipian* (DZ 868-870, HY 1177, 20:3b) reads *li* ( 里 ) here rather than *li* ( 李 ).

<sup>51</sup> For *zhong* ( 鐘 ) read *zhong* ( 鍾 ).

<sup>52</sup> See *Zuo zhuan*, Wengong, 18 (*Shisan jing zhushu*, p. 1863) for the expulsion of the four evil ones and the experts and harmonizers - the eight talented descendants of Gaoxin and Gaoyang, respectively - who were appointed when Shun became Yao's minister.

like Zi Chan's.<sup>53</sup> He was three *cun* shorter than Yu from the waist down. Despite this he was poor and impoverished but as a child he still loved the sacrifices so I knew he was destined for great things. When he grew the elevation of his discourse surprised people. It is on record that several thousand people came from near and far to attend to him and receive his teachings. I loved to listen to him speak and several times went to attend on him. However I regret my lack of learning as it meant I was unable to repeat and analyse with him. He was always encouraging me to read the *Changes*. He said, 'This is a fine book. I esteem it so greatly that its leather bindings have broken three times and the iron rod has snapped three times. Now, I am enlightened.' In the fourteenth year of Duke Ai of Lu a *lin* animal was captured by hunters in the west. The *lin* died. Confucius questioned me about it and I said, 'This is not a good omen'. Confucius then wept bitterly from sorrow. Later he had a nightmare and wanted to see me. That was in the middle of the fourth month and it was stifling hot so I could not go to him. When I asked after him it transpired that he had died after being ill for seven days.<sup>54</sup> To this day I vaguely recall his face."

He also said, "The First Emperor of Qin led me to Pengcheng to drag a tripod from the time of Zhou [from the river].<sup>55</sup> I informed him, 'This tripod is a spiritual object. If you are virtuous it will emerge of itself. If you are without the Dao it will sink. If you, sir, will simply cultivate yourself it is bound to come on its own - you cannot force it to arrive.' At that time the First Emperor looked incredulous at what I had said but when he tried to pull it out it would not appear. Then he apologized to me, 'You, sir, are one of those who can discern patterns from a distance.'"

He also expounded on all the details of Han Gaozu and Xiang Yu and things of that sort but it is not possible to record everything. Each of us who knew him at that time thought it was just fooling but when the common folk heard him they all believed what he said.

Furthermore when Qiang became old and senile he could no longer recall the origins of things. Official Ji once gave him a jade goblet. Later, he unexpectedly told Ji, "Long ago Master Anqi bequeathed me this." Later Qiang got ill and died at the house of Huang Zheng of Shouchun. Zheng suspected that he had left through transformation. About a year later he tried chiselling a hole in the coffin to have a look - and his corpse was still there.

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<sup>53</sup> The *Daozang* edition of *Baopuzi* (20:4b) reads "eyebrows" instead of "shoulders".

<sup>54</sup> *Kongzi jiyu* (SBCK ed.), 4:16a-17a says that Confucius wept because the *lin* that was captured had a broken leg. As the appearance of a *lin* was an auspicious omen that a sage ruler was about to appear, the meaning that Confucius saw in the appearance of an injured *lin* was that the times were not right for such a ruler to appear - thus, he wept.

<sup>55</sup> *Shiji* (Beijing, 1982), 6:248 says that Qin Shi Huang tried to get a tripod from the time of Zhou out of the Si river at Pengcheng but he did not succeed.

All of this was fraudulently claiming credit where it was not due. The general public were caused to disbelieve the existence of immortals because such people overturned the truth with falsehood.<sup>56</sup>

Clearly this picture of Gu Qiang is completely different from that in Li A's *Shenxian zhuan* biography. In both Gu Qiang is criticised - in *Baopuzi* openly and in *Shenxian zhuan* implicitly - but in *Shenxian zhuan* it is said only that he oversteps the mark; he is not the complete charlatan of *Baopuzi*. These three passages indicate starkly the kind of disparities that occur between *Shenxian zhuan* and *Baopuzi*. In most cases the conflict is not so obvious, but these examples show that the two texts do not attempt to accomplish the same thing. The insertion of authorial opinion in *Baopuzi* that was pointed out in the second passage, and which serves as the ostensible reason for the long digression about Gu Qiang in the third, is all but absent in *Shenxian zhuan*.<sup>57</sup>

The impression of the Ge Hong of *Baopuzi* is of an intellectual who actively believes in the possibility of immortality but who disparages popular notions and is critical of false claims. This is illustrated admirably by Kominami Ichirō,<sup>58</sup> who draws the distinction between this stance of Ge Hong in *Baopuzi* and the kind of material in *Shenxian zhuan* which he sees as representing a popular stream of belief emphasising stories of seemingly miraculous feats<sup>59</sup> and a relationship between master and student based on absolute faith.<sup>60</sup> According to Kominami, the quest for immortality is represented in these two texts as based on fundamentally different principles. For Ge Hong in *Baopuzi* gaining immortality is basically a technical problem in which self-reliance is paramount. The stories in *Shenxian zhuan*, on the other hand, represent the attainment of immortality as a process based on submission in complete faith to a teacher who bestows the means of immortality on a proven disciple. Immortality does not come from oneself but from outside. These issues will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. For the purposes of the present discussion of Kominami's claims about the authenticity of the text, let it be accepted that *Baopuzi* and *Shenxian zhuan* present radically different attitudes to the attainment of immortality.

These different positions are the starting point for Kominami's discussion of the reliability of the attribution of *Shenxian zhuan* to Ge Hong.<sup>61</sup> He examines the description of the text in Ge Hong's autobiographical statement which was translated in the first section of this chapter. It reads:

I also compiled biographies of those not normally listed - *Shenxian zhuan* - in ten chapters...

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<sup>56</sup> *Baopuzi*, 20:347-8.

<sup>57</sup> There are a few examples in the received text of *Shenxian zhuan* and these will be discussed in chapter five.

<sup>58</sup> Kominami Ichirō, "Gishin jidai no shinsen shisō: Shinsenden o chūshin toshite" in Yamada Keiji (ed.), *Chūgoku no kagaku to kagakusha* (Kyoto, 1978), 573-626, (pp. 595-600).

<sup>59</sup> See Kominami, "Gishin jidai no shinsen shisō: Shinsenden o chūshin toshite", pp. 583-90.

<sup>60</sup> See Kominami, "Gishin jidai no shinsen shisō: Shinsenden o chūshin toshite", pp. 600-05.

<sup>61</sup> See Kominami, "Gishin jidai no shinsen shisō: Shinsenden o chūshin toshite", pp. 623-24.

Kominami reads this sentence as:<sup>62</sup>

I also compiled biographies which are not passed down among the common people - *Shenxian zhuan* - in ten chapters...

Thus he concludes that if *Shenxian zhuan* came from the pen of Ge Hong it should be made up of stories which were not in common currency and should include refutation and rebuttal of popular belief. It is clear that many of the stories included in the versions of the text that have come down to us are related to other texts of the period - certain biographies in the dynastic histories, sections of *Soushen ji* and similar texts, lost historical works preserved in Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguo zhi* and in *Shuijing zhu* to name a few - so clearly the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies we have do not fulfill this criterion. The only example of refutation of popular belief that Kominami cites is from the Laozi biography but as he notes it is unusual and possibly a late inclusion adopting the compiler's name.<sup>63</sup>

He concludes that *Shenxian zhuan* was compiled after Ge Hong's time from remnants of an original text by the same people who added the preface to it. These people must, he says, have been attached to the sect that followed the "Dao of the Ge family" as some of the elixir lore is related to it - perhaps, he says, they inserted the paragraphs that include this information. Finally, as the biographies show no influence of the revelations of the Shangqing sect *Shenxian zhuan* must have been compiled in the middle or towards the end of the Eastern Jin, some generations after Ge Hong's time.

Such a hypothesis is unnecessary. It is clear that Murakami's reading of the passage from Ge Hong's autobiographical essay is mistaken. If the translation presented here is accepted, Ge Hong did not refer to stories which did not have currency among the common people. Rather he says he compiled stories of those who did not usually receive orthodox biographies. This is a fair description of *Shenxian zhuan*. The fact that the perceived stances of the author of *Baopuzi* and the compiler of *Shenxian zhuan* are different does not present a problem as Ge Hong states that he wrote (*zhu*) the former and compiled (*zhuan*) the latter, as has been shown in the first section of this chapter. Consistency between the two is not to be expected. The stories in *Shenxian zhuan* reflect the attitudes of the people who passed the various stories down from generation to generation, not the attitude of Ge Hong himself. There is no need to posit later compilers. This is not to assert that the *Shenxian zhuan* that has come down to us is necessarily the one that Ge Hong compiled, rather I am showing that Kominami's discussion of the question is flawed.

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<sup>62</sup> He notes that this reading comes from Murakami Yoshimi, *Chūgoku no sennin - Hōbokusi no shisō* (Kyoto, 1963), p. 240. Murakami does not give any reasons why he prefers this reading - it appears as part of a translation.

<sup>63</sup> See Kominami, "Gishin jidai no shinsen shisō: Shinsenden o chūshin toshite", pp. 623-4.

## Bibliographical Records and Citations of *Shenxian zhuan* from the Sui to the Song

The traditional method of tracing editions of texts step by step back in time from the most recent edition to something that can be classed as the original does not work with *Shenxian zhuan*. The attempt to apply this method in the previous section untangled some of the complexities of the modern editions but it took us no further back than the Song. This is still more than six hundred years after the death of Ge Hong. The question that remains is whether the *Shenxian zhuan* that was referred to before the Sui and the later versions that can be traced back to the Song are the same thing.

By the Sui *Shenxian zhuan* was certainly widely known and from this period is quoted extensively in both secular and religious sources: *leishu*, commentaries, anthologies of biographies of transcendents and so on. It is also listed in the bibliographical treatises of the standard histories and other library catalogues. This section traces records and citations of *Shenxian zhuan* in order to show the continuing presence of the text until the twelfth century. Each source is discussed below. A table of citations of *Shenxian zhuan* from each of these sources can be found in the appendix in the order in which they appear in the source. Based on this information we will, in the next section, be able to compile a list of those figures who we can conclude received biographies in an early Tang version of *Shenxian zhuan*.

### Bibliographical Records

The bibliographical treatise of *Suishu* has:

*Liexian zhuan*, ten chapters, compiled by Ge Hong.<sup>64</sup>

This reference to *Liexian zhuan* is the result of a transcription mistake for *Shenxian zhuan*. That the editors of *Suishu* are clear as to the authorship of the two collections can be seen from their notes to the *zazhuan* classification translated in the previous chapter. The only other catalogue to make reference to a text of Ge Hong called *Liexian zhuan* is in *Tongzhi* which has been shown to have been compiled from pre-existing catalogues including that of *Suishu*.<sup>65</sup> It therefore presents no independent evidence for the existence of a separate *Liexian zhuan* of Ge Hong.

The relevant chapters of both *Jiu Tangshu* and *Xin Tangshu* list *Shenxian zhuan* in 10 chapters and attribute it to Ge Hong, as does the bibliographical treatise of *Songshi*.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Suishu* (*Ershiwu shi* ed., Taipei, 1970), 33:19b. The *Zhonghua shuju* edition (Beijing, 1973) has corrected this to read *Shenxian zhuan*. See *Suishu*, 33:979. This is also the opinion of the *Siku quanshu zongmu* editors, see *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 146:1250.

<sup>65</sup> *Tongzhi*, 67:788. For more information on *Tongzhi* see van der Loon, *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period*, pp. 15-17.

<sup>66</sup> *Jiu Tangshu* (Beijing, 1975), 59:1520; *Xin Tangshu* (Beijing, 1975), 46:2004; *Songshi* (Beijing, 1977), 205:5189.



*Junzhai dushu zhi*, the catalogue of a private library in Sichuan, completed in 1151, lists *Shenxian zhuan*. The catalogue exists in two versions, one of which gives no further information, the other notes that it has ten chapters.<sup>67</sup> Another catalogue of a private collection, *Suichutang shumu*, lists *Shenxian zhuan* but gives no details of author or length. The owner of the library, You Mao (1124-1193) was an official in Wuxi.<sup>68</sup> *Shenxian zhuan* is not found in *Zhizhai shulu jieti* though it is listed, in ten chapters, in the bibliographical section of *Wenxian tongkao*.<sup>69</sup>

*Shenxian zhuan* does not survive in a complete version in the Ming *Daozang* and this has led to the suspicion that the complete text was lost by this time. It is important, therefore, to know that it formed part of previous versions of the canon. *Daozang quejing mulu* is a list of books which were missing at the time of the compilation of the Ming canon, probably compiled by the editors of the canon themselves. The list was compiled by referring to old booklists (now lost) from the Song. Thus, when this catalogue lists a book as "missing" - as it does *Shenxian zhuan* - we know that it was extant in one or more of the canons which date from the Song. The "missing books" were the result of the burning of Daoist "apocryphal" works in 1258-59 and in 1280-81 under the Yuan.<sup>70</sup>

A one-chapter version of *Shenxian zhuan* is listed in *Chongwen zongmu*, the catalogue of the imperial library as it stood in 1042. The present version of the catalogue dates from 1144 and, like *Daozang quejing mulu*, was used to note what books were missing. This one-chapter *Shenxian zhuan*, extant in 1042, was missing in 1144.<sup>71</sup>

Finally the presence of *Shenxian zhuan* at an early date in Japan is shown by its presence in the catalogue *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku* which was completed around 890.<sup>72</sup>

### Secular *Leishu*

*Beitang shuchao* is the first of the surviving *leishu* to cite *Shenxian zhuan* - and it does so extensively, quoting from eighteen biographies a total of twenty seven times. As this encyclopaedic compilation is quoted - as *Shuchao* - in the bibliographical treatise of *Suishu* it must have been compiled before 618.<sup>73</sup> Its compilation is attributed to Yu Shinan (558 - 638) in the bibliography of *Jiu Tangshu*.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>67</sup> *Junzhai dushu zhi*, Yuan edition (*Xu guyi congshu* ed.), 3 xia:5a; Qu edition (*Wanwei biechang* ed.), 9:12a (as cited in van der Loon, *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period*, p. 130). For more information on *Junzhai dushu zhi* see pp. 25-27.

<sup>68</sup> *Suichutang shumu* (preserved in *Shuofu* (Shanghai, 1930)), 23b. For more information on *Suichutang shumu*, see van der Loon, *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period*, p. 27.

<sup>69</sup> *Wenxian tongkao, jingji kao* (Shanghai, 1985), p.1196.

<sup>70</sup> *Daozang quejing mulu*, 1:21a.

<sup>71</sup> *Chongwen zongmu*, 10:9a. For more information on *Chongwen zongmu* see van der Loon, *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period*, pp.6-8.

<sup>72</sup> *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku* (*Guyi congshu* ed.), 19a.

<sup>73</sup> *Suishu*, 34:1009.

<sup>74</sup> *Jiu Tangshu*, 47:2046.

The second *leishu* that quotes *Shenxian zhuan* is *Yiwen leiju* which quotes no fewer than thirty two biographies a total of forty five times. It was compiled between 622 and 624 on the direction of the first emperor of the Tang by a group of scholars led by Ouyang Xun.

*Chuxue ji*, like *Yiwen leiju*, was compiled under imperial command. The leader of the editorial committee was Xu Jian who lived from 659 to 729, so although we do not know the exact year the work was finished it certainly belongs to the first part of the eighth century.<sup>75</sup> *Shenxian zhuan* is cited twenty eight times with quotations from twenty one biographies.

*Hifuryaku* is a *leishu* produced in Japan but which predominantly cites works from China. Completed in 831, only two chapters - 864 and 868 - from the original one thousand survive. These are concerned with grains and cloth. The manuscript fragments are incorporated into the complete works of Luo Zhenyu. *Hifuryaku* must be regarded as a source of primary value despite its relatively late date of compilation as texts compiled in Japan generally used source texts that had taken some time to reach Japan. It has four citations from two biographies.

*Taiping yulan* is one of the three major *leishu* compiled in the early Song for the Taizong emperor - the others being *Taiping guangji* and *Wenyuan yinghua*. It was probably completed in 982. Li Fang (925 - 996) was at the head of the editorial committee but it appears that others in the team were more responsible for the actual compilation. *Taiping yulan* cites approximately two thousand works in its one thousand chapters although it appears not to have cited directly from original texts - rather, as an introductory note says, pre-existing *leishu* were to serve as sources.<sup>76</sup> Three are mentioned - *Xiuwen yulan*, *Yiwen leiju* and *Wensi boyao* - of which only *Yiwen leiju* survives. In the list of citations from *Shenxian zhuan* in the appendix the source that *Taiping yulan* used is identified where that is possible. Apart from such direct identification, different sources are probably indicated in the way citations are introduced - "*Shenxian zhuan* says..." and "Ge Hong *Shenxian zhuan* says..." are both used. The table also indicates where the latter form is used - where there is no indication the reference is simply to "*Shenxian zhuan*". It is possible that this distinction indicates an origin in different *leishu*.

*Taiping guangji* was compiled - at least nominally - by the same group of scholars as *Taiping yulan*, with the same Li Fang at their head. Again, like *Taiping yulan*, it would appear that the citations came from pre-existing anthologies and not original works. The distinction between these two massive *leishu* was primarily between sources which were considered appropriate for a serious historical work - *Taiping yulan* - and the less formal and more fictional - *Taiping guangji*. *Shenxian zhuan*, however, demonstrates that this

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<sup>75</sup>For a more complete discussion of the date of *Chuxue ji*, see Forte, A., *Mingtang and Buddhist Utopias in the History of the Astronomical Clock*, Serie Orientale Roma, 58 and Publications de L'E.F.E.O., 155 (1988), pp. 98-9. He proposes 713 - 714 and 721 - 726 as the two most likely periods for *Chuxue ji*'s compilation.

<sup>76</sup>"Yin", 1b, *Taiping yulan* (Beijing, 1985), p. 3.

distinction is not as strict as it may appear as both works make extensive recourse to it. *Taiping guangji* was begun in 977, and was completed only eighteen months later.

Compiled by Zeng Cao (1131-1163), *Leishuo* cites *Shenxian zhuan* forty five times but as it is comparatively late it cannot be regarded as a primary source.

The anonymous *Ganzhu ji*, compiled in the twelfth century, cites *Shenxian zhuan* thirty four times. Dudbridge notes in his study of *Guangyi ji* that many of the citations contained in *Ganzhu ji* are identical with those in *Leishuo* and proposes that the latter was the source of the former.<sup>77</sup> The case of *Shenxian zhuan* is similar. The location of the parallel citations in *Leishuo* are indicated in the table. From the discrepancies in the two anthologies - different sequences, the absence from *Leishuo* of two *Ganzhu ji* citations, different characters for the same names and so on - it is most likely that the two have a sibling rather than a descendant relationship but it is clear that they belong to the same textual tradition.

#### Secular Commentaries

The sixteen citations of *Shenxian zhuan* in Li Shan's commentary to *Wenxuan* come from nine biographies. Li Shan died in 689 and the memorial submitting this commentary to the throne is dated 658.

Li Xian's (651-684) commentary to *Houhan shu* has four citations from *Shenxian zhuan* taken from two biographies. Li, who is traditionally given the credit for this commentary and was for sometime a crown prince, was actually at the head of a group of scholars. The commentary was submitted to the throne in 677.

Zhang Shoujie's commentary to *Shiji*, completed in 736, cites two *Shenxian zhuan* biographies a total of three times.

#### Texts from the Daozang

*Sandong zhunang* is a Daoist *leishu* compiled by Wang Xuanhe about whom very little is known except that he was alive in 683. It cites *Shenxian zhuan* twenty eight times. As we have seen the valuable peculiarity of the *Shenxian zhuan* citations in *Sandong zhunang* is that it records from which chapter in its source text a particular citation came. This provides a rare glimpse into the state of *Shenxian zhuan* in this period and these references have been used extensively in all serious discussions of its textual history, including this thesis. The table in the appendix gives the citations from *Shenxian zhuan* in *Sandong zhunang* as well as the chapter from which a citation came in the *Shenxian zhuan* of that period. It also shows in which chapter of the two most important modern versions - *Longwei mishu* and *Siku quanshu* - that biography occurs.

*Daode zhenjing guangshengyi* is a vast commentary to *Daode jing* written by the eminent Daoist Du Guangting. It occupies no fewer than eight volumes of the *Daozang*. Completed in 901 it is based upon the earlier commentary of Tang Xuanzong. It cites the *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Fan Furen once.

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<sup>77</sup> Dudbridge, G., "Guangyi ji chutan", *Xinya xuebao*, 15, 395-414 (p.398).

*Xianyuan bianzhu* is a selection of lives of immortals taken from a number of pre-existing collections. Compiled by the Tiantai Daoist monk Wang Songnian, it cites numerous *Shenxian zhuan* biographies in a manner which was imitated more than once in later texts: under a single heading it groups extracts of two biographies together (for instance "Lord Jie [Xian] - a bamboo staff; Zuo Ci - wooden shoes") or two characters who appear in the same story (for instance "Lu Ao travels to the sea; Ruoshi soars to Heaven"). In an unfortunately large number of cases apparent citations from *Shenxian zhuan* are unattributed. For this reason it is impossible to give an exact number of citations. Where apparent *Shenxian zhuan* biographies are not attributed this is indicated in the table. Boltz dates this text to "sometime after 921" without indicating her reasons.<sup>78</sup>

*Yunji qiqian* was compiled by Zhang Junfang who was the supervisor of the printing of the *Daozang* of 1019. Intended as a digest of this newly printed canon for the Zhenzong emperor (r. 993-1022) it was not actually ready for presentation until 1028 or 1029 by which time the Renzong emperor has ascended the throne. As was shown above, the citations from *Shenxian zhuan* in *Yunji qiqian* play a major role in the discussion of the textual tradition to which the version of *Shenxian zhuan* in the *Siku quanshu* collection belongs.

*Yiqie daojing yinyi miaomen youqi* is a small collection of remnants of *Yiqie daojing yinyi* which was compiled by the Daoist abbot Shi Chong in the late seventh century and is now lost. These remnants were preserved in a glossary of the *Shangqing dadong zhenjing* compiled by the Song Daoist (d.1094) which was called *Shangqing dadong zhenjing yujue yinyi*. It cites the *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Laozi.

*Sandong qunxian lu* is a selection from biographies of transcendents that uses the same format of pairing extracts from two biographies as does *Sandong zhunang*. Compiled by Chen Baoguang, a Zhengyi Daoist from present day Jiangsu, in 1154, it has a preface dated the same year.<sup>79</sup>

There are several important observations to be made about the list in the appendix, which was generated by selecting designated *Shenxian zhuan* citations from *Sandong qunxian lu*. Scattered amongst the names that are cited extensively elsewhere - She Zheng, Dong Feng, Ji Zixun and so on - there are many that are unfamiliar. As the primary concern of this survey of citations is to approach what the list of immortals of an original *Shenxian zhuan* was, are these new figures to be welcomed to the fold? Simply put, does *Sandong qunxian lu* preserve information which this survey has not uncovered in other texts? It may well do - these biographies may not have been anthologized elsewhere or else those texts in which they were anthologized are lost. On examination of the cases involved, however, serious doubts are raised as to the reliability of the citations in *Sandong qunxian lu*.

There are three straightforward problems. First, there are instances where different citations for the biography of a single person, ostensibly from the same text, occur in

<sup>78</sup> Boltz, J.M., *A Survey of Taoist Literature, Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries*, China Research Monograph 32, (Berkeley, 1987), p.59.

<sup>79</sup> See Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature, Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries*, p. 59.

different places. A good example is Ma Xiang whose biography is cited three times, twice from *Shenxian zhuan* and once from *Xuxian zhuan* - a completely different set of biographies compiled in the Tang and in which Ma Xiang's biography can be found in the *Daozang* edition of that text.<sup>80</sup> This indicates the possibility that each citation comes from a different source and, thus, that the compiler may have had more than one source text called *Shenxian zhuan*. Secondly, - in the specific case of the biography of Ge Hong - the source is twice given as *Shenxian zhuan*, which is clearly not possible. Thirdly, in some cases, the figures concerned are said to have lived after Ge Hong's death. Indeed amongst those said to be from *Shenxian zhuan* there are two figures from as late as the Five dynasties and Sima Chengzhen, the towering Daoist master from the Tang.

To add to the confusion *Sandong qunxian lu* also cites biographies of certain figures who appear in *Shenxian zhuan* under the heading of "*Baopuzi* says...". While this method of citation does not permit us, strictly speaking, to determine whether *Baopuzi* refers to the book or to its author, Ge Hong, all other citations in this collection are attributed to books not people. Generally the material in these biographies is related to the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies of the same people - Shen Xi, Bo Shanfu and Jie Xian can serve as examples - as they appear in the modern versions of the text. While, in some cases, these figures do occur in the modern version of *Baopuzi* (the book) the citations do not.

Finally, there are figures who appear in *Shenxian zhuan* at an early date and who are present in its modern versions but who are cited in *Sandong qunxian lu* as being from *Taiping guangji* - Feng Gang, Luan Ba and Jie Xiang.

The conclusions that we can make about the compilation of *Sandong qunxian lu* must remain tentative. It is clear, at the very least, that Chen Baoguang was less critical of his sources than other compilers. He seems to have had one text called *Baopuzi* - which seems to have had *Shenxian zhuan* material in it - and at least one called *Shenxian zhuan*, and possibly more. In addition, in at least one of these latter, biographies of figures of a late date have crept in. With selections from these texts being excerpted into *Sandong qunxian lu* there must be doubts concerning the text's reliability and it would be unwise to assume that those figures cited in *Sandong qunxian lu* were present in an original *Shenxian zhuan*. Moreover, while there may indeed be material preserved here that is not to be found elsewhere, there is no method, short of guesswork, to distinguish the original from the ersatz. Regrettably, therefore, *Sandong qunxian lu* is of no use in determining which figures are to be included in a list of early biographies. On the other hand where, through other sources, a figure is included, the selection of that biography in *Sandong qunxian lu* can be used for comparison.

#### Texts from the Buddhist Canon

*Poxie lun* was written by the Buddhist cleric Falin in 622. This polemic is one of a set of texts recording the rivalries between Buddhists and Daoists during the early years of the Tang. It cites the *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Wei Shuqing.

In 627, in the first year of the reign of Tang Taizong, Falin wrote *Bianzheng lun*, another polemic directed against Daoism. This work, as well as *Poxie lun*, must be seen

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<sup>80</sup> *Xuxian zhuan* (DZ 138, HY 295), shang:6a-10a.

in the context of the Tang imperial house seeking to establish its right to rule through an alleged line of descent from Laozi - the family name traditionally ascribed to both Laozi and the Tang ruling house was Li - and the concurrent measures taken against Buddhism. Their concern, therefore, is with the figure of Laozi and it is this biography from *Shenxian zhuan* that is cited. Apart from this citation there is a reference to "*Shenxian zhuan*, one work in ten chapters, compiled by Baopuzi Ge Hong".<sup>81</sup>

Written by the monk Yancong between 640 and 649, *Tang hufa shamen Falin biezhuàn* is a pious biography of Falin. The single citation from *Shenxian zhuan* comes from the biography of Laozi.

*Bianhuo pian* is included in *Guang Hongming ji* - a collection of various Buddhist texts, many of which are polemics, compiled by Dao Xuan in 664. It was based on an earlier model, *Hongming ji*, which had been compiled between 515 and 518. The texts in both works, of course, originated some time before their compilation but in some cases exactly how long before has been the source of good deal of scholarly argument. *Bianhuo pian* cites the biography of Laozi three times and that of Shen Xi once.

*Fayuan zhulin* is a Buddhist *leishu* compiled by the monk Daoshi and completed by 668. It cites the biography of Laozi twice and that of Pengzu once.

*Zhenzheng lun* was compiled by Xuan Yi during the reign of the Empress Wu (690-705). It cites the biographies of Liu An and Wei Shuqing.

#### A Dunhuang manuscript

Dunhuang manuscript Pelliot 2353 has been identified as coming from *Laozi kaiti xujue yishu* which is ascribed to Cheng Xuanying of the Tang.<sup>82</sup> The text is no longer extant in the *Daozang*. This manuscript cites the biography of Laozi twice.

### Modern Texts and their Sources

#### Texts

*Shenxian zhuan* is found in a number of ten chapter versions, one five chapter version and various one-chapter abstracts, as represented in table 1, below.

Table 1: Modern Versions of *Shenxian zhuan*.

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Editor</u>
<u>10 chapter</u>		
Qinding siku quanshu	Qianlong, 45 (1782)	
Zengding Hanwei congshu	Qianlong, 56 (1791)	Wang Mo
Longwei mishu	Qianlong, 59 (1794)	Ma Junliang
Shuoku	Minguo, 4 (1915)	Wang Wenru

<sup>81</sup> *Bianzheng lun* (TT 52), 546b.

<sup>82</sup> See Ōfuchi Ninji (ed.), *Tonkō dōkei mokuroku* (Tokyo, 1960), p. 57.

Daozang jinghua lu <u>5 chapter</u>	Minguo, 11 (1922)	Shouyizi (Ding Fubao)
Yiyuan junhua <u>1 chapter</u>	(1868)	Gu Zhikui
Yimen guangdu	Wanli (1573-1620)	Zhou Lüjing
Shuofu (120 ch.)	Shunzhi, 3 (1646)	Tao Zongyi (re-edited, Tao Ting)
Shuofu (100 ch.)	Minguo, 16 (1927)	Tao Zongyi (re-edited, Zhang Zongxiang)

The *Longwei mishu* edition, the *Zengding Hanwei congshu* edition, the *Shuoku* edition and the *Yiyuan junhua* edition (which only contains chapters one to five) all derive from *Guang Hanwei congshu* edition of 1592, compiled by He Yunzhong. This latter edition is not widely available although a few original printings are held in libraries in Taiwan.<sup>83</sup> Due to its relative availability, the *Longwei mishu* reprint has become the standard version.<sup>84</sup>

The *Siku quanshu* text has only recently become available in the complete reprinting of that collection - none of the thirteen previous sets of selections of *Siku quanshu* contained *Shenxian zhuan*. It differs markedly from the *Longwei mishu* edition, both in who is included and who is left out as well as presenting different stories for some of the figures in both versions. The editors note that this edition was printed by Mao Jin (1599-1659) and collected for the *Siku quanshu* by the salt administration office in Yangzhou; in the formula of the catalogue it was a *Lianghuai yanzheng caijinben*. In some works this edition is referred to as the *Jiguge* edition after the name of Mao Jin's studio.<sup>85</sup>

Table two presents those figures who receive biographies in both versions and indicates where the stories differ. There are forty three biographies that have a "close" relationship, twenty three with a "similar" relationship and ten that are "different". Twenty three biographies appear in only one version. The designation "close" indicates that the biographies differ only in minor ways, such as slight variations in wording, but have essentially the same content; "similar" indicates that there are parts of the biographies in common and parts that are different and that they may originally have come wholly or largely from the same source; and "different" indicates that the biographies appear to have come from different sources, even though some parts of the story may be the same.

<sup>83</sup> *Taiwan gongcang shanben shumu shuming suoyin* (Taibei, 1971), p.780, gives two locations.

<sup>84</sup> In this thesis I shall consistently refer to this edition as the *Longwei mishu* edition and not as the *Guang Hanwei congshu* edition.

<sup>85</sup> The fact that this was the source of the edition can be corroborated by referring to the *Siku caijin shumu* (Beijing, 1960), p.58, where two editions are recorded as being sent for consideration. That it was in Mao Jin's collection is clear from its entry in the catalogue of that collection, *Jiguge Mao Jin shi zangshu mulu* (CBM 658, 690 - 773, no 1509), p. 406. *Shenxian zhuan* is not, however, listed in the catalogue of books he published, *Jiguge jiaoke shumu* (reproduced in *Xiaoshi shanfang congshu*) nor in the catalogue *Jiguge miben shumu* (reproduced in *Shiliju Huangshi congshu*) prepared by his son Yi after 1689 in order to sell off some of the library. No colophon to *Shenxian zhuan* is included in Mao Jin's collection *Jiguge shupa* (Shanghai, 1959).

Table 2: Comparison of the *Longwei mishu* and *Siku quanshu* texts.

<u>Biography</u>	<u>Longwei mishu</u> <u>Chapter</u>	<u>Siku quanshu</u> <u>Chapter</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
Baishi (Xian)sheng	2	1	close
Ban Meng	10	4	close
Beijizi (Yin Heng)	10	4	close
Bo He	7	7	similar
Bo Shanfu	2	3	close
Chen Anshi	8	3	close
Chen Chang	10	6	similar
Chen Yongbo	10	8	close
Chen Zihuang	10	-	-
Cheng Weiqi	7	7	different
Chengxiangong	9	-	-
Dai Meng	10	-	-
Dongguo Yan	10	7	different
Dong Feng	6	10	close
Dongling Shengmu	7	6	close
Dong Ziyang	10	-	-
Dong Zhongjun	10	7	similar
Fan Furen	7	6	close
Feng Heng	10	10	similar
Feng Gang	8	1	close
Gan Shi	10	10	close
Ge Xuan	7	8	similar
Guangchengzi	1	1	close
Guo Pu	9	-	-
Gong Chong <sup>86</sup>	10	7	similar
Heshanggong	3	8	similar
Hugong	5	9	similar
Hua Ziqi	-	2	-
Huainanwang (Liu An)	4	6	different
Huang Chuping	2	2	close
Huangluzi	10	4	close
Huangshanjun	10	1	close
Huang Qing	10	10	close
Ji Zixun	5	7	similar
Jiao Xian	-	6	-
Jie Xiang	9	9	similar
Jiulingzi (Huang Hua)	10	4	close
Juedongzi (Li Xiu)	10	4	close
Kong Anguo	9	-	-
Kong Yuan (fang)	6	6	similar
Laozi	1	-	-
Le Zichang	-	2	-
Li Gen	10	10	close
Li Shaojun	6	6	different
Li Changzai	3	-	-
Li A	2	3	close
Li Babai	2	3	close

<sup>86</sup> *Siku quanshu* has Song ( 嵩 ) rather than Chong ( 崇 ).



Li Yiqi	3	10	similar
Li Zhongfu	3	-	-
Ling Shouguang	10	7	similar
Liu Feng	5	-	-
Liu Gang	-	6	-
Liu Gen	3	8	close
Liu Jing	10	7	similar
Liu Zheng	8	4	close
Lu Gong	6	2	close
Luan Ba	5	5	different
Lu Nüsheng	10	10	similar
Magu	7	-	-
Ma Mingsheng	2	5	close
Maojun	9	5	different
Mozi	8	4	close
Nanjizi (Liu Rong)	10	4	close
Pengzu	1	1	close
Ping Zhongjie	10	-	-
Qing (Qian) Pingji	10	7	similar
Ruoshi	-	1	-
Rongchengzi	-	7	-
She Zheng	10	6	similar
Shen Wentai	10	1	close
Shen Jian	6	2	close
Shen Xi	8	3	close
Suxiangong	9	-	-
Sun Bo	8	4	close
Sun Deng	6	6	different
Taishan Laofu	5	8	close
Taixuannü	7	4	close
Taiyangnü	-	4	-
Taiyangzi (Li Ming)	10	4	close
Taiyinnü	-	4	-
Tianmenzi	8	4	close
Wang Lie	6	6	similar
Wang Xing	3	10	similar
Wang Yao	3	8	close
Wang Yuan	2	3	similar
Wang Zhen	10	6	different
Wang Zhongdu	10	7	similar
Wei Boyang	1	2	close
Wei Shuqing	8	2	close
Wu Yan	5	8	close
Xihe Shaonü	7	-	-
Yan Qing	7	7	different
Yuzi	8	4	close
Yin Changsheng	4	5	close
Yin Gui	9	9	similar
Yin Si	9	-	-
Zhang Daoling	4	5	different
Zhao Qu	3	7	similar
Zuo Ci	5	8	close

"-" indicates that a biography is not included in that edition and no comparison can be made.  
 Brackets indicate different names or titles by which a character is known.

The twentieth century *Daozang jinghua lu* edition, minor textual variations excepted, differs from the *Longwei mishu* edition only in that it adds biographies of Ruoshi and Hua Ziqi. Ding Fubao's notes first list references to *Shenxian zhuan* in historical catalogues and discuss the *Guang Hanwei congshu* and *Siku quanshu* versions of the text (concluding that the latter is preferable despite its mistakes). They continue:

Recently there has appeared a popular block-printed bookshop edition which, recklessly, goes so far as to insert material for which there is no supporting evidence. In this way it loses a large degree of authenticity. When this edition has been corrected against the old manuscript versions, it must be considered the oldest and most complete.<sup>87</sup>

Despite Ding's comments, on examination the *Daozang jinghua lu* edition proves simply to be based on the *Longwei mishu* edition (and thus ultimately the *Guang Hanwei congshu* edition) with the addition of the two biographies mentioned above. These two biographies are cognate with the versions in the *Siku quanshu* text. It therefore adds nothing to our knowledge of *Shenxian zhuan* and will play no further part in discussions of its text history. Those variant readings it contains will be considered at the appropriate time in each case.

The three one-chapter versions in *Yimen guangdu* and both versions of *Shuofu* all simply present the name, alternate name and place of origin but the entries do not agree point by point. Indeed they vary enough in who gains entry (and how those names are written) to suggest that they were independently derived. Table three presents their tables of contents along with that of the *Yunji qiqian* extracts (see below) and the *Siku quanshu* edition. To take the other possible view that they represent more or less corrupted descendants of a pre-existing abridgement requires that such an ancestor be found. In Song catalogues the only candidate is listed in *Chongwen zongmu*. This 1042 catalogue exists now only in an 1144 version designed to make a note of books that had gone missing in the intervening years. Unfortunately the one-chapter edition of *Shenxian zhuan lüe* is designated as belonging to this category.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> "Baizhong tiyao":9a, *Daozang jinghua lu*, vol.1 (Shanghai, 1922). The 3rd edition (Taibei, 1980) relocates the textual notes to the beginning of each independent volume, in this case including them in a new preface written by Xiao Tianshi. The section translated above does not appear there (*Lidai zhenxian shizhuan*, *Daozang jinghua lu*, fifth collection, vol.7).

<sup>88</sup> *Chongwen zongmu* (*Qinding siku quanshu* ed.), 10:9a. For a detailed discussion of this catalogue see van der Loon, P., *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period*, pp. 6-8.

Table 3: Comparison of *Siku quanshu*, *Yunji qiqian* and 3 Ming one-chapter editions of *Shenxian zhuan*.

<u>Siku quanshu</u>	<u>Shuofu (100 ch.)</u>	<u>Shuofu (120 ch.)</u>	<u>Yimen guangdu</u>	<u>Yunji qiqian</u>
1. Guangchengzi	1. Guangchengzi	1. Guangchengzi	1. Guangchengzi	1. Guangchengzi
2. Ruoshi	2. Ruoshi	2. Ruoshi	2. Ruoshi	2. Ruoshi
3. Shen Wentai	3. Shen Wentai	3. Pengzu	3. Shen Wentai	3. Shen Wentai
4. Pengzu	4. Pengzu	4. Shen Wentai	4. Pengzu	
5. Baishisheng	5. Baishixian	5. Baishi Xiansheng	5. Baishisheng	
6. Huang Shanjun	6. Huang Shanjun		6. Huang Shanjun	
7. Feng Gang	7. Feng Gang		7. Feng Gang	
8. Huang Chuping	8. Huang Chuping	6. Huang Chuping	8. Huang Chuping	4. Huang Chuping
9. Lu Gong	9. Lu Gong		9. Lu Zi	
10. Shen Jian	10. Shen Jian		10. Shen Jian	5. Shen Jian
11. Hua Ziqi				6. Hua Ziqi
12. Le Zichang	11. Le Zichang		11. Le Zichang	
13. Wei Shuqing	12. Wei Shuqing	7. Wei Shuqing	12. Wei Shuqing	
14. Wei Boyang	13. Wei Boyang		13. Wei Boyang	7. Wei Boyang
15. Shen Xi	14. Shen Xi	8. Shen Wei	14. ShenWei	8. Shen Xi
16. Chen Anshi	15. Chen Anshi		15. Chen Anshi	
17. Li Babai	16. Li Babai	9. Li Babai	16. Li Babai	9. Li Babai
18. Li A	17. Li A		17. Li A	10. Li A
19. Wang Yuan	18. Wang Yuan	10. Ping Yuan	18. Wang Yuan	11. Wang Yuan
				12. Cai Jing
				13. She Zheng
20. Bo Shanfu	19. Bo Shanfu		19. Bo Shanjue	
21. Mozi	20. Mozi	11. Mozi	20. Mozi	
22. Liu Zheng	21. Sun Bo	12. Sun Bo	21. Sun.Bo	14. Sun Bo
23. Sun Bo	22. Liu Zheng		22. Liu Zheng	
24. Ban Meng	23. Ban Meng	13. Ban Meng	23. Ban Meng	
25. Yüzi	24. Yüzi	14. Wangzi	24. Yüzi	15. Yüzi
26. Tianmenzi	25. Tianmenzi	15. Tianmenzi	25. Tianmenzi	16. Tianmenzi
27. Jiulingzi	26. Jiulingzi		26. Jiulingzi	
28. Beijizi	27. Beijizi	16. Beijizi	27. Beijizi	
29. Juedongzi	28. Juedongzi		28. Juedongzi	
30. Taiyangzi	29. Taiyangzi	17. Taiyangzi	29. Taiyangzi	
31. Taiyangnü	30. Taiyangnü	18. Taiyangnü	30. Taiyangnü	
32. Taiyinnü	31. Taiyinnü		31. Taiyinnü	
33. Taixuannü	32. Taixuannü	19. Taixuannü	32. Taixuannü	
34. Nanjizi	33. Nanjizi	20. Huangjizi	33. Huangjizi	17. Nanjizi
35. Huangluzi	34. Huangluzi		34. Huangluzi	18. Huangluzi
36. Ma Mingsheng	35. Ma Mingsheng	21. Ma Mingsheng	35. Ma Mingsheng	
37. Yin Changsheng	36. Yin Changsheng	22. Yin Changsheng	36. Yin Changsheng	
38. Maojun	37. Zhang Daoling	23. Zhang Daoling	37. Zhang Daoling	19. Zhang Daoling
39. Zhang Daoling	38. Maojun	24. Maojun	38. Maojun	
40. Luan Ba	39. Luan Ba	25. Bian Ba	39. Cai Ba	20. Luan Ba
41. Huainanwang	40. Huainanwang	26. Huainanwang	40. Huainanwang	21. Huainanwang
42. Li Shaojun	41. Li Shaojun	27. Li Shaojun	41. Li Shaojun	
43. Wang Zhen	42. Wang Zhen	28. Wang Zhen	42. Wang Zhen	
44. Chen Chang	43. Chen Chang	29. Chen Chang	43. Chen Chang	
45. Liu Gang	44. Liu Gang	30. Liu Gang	44. Liu Gang	
46. Pan Furen	45. Pan Furen	31. Pan Furen	45. Pan Furen	
47. Dongling Shenmu		46. Dongling Shenmu		32. Dongling Shenmu
	46. Dongling Shenmu			

- |                    |                    |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 48. Kong Yuan      | 47. Kong Yuanfang  | 33. Kong Yuanfang  | 47. Kong Yuanfang  |
| 49. Wang Lie       | 48. Wang Lie       |                    | 48. Wang Liu       |
| 50. She Zheng      | 49. She Zheng      | 34. She Zheng      | 49. She Zheng      |
| 51. Jie Xian       | 50. Jie Xian       | 35. Jie Xiansheng  | 50. Jie Xiansheng  |
| 52. Sun Deng       | 51. Sun Deng       | 36. Sun Deng       | 51. Sun Deng       |
| 53. Dongguo Yan    | 52. Dongguo Yan    |                    | 52. Dongguo Yan    |
| 54. Ling Shouguang | 53. Ling Shouguang | 37. Ling Shouguang | 53. Ling Shouguang |
| 55. Liu Jing       | 54. Liu Jing       |                    | 54. Liu Jing       |
| 56. Yan Qing       | 55. Bo He          |                    | 55. Yan Qing       |
| 57. Bo He          | 56. Yan Qing       | 38. Yan Qing       | 56. Bo He          |
| 58. Zhao Ying      | 57. Zhao Ying      | 39. Zhao Ying      | 57. Zhao Ying      |
| 59. Gong Chong     | 58. Gong Chong     | 40. Gong Chong     | 58. Gong Chong     |
| 60. Rongchengzi    | 59. Rongchengzi    | 41. Rongchengzi    | 59. Rongchengzi    |
|                    | 60. Zhong Huangzi  |                    |                    |
|                    | 61. Xuyou Chaofu   | 42. Xuyou Chaofu   | 60. Xuyou Chaofu   |
|                    | 62. Shiyang        | 43. Shiyang        |                    |
| 61. Dongzhongjun   | 63. Dongzhongjun   |                    | 61. Dongzhongjun   |
| 62. Qing Pingji    | 64. Qing Pingji    | 44. Pingji         | 62. Qian Pingji    |
| 63. Wang Zhongdu   | 65. Wang Zhongdu   | 45. Wang Duzhong   | 63. Wang Zhongdu   |
| 64. Cheng Weiqi    | 66. Cheng Weiqi    | 46. Cheng Weiqi    | 64. Cheng Weiqi    |
| 65. Ji Zixun       | 67. Ji Zixun       |                    | 65. Ji Zixun       |
| 66. Ge Xuan        | 68. Ge Xuan        | 47. Ge Xuan        | 66. Ge Xuan        |
| 67. Zuo Ci         | 69. Zuo Ci         | 48. Zuo Ci         |                    |
| 68. Wang Yao       | 70. Wang Yao       | 49. Wang Yao       | 67. Wang Yao       |
| 69. Chen Yongbo    | 71. Chen Yongbo    |                    |                    |
| 70. Taishan Laofu  | 72. Taishan Laofu  | 50. Taishan Laofu  | 68. Taishan Laofu  |
| 71. Wu Yan         |                    |                    |                    |
| 72. Heshanggong    |                    |                    |                    |
| 73. Liu Gen        | 73. Liu Gen        | 51. Liu Gen        |                    |
| 74. Hugong         | 74. Hugong         | 52. Hugong         | 69. Hugong         |
| 75. Yin Gui        | 75. Yin Gui        | 53. Yin Gui        | 70. Yin Gui        |
| 76. Jie Xiang      | 76. Jie Xiang      |                    | 71. Jie Xiang      |
| 77. Dong Feng      | 77. Dong Feng      | 54. Dong Feng      | 72. Dong Feng      |
| 78. Li Gen         | 78. Li Gen         | 55. Li Gen         | 73. Li Gen         |
| 79. Li Yiqi        | 79. Li Yiqi        | 56. Li Yiqi        | 74. Li Yiqi        |
| 80. Wang Xing      | 80. Wang Xing      | 57. Wang Xing      | 75. Wang Xing      |
| 81. Huang Qing     | 81. Huang Qing     | 58. Huang Qing     | 76. Gan Shi        |
| 82. Lu Nüsheng     | 82. Lu Nüsheng     |                    | 77. Huang Qing     |
| 83. Gan Shi        | 83. Gan Shi        | 59. Gan Shi        | 78. Lu Nüsheng     |
| 84. Feng Junda     | 84. Feng Junda     |                    | 79. Feng Junda     |
|                    |                    | 60. Ji Zixun       |                    |
|                    |                    | 61. Jie Xiang      |                    |
|                    |                    | 62. Bo Shanjue     |                    |
|                    |                    | 63. Huangshanjun   |                    |
|                    |                    | 64. Wei Boyang     |                    |
|                    |                    | 65. Chen Anshi     |                    |
|                    |                    | 66. Li A           |                    |
|                    |                    | 67. Jiulingzi      |                    |
|                    |                    | 68. Juedongzi      |                    |
|                    |                    | 69. Liu Zheng      |                    |
|                    |                    | 70. Wang Liu       |                    |
|                    |                    | 71. Feng Gang      |                    |
|                    |                    | 72. Dongguo Yan    |                    |
|                    |                    | 73. Le Zichang     |                    |
|                    |                    | 74. He Gui         |                    |

- 75. Huangluzi
- 76. Lu Nüsheng
- 77. Feng Junda
- 78. Liu Jing
- 79. Dong Zhongjun

The last edition to be discussed probably never existed. In Chang Bide's *Shuofu kao* a *Daozang* edition of *Shenxian zhuan* is listed as having ten chapters and eighty four biographies and along with the *Jiguge* edition - which also has eighty four biographies - is said to be descended from the original.<sup>89</sup> *Shenxian zhuan* does not appear in *Zhengtong Daozang* (originally printed in 1445, reprinted in 1598 on the initiative of the Empress Dowager, and again by a photolithographic process with funding from President Xu Shichang, 1853 - 1939, in 1923-26).<sup>90</sup> However *Daozang quejing mulu* (compiled from old catalogues by the editors of the Ming canon) lists *Shenxian zhuan* as "missing".<sup>91</sup> The *Siku quanshu* editors did not see a *Daozang* edition and neither did Ding Fubao. If Chang did indeed have such an edition it must have been well hidden. *Shenxian zhuan* was present, as far as we can tell, in the Song *Daozang* of 1019 as extracts appear in *Yunji qiqian* - a condensed version of the canon prepared for the Zhenzong emperor by Zhang Junfang who played a pivotal role in the compilation of the whole canon.<sup>92</sup> These extracts are extensive, occupying a whole chapter in *Yunji qiqian*. The list of biographies from which extracts have been taken is shown in table three. The possibility that the Song *Daozang* edition may have survived the Mongol prohibition of Daoist books and reappeared under the guise of the Mao Jin edition is excluded by comparing that edition with the *Yunji qiqian* extracts. The *Siku quanshu* versions of the three biographies it has in common with *Yunji qiqian* (Luan Ba, Liu An and Zhang Daoling) are clearly not descended from *Yunji qiqian*.

#### The Sources of the *Siku quanshu* edition.

The editors of *Siku quanshu* base their judgement of the authenticity of Mao Jin's edition by comparison with the four extant quotations in Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguo zhi*. As these quotations coincide with Mao Jin's text it is held to be the original version. Strictly speaking this type of quotation validates only those three biographies concerned (one is cited twice) or even those particular sections cited. It is possible, after all, that as a collection of biographies passed from hand to hand whole biographies may have been added or excised or new stories about preexisting figures included - motivated by particular historical circumstances or simply due to the ravages of time and the practical problems of transmission.

<sup>89</sup> Chang Bide, *Shuofu kao* (Taipei, 1979), p. 265.

<sup>90</sup> See van der Loon, *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period*, pp. 58-9, and Liu Ts'un-yan, "The Compilation and Historical Value of the Tao-tsang" in Leslie, D., Mackerras, C. and Wang Gungwu, eds., *Essays on the Sources for Chinese History* (Canberra, 1973), 104-119, on the formation of the Ming *Daozang*.

<sup>91</sup> *Daozang quejing mulu* (DZ1056), 1:21a. For more information on *Daozang quejing mulu*, see van der Loon, *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period*, p. 62.

<sup>92</sup> Zhang's role in the compilation has been questioned by van der Loon, see *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period*, pp. 29-39.

Setting aside an examination of the continuities or discontinuities in the texts themselves over time, the sequence of the biographies remains as a means of comparison of editions. Clearly the sequence of biographies in the *Siku quanshu* edition of *Shenxian zhuan* is closely related to those of the three one chapter versions. If, as concluded above, both *Shuofu* editions and the *Yimen guangdu* edition derived independently from complete texts, Mao Jin's edition must stand as a close relative of their sources. Kominami Ichirō has investigated the sequence of these one-chapter editions - he does not use the *Siku quanshu* edition - as a way of drawing connexions with the text as it stood in the early Tang.<sup>93</sup>

Kominami's first step is to take the sequence of the hundred-chapter version of *Shuofu* and compare it with the sequence of the extensive quotations in chapter one hundred and nine of *Yunji qiqian* in order to demonstrate a connexion between the Ming sequence of the hundred-chapter version of *Shuofu* and the Song sequence of *Yunji qiqian*. Allowing for the likelihood that the *Yunji qiqian* editor did not extract all he could the sequences are, with the exception of the biography of She Zheng, entirely compatible. To make a connexion between the early Tang and the Song Kominami makes use of the various quotations of *Shenxian zhuan* in *Sandong zhunang*, a Daoist *leishu* dating from the late seventh century. In addition to the normal formula "*Shenxian zhuan* says..." it adds a chapter number. While these citations allow us to locate a biography in a particular chapter there is no indication of sequence within chapters or the collection as a whole. Needless to say, there is no easy fit with any modern edition. This information is shown in table four.

Kominami goes on to suggest that Kong Yuanfang, Wang Lie, She Zheng, Jiao Xian and Sun Deng who occupy numbers 47 - 51 in the hundred-chapter version of *Shuofu* sequence formed a block in the Sui/Tang *Shenxian zhuan* as Kong, Jie and Sun are all designated as being from chapter four in *Sandong zhunang*. The biography preceding She Zheng in *Yunji qiqian* is that of Cai Jing (see table three) who, in *Sandong zhunang*, is said to come from chapter three of *Shenxian zhuan*. Following She Zheng, in his spot at number 13 in *Yunji qiqian*, is another group of biographies designated in *Sandong zhunang* as coming from chapter four of *Shenxian zhuan*. This group ends with Huangluzi. Kominami thus constructs a possible Sui/Tang chapter four, as represented in table four.

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<sup>93</sup> Kominami Ichirō, "Shinsen den no fukugen", *Iriya kyōju Ogawa kyōju taikyū kinen chugoku gogaku chugoku bungaku ronshū* (Kyoto, 1974), pp. 301-313.

Table 4: Sui/Tang *Shenxian zhuan* chapter 4 (reconstructed).

<u>Shuofu (100 ch.)</u>	<u>Yunji qiqian</u>	<u>Shenxian zhuan Chapter (Sandong zhunang)</u>
47. Kong Yuanfang		4
48. Wang Lie		
49. She Zheng	13. She Zheng	
50. Jie Xian		4
51. Sun Deng		4
19. Bo Shanfu		
20. Mozi		
21. Sun Bo	14. Sun Bo	4
22. Liu Zheng		
23. Ban Meng		
24. Yüzi	15. Yüzi	
25. Tianmenzi	16. Tianmenzi	
26. Jiulingzi		
27. Bejjizi		
28. Juedongzi		
29. Taiyangzi		4
30. Taiyangnü		4
31. Taiyinnü		4
32. Taixuannü		
33. Nanjizi	17. Nanjizi	
34. Huangluzi	18. Huangluzi	4

The way the editor of *Yunji qiqian* seems to have sampled *Shenxian zhuan* is roughly similar to the way he treated *Liexian zhuan* (a text which is extant in the Ming *Zhengtong Daozang*) in that he did not take extracts from every possible biography. On the other hand the citations from *Liexian zhuan* are taken from throughout the text whereas the citations from *Shenxian zhuan* stop abruptly about half way through sequence of the hundred-chapter version of *Shuofu* - at Liu An who is number 40 in the hundred-chapter version. It must be a possibility, therefore, that the editor of *Yunji qiqian* (and by extension the editors of the Song *Daozang*) had an edition of *Shenxian zhuan* which had lost some of its later chapters. Further evidence that this may be the case can be found in the citation in chapter eighty six of *Yunji qiqian* which reads "*Shenxian zhuan*, chapter ten says "Ling Shouguang was a native of Fufeng...". Ling occupies position 53 in the hundred-chapter version of *Shuofu*. At position 52 is Dongguo Yan who is designated as being from chapter ten of *Sandong zhunang*. At position 51 is Sun Deng who is also cited in *Sandong zhunang* but who was then in Chapter four (see table four). Ling Shouguang's designation as being in chapter ten is thus compatible with *Sandong zhunang*. If the edition of *Shenxian zhuan* used by the editor of *Yunji qiqian* did indeed end with Liu An, or thereabouts, the editor used a different source for his story of Ling Shouguang and one which, moreover, preserved information from the Sui/Tang text.

It is possible to take Kominami's reconstructions another step by consulting *Xianyuan bianzhu*. *Xianyuan bianzhu* groups two characters, usually from two biographies, together - the interlocking pearls (*bianzhu*) of the title - when very often there is no linking idea in the biographies themselves. Rarely do both characters occur in the same source biography. In many cases where the stories have no apparent connexion they

occur next to each other in the *Siku quanshu* sequence. In addition large blocks of citations from *Xianyuan bianzhu* repeat the sequence of *Siku quanshu*: pairs 23 -29 in the *shang* chapter coincide exactly with items 21 - 34 in the *Siku quanshu* sequence; pairs 44 - 47 and 49 - 50 in the same chapter coincide with items 7 - 18 and pairs 2 - 5 in the *xia* chapter coincide with items 45 - 52. Finally, in all but one of these pairs both items come from the same chapter in the *Siku quanshu* edition. This evidence points towards the conclusion that the edition of *Shenxian zhuan* used by Wang Songnian as his source in the 10th century had a sequence compatible with that of the *Siku quanshu* edition.

Furthermore, if we guess that both items in his pairs came from the same chapter in his source edition and that this arrangement was related to that of the source edition of *Sandong zhunang*, where a chapter number is identified in *Sandong zhunang* or *Yunji qiqian* its "pair" in *Xianyuan bianzhu* should also have come from that chapter. Doing this would give us enough information to make three tentative conclusions. First, that Kominami's chapter 4 should also include the biography of Ma Mingsheng. Secondly, by applying Kominami's method, a possible chapter ten can be reconstructed, as represented in table five.

Table 5: Sui/Tang *Shenxian zhuan* chapter 10 (reconstructed).

<u>Shuofu (100 ch.)</u>	<u>Shenxian zhuan Location (Sandong zhunang)</u>	<u>Inferred Shenxian zhuan Location (Sandong zhunang + Xianyuan bianzhu)</u>
43. Chen Chang	10	
52. Dongguo Yan	10	
53. Ling Shouguang		10
54. Liu Jing		
55. Bo He		
56. Yan Qing	10	
57. Gong Chong		10
78. Li Gen	10	
79. Li Yiqi		
80. Wang Xing		
81. Huang Qing		
82. Lu Nüsheng		10
83. Gan Shi		
84. Feng Junda	10	

Thirdly, that with one chapter of fourteen biographies and one of twenty two (as produced in these reconstructions) the Sui/Tang text would have contained about *twice* as many biographies as are contained in the modern editions. Interestingly enough an early Tang source gives a figure of about this magnitude.<sup>94</sup>

The question Kominami asked of the hundred chapter version of *Shuofu* - whether or not it can be traced back to the Song - is also clearly the first to be asked of the *Siku quanshu* edition. To expand the question: is the absence from the Ming *Zheng tong Daozang* of a complete text of *Shenxian zhuan* sufficient reason to conclude that all modern editions are reconstructions? Kominami's work on the sequences of the hundred

<sup>94</sup> See the discussion of *Shenxian zhuan lun*, below.



chapter version of *Shuofu* and the extracts in *Yunji qiqian* - and so of the edition in the Song *Daozang* - have shown that such an ancestral relationship may be inferred. These conclusions are also valid for the *Siku quanshu* edition, as far as sequence is concerned. However, as has been noted above, three of the twenty one citations in *Yunji qiqian* are clearly unrelated to the texts in the *Siku quanshu* edition. Thus, on the one hand, if we propose that *Shenxian zhuan* did not survive into the Ming intact how did the editors responsible for the reconstructions obtain the information on sequence? But, on the other hand, if it did survive, why does the Ming version differ in important ways from that of the Song and why did the editors of the Ming canon not include it ?

If indeed the *Siku quanshu* edition is a reconstruction we may be able to find the sources that were used by the editors. A search I have conducted, based on the Harvard-Yenching Index to biographies in the *Daozang*, has produced a list of what may be the sources of this edition - see table six.

Table 6: Possible Sources of the *Siku quanshu* edition of *Shenxian zhuan*.

<u>Biography</u>	<u>Source</u>
1	
Guangchengzi	Zhenxian tongjian <sup>95</sup>
Ruoshi	
Shen Wentai	
Pengzu	
Baishisheng	Zhenxian tongjian
Huang Shanjun	
Feng Gang	
2	
Huang Chuping	
Lu Gong	
Shen Jian	
Hua Ziqi	
Le Zichang	
Wei Shuqing	
Wei Boyang	
3	
Shen Xi	
Chen Anshi	Zhenxian tongjian
Li Babai	
Li A	
Wang Yuan	
Bo Shanfu	
4	
Mozi	
Liu Zheng	
Sun Bo	
Ban Meng	Zhenxian tongjian

<sup>95</sup> In this table *Zhenxian tongjian* is used to abbreviate *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian*.

Yüzi  
 Tianmenzi  
 Jiulingzi  
 Beijizi Zhenxian tongjian  
 Juedongzi  
 Taiyangzi  
 Taiyangnü  
 Taiyinnü  
 Taixuannü  
 Nanjizi  
 Huangluzi

5  
 Ma Mingsheng  
 Yin Changsheng  
 Maojun  
 Zhang Daoling  
 Luan Ba

6  
 Huainanwang  
 Li Shaojun Hanwudi waizhuan  
 Wang Zhen Hanwudi waizhuan  
 Chen Chang Xianyuan bianzhu  
 Liu Gang Xianyuan bianzhu  
 Fan Furen  
 Dongling Shenmu  
 Kong Yuan Xianyuan bianzhu  
 Wang Lie Xianyuan bianzhu  
 She Zheng Xianyuan bianzhu  
 Jie Xian Xuanpinlu  
 Sun Deng Xuanpinlu

7  
 Dongguo Yan Hanwudi waizhuan  
 Ling Shouguang Xianyuan bianzhu  
 Liu Jing Hanwudi waizhuan  
 Yan Qing Xianyuan bianzhu  
 Bo He Xianyuan bianzhu  
 Zhao Ying  
 Gong Chong Xianyuan bianzhu  
 Rongchengzi  
 Dongzhongjun Xianyuan bianzhu  
 Qing Pingji  
 Wang Zhongdu Xianyuan bianzhu  
 Cheng Weiqi

8  
 Ge Xuan  
 Zuo Ci  
 Wang Yao  
 Chen Yongbo  
 Taishan Laofu Zhenxian tongjian  
 Wu Yan  
 Heshanggong  
 Liu Gen  
 9

Hugong  
 Yin Gui  
 Jie Xiang  
 10  
 Dong Feng                      Zhenxian tongjian  
 Li Yiqi  
 Wang Xing  
 Huang Qing  
 Lu Nüsheng  
 Gan Shi  
 Feng Junda

This table indicates two things clearly. First, if this edition was a reconstruction many of the sources have been lost since the Ming. Secondly, it would appear that the editor was eclectic in his choice of which biography to select from which source - as in the case of each of these texts, he did not choose all the biographies he could have in order to complete his list of characters. For example, seven possible source biographies have been found in *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian*. That text, however, contains biographies of virtually all the people who are included in *Shenxian zhuan*.<sup>96</sup> In fact, the existence of an exact counterpart to a text elsewhere does not necessarily indicate that one is the ancestor of the other.

We may conclude, then, that the *Siku quanshu* text:

- i. descends from a group of related texts that were fairly widely distributed in the Ming;
- ii. arranges the biographies in a sequence that certainly goes back to the Northern Song, probably into the late Tang and possibly reflects some portions of the Sui/Tang text;
- iii. despite this continuity of sequence has versions of some of the biographies different from those in the lost Song *Daozang* edition.

It would also seem reasonable to conclude that this version is not a Ming reconstruction. Unfortunately the absence of *Shenxian zhuan* from the Ming *Daozang* and its presence in *Daozang quejing mulu* remain stumbling blocks to such a conclusion.

The Sources of the *Longwei mishu* edition.

The editors of the *Siku quanshu* catalogue make these comments about the *Longwei mishu* edition:

In great part the text is the same [as the *Siku quanshu* edition] but it records ninety two people. From the order in which the sections appear, it was compiled by putting the citations [from *Shenxian zhuan*] in *Taiping guangji* together. As there are errors in some of the headings in *guangji*,

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<sup>96</sup> See the textual appendix under each biography for the location of the corresponding biography in *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian*.

and these are also seen in other books, it did not [directly] cite *Shenxian zhuan*. As a result, this edition has quite a few mistakes and omissions.<sup>97</sup>

The editors thus base their criticisms of the *Longwei mishu* edition on the relationship they see between it and the citations from *Shenxian zhuan* in *Taiping guangji*, compiled in the three years 978 to 981. In addition they note the absence of the biography of Ruoshi from this edition - it is present in the *Siku quanshu* edition - and the fact that Li Shan, who died in 689, cites it twice in his commentary to *Wenxuan*. These two pieces of evidence lead them to the conclusion that "it is not a complete edition".

The first major examination of *Shenxian zhuan* in modern times is Fukui Kōjun's "*Shinsen den kō*" which appeared in 1951. His discussions are restricted to the *Longwei mishu* edition - he noted the existence of Mao Jin's edition but had not seen it.<sup>98</sup> Fukui's arguments take the *Sandong zhunang* citations as pivotal: if, as he assumes, they accurately reflect the state of *Shenxian zhuan* in the Sui and early Tang, it is clear that the *Longwei mishu* edition has at best been completely rearranged. Further, taking his lead from the article in the *Siku quanshu* catalogue, he demonstrated the intimate relationship of the *Longwei mishu* edition and the *Taiping guangji* citations. The compilation process was by no means straightforward and Fukui noted some discrepancies and anomalies. Some of these will be discussed below. Before moving to them, however, it is obvious that the argument that the *Longwei mishu* edition is no more than a compilation from *Taiping guangji* encounters a serious problem in the tenth chapter of *Shenxian zhuan*: *Taiping guangji* could not be its source. In this chapter there are disproportionately many biographies (twenty nine) and they are, by and large, very short. More importantly there are no clear examples of borrowing from *Taiping guangji* - indeed in one case where biographical material is somewhat similar, that of Dongzhongjun, *Taiping guangji* gives its source as Wang Zinian's *Shiyi ji* and not *Shenxian zhuan*. Fukui found this perplexing, as he did some other less crucial aspects of this chapter such as the similarity between the biography of Huangshanjun and the last few lines of the biography of Pengzu in chapter one, and the general amount of variation in the form of the biographies. The solution to these problems, I would suggest, is that the compiler of the *Longwei mishu* edition used a second source for the biographies of chapter ten. That source is *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian*, an enormous compendium of biographical records of transcendents which was compiled in the early Yuan. Unlike *Taiping guangji*, *Zhenxian tongjian* does not generally name its sources and these cases are not exceptions. The identification of this compendium as the compiler's second source is verified not only from text comparison but from the sequence of the first twenty three of the twenty nine biographies which matches their sequence in *Zhenxian tongjian*. The biography of Feng Junda - the twenty ninth - is taken out of sequence presumably so that this edition will abide by the description that *Shenxian zhuan* starts with Guangchengzi and ends with Feng Junda.

<sup>97</sup> *Siku quanshu zongmu* (Beijing, 1983), 146:1250.

<sup>98</sup> Fukui Kōjun, "*Shinsen den kō*", *Tōhō shūkyō*, 1 (1951), 1-20 (note 1, p. 19).

The intimate relationship of the *Longwei mishu* edition and *Taiping guangji* and the matching of sequences between chapter ten of this edition and *Zhenxian tongjian* can be verified by reference to table seven.

Table 7: Possible Sources of the *Longwei mishu* Edition of *Shenxian zhuan*.

<u>Biography</u> (sequence from Longwei Mishu edition)	<u>Source Text</u>	<u>Chapter in</u> <u>Source Text</u> (item)	<u>Page in</u> <u>Source Text</u>
1			
Guangchengzi	Taiping guangji	1(3)	5/6
Laozi	Taiping guangji	1(1)	1/4
Pengzu	Taiping guangji	2(3)	8/11
Wei Boyang	Taiping guangji	2(4)	11/12
2			
Baishi Xiansheng	Taiping guangji	7(1)	44
Huang Chuping	Taiping guangji	7(2)	44/45
Wang Yuan	Taiping guangji	7(3)	45/48
Bo Shanfu	Taiping guangji	7(4)	48
Ma Mingsheng	Taiping guangji	7(5)	49
Li Babai	Taiping guangji	7(6)	49/50
Li A	Taiping guangji	7(7)	50
3			
Heshanggong	Taiping guangji	10(1)	66
Liu Gen	Taiping guangji	10(2)	67/69
Li Zhongfu	Taiping guangji	10(3)	69/70
Li Yiqi	Taiping guangji	10(4)	70
Wang Xing	Taiping guangji	10(5)	70/71
Zhao Ying	Taiping guangji	10(6)	71
Wang Yao	Taiping guangji	10(7)	72
Li Changzai	Taiping guangji	12(4)	85/86
4			
Liu An	Taiping guangji	8(1)	51/52a
Yin Changsheng	Taiping guangji	8(2)	53/55
Zhang Daoling	Taiping guangji	8(3)	55/58
5			
Taishan Laofu	Taiping guangji	11(1)	73
Wu Yan	Taiping guangji	11(2)	73/74
Liu Feng	Taiping guangji	11(3)	74/75
Luan Ba	Taiping guangji	11(4)	75/76
Zuo Ci	Taiping guangji	11(5)	76/78
Hugong	Taiping guangji	12(1)	80/82
Ji Zixun	Taiping guangji	12(2)	82/83
6			
Li Shaojun	Taiping guangji	9(1)	59/60
Kong Yuanfang	Taiping guangji	9(2)	61
Wang Lie	Taiping guangji	9(3)	61/62
Jie Xian	Taiping guangji	9(4)	62/63
Sun Deng	Taiping guangji	9(5)	63/64
Lu Wenjing	Taiping guangji	9(6)	64

Shen Jian	Taiping guangji	9(7)	65
Dong Feng	Taiping guangji	12(3)	83/85
7			
Taixuannü	Taiping guangji	59(4)	363
Xihe Shaonü	Taiping guangji	59(5)	364
Chenweiqi	Taiping guangji	59(12)	366
Magu	Taiping guangji	60(1)	369/370
Pan Furen	Taiping guangji	60(5)	362/364
Yan Qing	-		
Bo He	-		
Dongling Shengmu	Taiping guangji	60(6)	374
Ge Xuan	Taiping guangji	71(3)	441/444
8			
Feng Gang	Taiping guangji	4(2)	24
Wei Shuqing	Taiping guangji	4(9)	28/30
Mozi	Taiping guangji	5(2)	31/33
Sun Bo	Taiping guangji	5(4)	33/34
Tianmenzi	Taiping guangji	5(5)	34
Yüzi	Taiping guangji	5(6)	34/35
Chen Anshi	Taiping guangji	5(9)	37
Liu Zheng	Taiping guangji	5(3)	33
9			
Shen Xi	Taiping guangji	5(8)	36
Maojun	Taiping guangji	13(1)	87/88
Suxiangong	Taiping guangji	13(5)	90/91
Kong Anguo	Taiping guangji	13(2)	88
Yin Gui	Taiping guangji	13(3)	8
Jie Xiang	Taiping guangji	13(4)	89/90
Chengxiangong	Taiping guangji	13(6)	92/94
Guo Pu	Taiping guangji	13(7)	94/95
Yin Si	Taiping guangji	13(8)	95
10			
Shen Wentai	Zhenxian tongjian	4	19a
Pu Zhang	Zhenxian tongjian	5	8a
Huang Hua	Zhenxian tongjian	5	11a
Beijizi	Zhenxian tongjian	5	12a
Li Xiu	Zhenxian tongjian	5	12a
Liu Rong	Zhenxian tongjian	5	12b
Ge Yue	Zhenxian tongjian	5	12b
Chen Yongbo	Zhenxian tongjian	5	20a
Dong Zhongjun	Zhenxian tongjian	7	1a
Wang Zhongdu	Zhenxian tongjian	7	10a
Li Ming	Zhenxian tongjian	10	8a
Liu Jing	Zhenxian tongjian	12	1b
Qing Pingji	Zhenxian tongjian	12	6a
Huang Shanjun	Zhenxian tongjian	12	6b
Ling Shouguang	Zhenxian tongjian	12	9b
Li Gen	Zhenxian tongjian	12	10b
Huang Qing	Zhenxian tongjian	12	12a
Gan Shi	Zhenxian tongjian	12	12b
Ping Zhongjie	Zhenxian tongjian	17	8a
Gong Chong	Zhenxian tongjian	20	4b
Wang Zhen	Zhenxian tongjian	21	6b
Chen Chang	Zhenxian tongjian	21	6b
Ban Meng	Zhenxian tongjian	5	10a

Dong Ziyang	-		
Dongguo yan	Taiping yulan	38	6a
Dai Meng	-		
Lu Nüsheng	-		
Chen Zihuang	-		
Feng Junda	Zhenxian tongjian	21	1a

Despite the neatness of these allocations several anomalies remain. First, I have not been able to find sources for five biographies in chapter ten - the biography of Dongguo Yan may come from *Taiping yulan* - or for those of Yan Jing and Bo He from chapter seven. These gaps in the table are marked "-".

The second anomaly is that *Taiping guangji* gives sources other than *Shenxian zhuan* for five of the biographies, all of female immortals, from chapter seven. One of the five - Cheng Weiqi - is said to come from *Jixian lu* and four - Taixuannü, Xihe Shaonü, Fan Furen and Dongling Shengmu - from *Nüxian zhuan*, a collection of the lives of female immortals. *Jixian lu* could refer to *Yongcheng jixian lu*, another collection of biographies of female immortals compiled by Du Guangting (850 - 933) and found in *Zhentong Daozang*. Ironically, while four out of the five appear in this text with biographies cognate with the *Longwei mishu* versions, Cheng Weiqi - the one actually ascribed to *Jixian lu* - is absent. Du Guangting is also recorded as having written a *Jixian zhuan* in two chapters in the Song catalogue *Mishusheng xupiandao siku qeshumu* but this text does not appear in *Zhentong Daozang*.<sup>99</sup> This should not be confused with Zeng Cao's compilation also called *Jixian zhuan* preserved in abstract form in *Shuofu*. This text is recorded as being in twelve chapters in the Song catalogue *Zhizhai shulu jieti*.<sup>100</sup> *Nüxian zhuan* does not appear in Song catalogues nor in *Zhentong Daozang* and is not quoted in Tang or Song *leishu* apart from these four citations.

The third anomaly is that there are two biographies which *Taiping guangji* designates as being from *Shenxian zhuan* which do not appear in the *Longwei mishu* edition. These are those of Tiantai Ernü and Taizhen Furen. There does not seem to be a clear reason for what would seem to be simple omissions on the part of the compiler.<sup>101</sup> Taizhen Furen is mentioned by Kominami but he can only assert that this biography was not included because of its length (it is a little bigger than that of Laozi - the longest in the modern editions).<sup>102</sup>

The fourth anomaly is that, as Fukui notes, the four biographies which came from chapter twelve of *Taiping guangji* - Hugong, Ji Zixun, Dong Feng and Li Changzai - appear at the end of chapters three, five and six. Normally all the biographies from a

<sup>99</sup> *Mishusheng xupiandao siku qeshumu* (*Guangutang shumu congkan* ed.), 2:16a, as cited in van der Loon, *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period*, p. 144.

<sup>100</sup> *Zhizhai shulu jieti* (*Qinding siku quanshu* ed.), 12:5b.

<sup>101</sup> While it is true that *Taiping guangji* has not had the easiest of transmissions and that in some cases different editions give different sources for a particular citation, the selections that derive from *Shenxian zhuan* seem not to be a matter of much contention. However, this does not provide us with a solution to the problem of Taizhen Furen and Tiantai Ernü. On the differences the various editions of *Taiping guangji* can make to the analysis or compilation of a particular text see Dudbridge, G., *The Story of Li Wa: A Study and a Critical Edition of a Chinese Story from the Ninth Century* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 1-14.

<sup>102</sup> Kominami, "Shinsen den no fukugen", p. 303.

source chapter in *Taiping guangji* will appear in the same chapter of the *Longwei mishu* edition of *Shenxian zhuan*.

Finally, the order the source chapters appear in *Taiping guangji* is completely altered in this edition of *Shenxian zhuan*: that is, while chapters one, two, and three of *Shenxian zhuan* use chapters one, two, seven and ten of *Taiping guangji*, chapter four of *Shenxian zhuan* uses chapter eight of *Taiping guangji*, chapter five of *Shenxian zhuan* uses chapter eleven of *Taiping guangji*, chapter six of *Shenxian zhuan* reverts to chapter nine of *Taiping guangji* and so on. On the other hand, the sequence within the chapters, with the exception of chapter twelve noted above, is maintained.

These five anomalies indicate that the process of compilation of the *Longwei mishu* edition was not straightforward. There seems no obvious reason why the texts from *Taiping guangji* need to have been rearranged - and the present order and grouping into chapters does not reveal any particular logic. Indeed as Fukui notes there are instances of illogic - Ge Xuan, the cousin of Ge Hong's grandfather and a radiant star in the Daoist firmament, is relocated to last position in chapter seven which seems to be reserved for female immortals.<sup>103</sup>

Whatever the explanations are for these anomalies - and it may well be that the loss of texts and early editions prevents us ever knowing what they might be - it is possible to nominate an earliest possible date for the compilation of this edition. If the contention that chapter 10 derives in large part from *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* is accepted the compilation of the version of *Shenxian zhuan* that was included in *Longwei mishu* cannot have taken place before the early Yuan.

The position that Fukui adopts is rather more extreme than this. He maintains not only that this edition was compiled late but that discrepancies between early sources and citations and the text of this edition indicate that the texts of the biographies themselves are not authentic. Apart from the material outlined above, Fukui's arguments are of three kinds. First, some biographies cited in *Sandong zhunang* simply do not occur in the modern editions. Secondly, in some cases the text of the biography as it stands and quotations from it in early sources do not agree. Thirdly, the words used in the biographies when Ge Hong introduces his own opinions are not what would be expected if indeed he was responsible for *Shenxian zhuan*.

Generally speaking, a text which is a collection of more or less discrete parts is more subject to additions and subtractions than one which forms a single unit. Single biographies can be added to or subtracted from a collection at different points in the history of its transmission without altering the substance of the rest of the text at all. As we have seen there is evidence that this did happen to *Shenxian zhuan*, perhaps on an even larger scale than the surviving evidence allows us to conclude. Nonetheless at the same time it is equally possible that most of what remains of the text, when shorn of obvious additions, is basically unaltered. That there are records of biographies that do not now appear is no evidence for the remaining biographies being spurious.

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<sup>103</sup> Fukui, "Shinsen den kō", p. 12



When Fukui points to discrepancies between texts of biographies and early citations he again errs in generalizing from the specific example to the whole. The biography on which he places most emphasis - Laozi - is also the most likely to have been tampered with. Much of the dispute between Buddhists and Daoists in the late Six Dynasties and the Sui and early Tang centred precisely on questions of Laozi's previous incarnations and the miraculous details of his life. The present text of his biography in *Shenxian zhuan* is concerned with just these questions. While I am certainly not prepared to concede that the whole biography is a late interpolation it is clearly a special case and is likely to have been subject to more ideological pressure than any of the other biographies in the collection. Fukui's other examples of discrepancies will be raised biography by biography in the body of this thesis where they are relevant but in general the evidence he adduces indicates that any changes were marginal.

Finally, there are two examples in the text where Ge Hong's opinion about the person at the centre of the biography is quoted. Neither case represents the grammatical method of referral that we would expect if these were cases of Ge Hong citing his own opinion, but comply with the formal style of biography writing. In one of these the text states:

Ge Zhichuan says "Hong considers..."

The other has:

Baopuzi says "Hong has heard that..."

The first example comes from the biography of Laozi and is therefore, as explained above, a special case in which later interpolations are likely.<sup>104</sup> The second comes from the biography of Yin Changsheng and occurs immediately after the statement that Yin eventually gained deliverance from the corpse and arose to heaven as an immortal. This statement is the standard conclusion of the biography of an immortal. The opinion of Baopuzi may, therefore, be a kind of additional record in the form of a commentary.<sup>105</sup> This was, by no means, an unusual practice - we have already seen the way that Pei Songzhi cites large portions of biographies from *Shenxian zhuan* in his commentary to *Sanguozhi*. Indeed, there is a close parallel in the way he tacks the *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Jie Xiang on to the end of his biography of Zhao Da. Thus, the citation of the record of the opinion of Ge Hong may be a later interpolation. It may also be original but the introductory "Baopuzi says" may have been added by a later editor. Immediately following this, an extended quotation from the *Yinjun zixu*, Yin Changsheng's autobiographical statement, is cited presumably by the same later editor that added the *Baopuzi* record.<sup>106</sup> Thus, in the case of the biography of Yin Changsheng as well as in the case of the biography of Laozi, the oddity in the way Ge Hong refers to himself can be explained by close examination of the text. While there may have been some later editorial intervention, such editorial intrusion simply takes the form of relatively unmarked commentary or clarification. The core biography has remained unchanged.

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<sup>104</sup> For a detailed discussion of the Laozi biography from this point of view see chapter five.

<sup>105</sup> This passage is not from *Baopuzi*.

<sup>106</sup> For a discussion of the different parts of the received Yin Changsheng biography see the textual appendix.

Fukui's arguments do not, therefore, fundamentally challenge the integrity of *Shenxian zhuan* as a whole. Clearly they do point to the likelihood that in some cases the text may have been added to or altered in marginal ways and in the case of Laozi perhaps by a great deal. Any discrepancies between early citations and the modern versions of biographies will be analysed when those particular biographies come to our attention in the body of the thesis.

### The Contents of the Original *Shenxian zhuan*

The analyses of the first three sections of this chapter has enabled us to define more closely the questions that can usefully be asked of *Shenxian zhuan* and possible conclusions we can make about its text history. Clearly it is impossible to regard any of the modern versions of the text as reliably integral editions of an original *Shenxian zhuan*. Equally, however, there was certainly no radical break in the transmission of the biographies from the Sui through until the Song. What methods, then, can be used to reconstruct the contents of *Shenxian zhuan*? There are two questions here: which figures originally received biographies in *Shenxian zhuan*? and how do the received texts of each biography relate to the originals? The second question will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

While there is no evidence with which to make certain conclusions in regard to the list of figures in the original *Shenxian zhuan*, there is a text written by the Tang Buddhist scholar Liang Su (753-93) which discusses the version of the text that he knew.<sup>107</sup> It is translated here in full:

I have examined Ge Hong's writings and I consider that he has clarified the Dao of immortality in them. His evidence is sufficient and it has been tested.

Let me discuss it in this way: The way that men are born is identical to the ten thousand things. They pass into birth because of fault [sanskrit *mithya*]; they pass into death because they have been born. Birth and death follow on from each other - those who have not yet begun have their death within them. The sages know that their basis is vacuity, that their form is absence. They are made manifest by the great Dao. If they faultlessly conform their emotions to their nature, they will return, in every case, to their basis. Returning to their basis, they will not be born; if they are not born, they will not die. Then they can roam throughout the Great Vacuity and come and go with the ten thousand transformations. In the morning they can be [Fu] Xi or [Shen] Nong; in the evening, Yao or Shun. Sometimes, through being they do not exist; sometimes, they remain in

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<sup>107</sup> For details on Liang Su see Kanda Kiichirō, "Ryō Shuku nempu" in *Tōhō Gakkai sōritsu nijūgo shūnen kinen Tōhōgaku Ronshū* (Tokyo, 1972), 259-74 and Barrett, T.H., *Li Ao: Buddhist, Taoist or Neo-Confucian?* (Oxford, 1992), pp.60-87.

existence though non-being. Heaven and Earth are unable to cover or support them; Yin and Yang are unable to transform them [lit. fire in a kiln or cook with steam]. In the silence you can sense no sign of them; dazed you cannot recognize the gates they pass through. This is called Ultimate Spirit.<sup>108</sup> Ultimate Spirit regards Heaven, Earth and the four seas as the tip of the finest hair; it regards ten thousand antiquities ago to hundred thousand ages into the future as a single breath. Lie Yukou [Liezi] said "The unborn can give life, the unchanging can change."<sup>109</sup> This is one way of speaking about it.

Those who do not tally their emotions to their nature are not like this. They may only be put to use at the opportune time; they must wait before they move. Being and non-being restrict each other in turn; reliance and submission follow on, one after the other. Their Dao is subject to numbers and when those numbers are exhausted they are ruined. Thus Lie Yukou said "The born cannot escape death, the dead cannot escape change."<sup>110</sup> This is the alternative way of speaking about it.

The disciples of the immortals even now furtively transform gold into the elixir and refine their *qi* to preserve their bodies. Even if they dwell for hundreds or thousands of years within the six directions, even longer than the turtle, the crane, the Daqun tree, such long life cannot be esteemed. Alas, one after the other, later people have been cheated, not thinking on Mr Lao's idea "diminish it!"<sup>111</sup> or on Yanzi's returning (*fu*) from an error that had not led him far away.<sup>112</sup> And in this way, they have spread their knowledge and its applications widely.

They regard talismans and registers, herbs and techniques as fundamental and [in so doing] are at fault in their Numinous Altar [the heart]. This is to worry about extraneous details. They say that their hair

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<sup>108</sup> This refers to the *Xici* (*shang* 9:43, Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement 10, Taipei, 1966).

<sup>109</sup> This is close to a sentence at *Liezi* (*Liezi jishi*, Yang Boju, ed., Beijing, 1979), 1:2 which reads "The unborn can give birth to the born, the unchanging can change the changing".

<sup>110</sup> This is close to a sentence at *Liezi*, 1:2 which reads "The born cannot escape birth; the changing cannot escape change".

<sup>111</sup> This refers to *Laozi* (*Laozi jiaoshi*, Zhu Qianzhi, ed, Beijing, 1984), 42:176. In Waley's translation, "Truly, things are often increased by seeking to diminish them and diminished by seeking to increase them", (*The Way and its Power*, p.195), *Zhuangzi* discusses the matter further at 7 *xia*:731, "The doer of the way every day does less, less and less until he does nothing at all, and in doing nothing there is nothing that he does not do" (translation from Graham, A.C., *Chuang-tzu: The Inner Chapters* (London, 1986) p. 159).

<sup>112</sup> This refers to the *Xici* (*xia* 4:47) where, in Wilhelm and Baynes's translation, "The Master said: 'Yen Hui is the one who will surely attain it. If he has a fault, he never fails to recognise it; having recognised it, he never commits the error a second time. In the Changes it is said, 'Return from a short distance. No need for remorse. Great good fortune'" (*The I Ching or Book of Changes*, trans., Wilhelm, R., rendered into English by Cary F. Baynes, Bollingen Series 19, Princeton, 1969, p. 342). This passage glosses the reading of the first line of the twenty-fourth hexagram *fu*, the return: "Nine at the beginning means: Return from a short distance" (p. 98).

and teeth do not change and illness and disease will not arise. Considering this as meritorious they battle on within the borders of premature death and long life. Is it not lamentable to call this the tradition of the Dao?

Now, of the one hundred and ninety persons in *Shenxian zhuan*, I esteem only two: the librarian [Laozi] and Guangcheng[zi]. All the rest are disciples of life and death. It is on this account I have discussed it to serve as an admonition.<sup>113</sup>

The figure of one hundred and ninety figures who appeared in *Shenxian zhuan* in the last paragraph should give us pause as it implies that in the eighth century there were close to one hundred more biographies in *Shenxian zhuan* than in any of the modern versions and almost one hundred and thirty more than are cited by that time in other texts. The unfortunate but inescapable conclusion deriving from this text is that modern versions of *Shenxian zhuan* are possibly less than one half the size of an eighth-century *Shenxian zhuan*. There is no rigorous way of determining which biographies have been lost. This conclusion concerning the number of biographies in an eighth-century *Shenxian zhuan* was implied by the reconstruction of the original chapter ten, above.

Equally there is no way that we are able to determine which of the figures who receive full biographies in modern versions of *Shenxian zhuan* or have traces in earlier works were present in an original *Shenxian zhuan*. In fact, all we can say with certainty is that when a commentator or encyclopaedist or editor cited a biography from *Shenxian zhuan*, that biography was in the version of *Shenxian zhuan* he had before him. Thus, we are able to say that Jie Xiang, Dong Feng and Li Yiqi appeared in the copy of *Shenxian zhuan* that Pei Songzhi used when he compiled the commentary to *Sanguo zhi*, but we cannot be sure who else appeared in Pei's source text. It is certainly inadmissible to conclude that since the three quotations fit with modern versions then those modern versions must represent the original - as the editors of *Siku quanshu zongmu* did. Since we cannot ascertain what the contents of the original were - and the closer we come to our own time the less sure we can be that citations accurately represent an early text - the choice of which citations to use to generate a list of biographies is largely a matter of choice. At one extreme we could use only those biographies that appear in Pei Songzhi's commentary; at the other we could include all those biographies ever cited as being from *Shenxian zhuan* including all those cited in *Sandong qunxian lu* despite the problems with that text that have been discussed above. The position adopted in this thesis follows a middle course in aiming to define those biographies that were definitely present in a *Shenxian zhuan* circulating during the early to mid-Tang. There are two good reasons for choosing this date. First, there is a relatively large number of texts which cite *Shenxian zhuan* biographies from this period and secondly, the number of biographies that are cited is significant. The texts which are used to test the presence of a biography in an early to mid-Tang *Shenxian zhuan* are those compiled before 736, the date of Zhang Shoujie's commentary to *Shiji*. To this list are added the five biographies that Tao Hongjing says were present in *Shenxian zhuan* in his commentary to *Zhengao* but which are not cited by

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<sup>113</sup> *Quan Tangwen* (Taipei, 1965), 519:10a-11a (6689-90), *Wenyuan yinghua* 739:14a-15a (3855-3856).

the time of Zhang's commentary. These rules of selection generate the following list of sixty nine figures. It is with their records that this thesis is concerned:<sup>114</sup>

<u>Name</u>	<u>Courtesy Name</u>	<u>Title</u>
Baishi Xiansheng		
Ban Meng		
Bo He	Zhongli	
Chao Fu		
Chen Anshi		
Chen Chang		
Chen Zihuang		
Cheng Weiqi		
Dong Feng	Junyi	
Dong Weinian		
Dongguo Yan(nian)		
Dongling Shengmu		
Fan Furen		
Feng Gang		
Feng Heng	Junda	
Gan Shi		
Gan jun		
Gaoqiugong		
Ge Xuan	Xiaoxian	
Ge Yue		Huangluzi
Guangchengzi		
Guijun		
Heshanggong		
Huang Chuping		
Huang Shijun		
Hugong		
Ji Zixun		
Jian Keng		Pengzu
Jiao Xian	Xiaoran	
Jie Xiang	Yuanze	
Kangfengzi		
Kong Yuanfang		
Laozi		
Li A		
Li Babai		
Li Changzai		
Li Gen	Ziyuan	
Li Ming		Taiyangzi
Li Shaojun		
Li Yiqi		
Li Zhongfu		
Lilougong		
Liu An		Huainanwang

<sup>114</sup> In this list the figures are named using their *ming* rather than their *zi* (for example Feng Junda is listed as Feng Heng) or their title (for example Huangluzi is listed as Ge Yue).

Liu Gen	Jun'an	
Liu Rong		Nanjizi
Lu Nüsheng		
Lu Quan		Taiyinnü
Luan Ba		
Lü Gong	Wenjing	
Magu <sup>115</sup>		
Maojun		
Rongchenggong		
Ruoshi		
Shen Jian		
Shen Xi		
Sun Bo		
Sun Deng		
Taishan Laofu		
Wang Lie	Chanxiu	
Wang Yao	Boliao	
Wang Yuan	Fangping	
Wei Shuqing		
Wu Yan	Zidu	
Xu You		
Yin Changsheng		
Zhang Ling		
Zhao Qu	Zirong	
Zhu Yi		Taiyangnü
Zuo Ci	Yuanfang	

It will be noted that some of the more famous *Shenxian zhuan* biographies such as those of Wei Boyang and Mozi have been excluded from this list and that some figures who had been lost by the time that the modern editions were compiled like Gaoqiugong and Kangfengzi have been restored .

The method used here to decide which text to regard as the basic *Shenxian zhuan* text for each of these biographies follows certain rules also. Since no modern version of *Shenxian zhuan* can be regarded as a reliable integral text the basic text of each biography must be selected separately. Usually a biography is represented in either *Taiping guangji* or *Yunji qiqian*. Where it is represented in both the *Yunji qiqian* text is preferred for the following reasons. *Yunji qiqian* was itself composed within only thirty years of *Taiping guangji* and moreover, it would appear, that the *Yunji qiqian* selections constitute the remains of the *Shenxian zhuan* in the lost Song canon. What places the *Yunji qiqian* selections above those in *Taiping guangji* in terms of textual reliability is the likelihood that the Song *Daozang* version itself was based on earlier *integral* versions of *Shenxian zhuan* - the traces of an earlier sequence can be seen in it still - whereas *Taiping guangji* is the product of earlier sets of *selections*. Thus, the *Taiping guangji* selections are more likely to have suffered editorial intervention. It is also possible that the pre-Song transmission of *Shenxian zhuan* in the Daoist circles which had control of the canon

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<sup>115</sup> For the text appendix for Magu, see Wang Yuan.

involved for religious reasons a greater degree of respect for the words on the page than the secular transmission that led to *Taiping guangji*. If a biography is not present in *Yunji qiqian*, the *Taiping guangji* version is selected. Where neither is available the *Siku quanshu* text is chosen. All these versions are examined against the early citations of the biography and sometimes the basic version of the biography that has been chosen is emended or enlarged to take account of them. In a few cases there is no available full biography so the citations themselves are used as they stand. Appendix four lists which texts have been selected for each biography.

### The State of the Texts

The *Shenxian zhuan* texts that survived to be compiled into collections of biographies of the Song or later have not all been preserved in perfect condition. Indeed, it is impossible to say what perfect condition might mean as we are not so fortunate to have any early complete texts, let alone a manuscript copy. With texts of the age of *Shenxian zhuan* questions of transmission and authenticity are in the realm of the "best guess". Since firm conclusions are not possible, there are two lines of enquiry that can be pursued in order to make interesting observations about the state of the texts as we have them. These are to examine the surviving texts themselves for internal evidence of changes from an original, or at least an earlier, version and to test the texts against dated citations which claim to be from them.

Changes from an earlier version of the text can be divided into subtractions and additions. There are two types of evidence for subtraction that appear in the texts that have survived: the reproduction of quotations and editorial marking of selection. Additions, where they can be determined, are clearly pointed out.

There are several cases where the surviving version of a biography is nothing more than a reproduced citation of part of the original. Clearly these truncated biographies will tend to be rather short. A good example is the biography of Chen Zihuang translated here in full:

Chen Zihuang obtained the essential method of eating *zhu*. He took it, obtained immortality and departed, entering Huoshan. His wife who came from the Jiang clan had a debilitating disease. She remembered her husband's way of picking *zhu*. When she took it the disease was cured. After 370 years she climbed the mountain and took *zhu*. Carrying it she returned without resting or exhaustion. Her colour and the strength of her *qi* were that of a twenty year old. (Chen Zihuang)

The *Longwei mishu* edition simply reproduced this citation from *Yiwen leiju* or *Taiping yulan* - the *Taiping yulan* citation is identical to the *Yiwen leiju* one and it was probably copied directly. The only other source for the biography of Chen Zihuang comes from a citation in *Xianyuan bianzhu* which the editor claims came from *Shenxian zhuan*:

When Chen Zihuang was more than seventy his hair had turned white and his teeth had fallen out. Then, relying on the method, he ate *zhu* and abstained from eating grains. After three years his hair was completely black and his teeth had regrown. When he was two hundred and thirty he departed as an immortal.

These two stories are obviously quite different but the information they provide is not incompatible. The second deals exclusively with Chen whereas the first is actually more interested in his wife. Perhaps a version of the text that included the information from both survived until the time that *Xianyuan bianzhu* was compiled; perhaps by that time the *Yiwen leiju* information had already dropped out. It is impossible to say, but certainly *Taiping guangji* and *Yunji qiqian* do not mention Chen Zihuang or his wife at all and the later compilers of the *Longwei mishu* edition retrieved the citation which dated back to *Yiwen leiju* for their collection.

There are also biographies that show possible editorial marking of where each selection begins. This takes the form of anecdotes or particular pieces of information being introduced by the character *you*, "furthermore, also". An editorial *you yue* is frequently seen in *leishu* where more than one citation is drawn from the same text and they are presented in a block. The citations from *Shenxian zhuan* in *Yiwen leiju* 78:1328-30 are an apposite example. The first *Shenxian zhuan* citation is introduced with the formula "*Shenxian zhuan yue...*". This is followed by seven more citations from *Shenxian zhuan* all introduced by "*You yue...*". This use of such an editorial *you* can be seen in the biography of Ban Meng translated here in full. *You* is translated as "also":

No-one knew what sort of person Ban Meng was. Some people said a girl.

She was able to fly through the whole day .

Also, she could sit in emptiness and speak with people.

Also, she could enter the earth. When she first left her feet sank and she went in up to her waist. She entered gradually: all that would be left was her cap. After a good while she disappeared without trace.

Piercing the ground with her fingers she made wells from which it was possible to suck up water. If she blew at the tiles of someone's roof they would fly off into someone else's house.

There were several thousand trees covered in mulberries. Meng gathered all the fruit into one place and it made a pile as big as a mountain. It was like this for more than ten days. She blew on them and each went back to its original place.

Also, she was able to take a mouthful of ink powder, unroll sheets of paper in front of her, chew it up, spray it out, and it formed writing. When she had finished, each sheet of paper made sense.

She took the wine elixir. When she was four hundred years old she became young and entered Daye shan. (Ban Meng)



In this biography short notes of Ban Meng's powers as well as longer anecdotes are recounted under the editorial *you*. This may indicate that these passages had been selected from a longer text. While this is not a widely cited biography the citations that do exist do not present any more information than is contained in the biography.<sup>116</sup> This may indicate that the selection of these anecdotes took place before the citations were made - or that the people who made the citations happened to pick some of the same passages as those responsible for the current form of the biography.

Additions to the text present a different kind of problem. While early citations may, at least in theory, prove that a certain passage has dropped out of a text they cannot show that something has been added. Short of anachronism (for instance, episodes dated within the text to a time later than its composition - of which there are none in the surviving biographies of *Shenxian zhuan*) there is simply no way of knowing what is a late addition.

Possible exceptions to this are passages added by way of commentary to an existing biography which are noted in the text. Several cases of this occur in *Shenxian zhuan*. One of particular interest occurs towards the end of the biography of Liu An, king of Huainan. When the biography seems to have finished a text called *Zuo Wu ji* is cited with the formula "Now *Zuo Wu ji* says..". Subsequently another episode, one that occurs after Liu An's ascension to heaven, is narrated under the formula "*Wu ji* explains this saying...". The particularly interesting feature of these citations is that *Zuo Wu* is named in the first citation as one of the Eight Worthies who take part in the main narrative. This *Zuo Wu ji* has not survived independently, nor is it quoted in any of the major sources for texts of this period, the commentaries to the histories, *leishu* and so on. Unfortunately that part of Liu An's biography in which it appears is also not cited. There is no answer, then, as to when it was included in the text or to whom the editorial "*an*" belonged. It may have been there from the time the Liu An biography was first rendered into writing or it may be an entirely spurious late addition; it is impossible to tell.<sup>117</sup>

A more minor addition occurs at the conclusion to the biography of Dongling Shengmu. The final sentences in the basic version of that biography read "The big ones are drowned by the wind and waves or eaten by tigers and wolves. The small ones get sick again." What this refers to is mysterious - nothing in the biography can explain it - and it appears to have been absorbed from some kind of commentary. The entire biography is translated in chapter four.

These two kinds of additions along with the various sorts of deletions that have been described are based on examination of the basic texts of the biographies as they stand in versions of the Song or later. Early citations of the biographies also provide a means to judge, albeit imperfectly, how much these relatively late versions of the biographies correspond to the versions circulating at the time the citations were extracted from them.

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<sup>116</sup> *Xianyuan bianzhu* has two variants: Rather than "took the wine elixir" it has "drank wine and ate the elixir"; and instead of Tianzhi shan it has Tiantai shan. The mountain name is probably not correct in the *Taiping guangji* text.

<sup>117</sup> This biography and the citation from *Zuo Wu ji* are discussed in chapter five.

In many cases there are only a small number of early citations so it is difficult to make any clear conclusions. Some biographies are more commonly cited and one, that of Wang Yuan, is cited quite extensively. Using this biography as an example to demonstrate the close correspondence between the citations from this biography and the various modern versions of it, the complete set of versions of and citations from it appear as appendix two.

What these comparisons show is that the modern versions of the biography agree very well with the citations from earlier versions. Variant readings, while not uncommon, usually do not alter the sense of a passage. While those who cited from a biography appear to feel free to excise large portions of text, they seemed extremely reluctant to add anything. In short the attitude displayed by these editors is characterized by respect for their sources. There is nothing in this comparison that leads us to doubt the textual reliability of what survives of the basic versions of the biographies that have come down to us.

### Concluding Remarks

The goal of textual history is to approach, as closely as possible, the original text that an author or editor has produced. The primary difficulty relating to *Shenxian zhuan* is that no integral editions of it have survived into modern times - this means that a comparison of editions will lead only to possible sources of those editions. It has been shown above that although we can come close to the sources of the modern editions, it is impossible to conclude with exactitude which text or texts were used in each reconstruction and so, in turn, it is impossible to find their sources. In these circumstances it is necessary to recognize that what the original *Shenxian zhuan* consisted of cannot be determined. It is therefore only possible to compromise and seek to ascertain the contents of an early text - here, a text from the early Tang has been the goal. It is very probable that the contents of the text that have been determined from early citations leave out some authentic fragments that survive in other texts but it is impossible rigorously to select which of the other surviving fragments are authentic. This uncertainty, however, contrasts with the confidence we can have in the state of the texts of individual biographies that have come down to us. While a biographical collection is more subject than most texts to insertion and deletion - and *Shenxian zhuan* would appear not to be an exception in this regard - that insertion or deletion seems to have occurred with *whole* biographies and not with parts of each text. For these reasons the texts with which this thesis is concerned can be regarded - with as much certainty as the sources will allow - as having come from an authentically early Tang *Shenxian zhuan*. These texts may be extracts of the biographies from a *Shenxian zhuan* of that period rather than complete biographies but those complete biographies, as well as the many other biographies that in all probability were in that collection, are simply not available to us.

## Chapter Three: Ideas Concerning Immortality in the Biographies

In the past, scholars who have studied *Shenxian zhuan* biographies have largely concentrated on the information they contain on particular figures who are important in other contexts.<sup>1</sup> These analyses have not, therefore, addressed the question of the religious content of the biographies of *Shenxian zhuan* as a whole. An analysis of this corpus, insofar as it appears to have been put together at one time, suggests certain conclusions about the conceptions of immortality current at its time of composition. These ideas may not constitute a coherent or homogeneous way of thinking about immortality and related issues but, by examining the records of all the figures in the biographies - the all but forgotten along with those who remained famous - the range and variety of practices and beliefs then current can be ascertained.

This chapter will, therefore, focus on ideas concerning immortality in *Shenxian zhuan*. These range from the qualifications necessary to become an immortal, how immortality is attained to what additional powers immortals secure. The biographies should not be expected to provide information on every aspect of the quest for immortality - they do not purport to be a guide or handbook. The focus on individual figures presupposes an interest in particular cases; for example, a biography will tend to describe what drugs a particular figure used rather than what range of drugs were available to the seeker after immortality. What has been preserved of each life reflects the priorities of the original compilers of that biography. Indeed, it is clear that the priorities of the compilers of different biographies were not identical. For example, the discussion here on the prerequisites for immortality mentions only a few figures because only a few biographies discuss the topic. The absence of certain kinds of information from a biography should not simply be ignored: the decisions a compiler makes about what is left out are as important as those about what is included. The final section of this chapter which makes

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<sup>1</sup> Miyakawa Hisayuki, for instance, refers to several biographies in different places in the first volume of *Chūgoku shūkyōshi kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1983): Wang Yuan (pp. 134-36), Luan Ba in relation to the cults around Mount Lu (pp. 243-5; see also his "Local Cults around Mount Lu" in Welch, H. and Seidel, A., *Facets of Taoism*, 83-101 (p. 92)), Li Shaojun, Li Yiqi, Ge Xuan, Ji Zixun, etc in relation to corpse-liberation (pp. 444-47), Liu An (p. 466) and Zhang Ling (p. 469) in relation to exiled immortals. Isabelle Robinet makes use of *Shenxian zhuan* biographies in her work on Maoshan Daoism in *La Revelation du Shangqing dans l'Histoire du Taoisme, Publications de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, CXXXVII* (Paris, 1984). Edward Schafer used the biography of Magu in his *Mirages on the Sea of Time* (Berkeley, 1985) as did Joseph Needham in *Science and Civilisation in China*, III, pp. 599-600, in relation to his discussion of geological eras. In other volumes of *Science and Civilisation in China* the biographies of Baishi Xiansheng (V, II, p. 107), Wei Boyang (V, II, p. 295; V, III, pp. 52-53), Dong Feng (V, III, p. 75), and Yin Gui (V, III, p. 101) are discussed. The biography of Laozi is quoted by Henri Maspero in his "Essay on Taoism in the First Centuries AD", *Taoism and Chinese Religion* p.394, and is discussed by Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, *Dōkyō to Bukkyō*, II (Tokyo, 1970), p. 79, III (Tokyo, 1976) pp. 53-55 and by Kusuyama Haruki, *Rōshi densetsu no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1979), pp. 350-351. Kusuyama also examines the *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Heshanggong in the same work, p. 14.

certain conclusions about the nature of *Shenxian zhuan* will base its discussions partly on what priorities we can infer the compilers had.

As well as illustrating the different priorities of their compilers, the biographies also, to some extent, present different ideas in relation to religious questions. Certainly, there are many shared ideas - especially at a general level - but the closer the biographies are examined the less and less homogeneous they appear. It is clear, therefore, that *Shenxian zhuan* was not compiled from records which came from a single religious culture. These differences are, perhaps, emphasised by the arrangement of this chapter simply because passages which contain information on a particular topic are arranged next to related passages from different biographies. This way of organizing religious information for the purpose of analysis takes it out of its original contexts. One effect of this rearrangement is to reveal the lack of interest the biographies have in explanatory detail. Elixirs are named but no instructions are given on how to prepare them; physiognomy is sometimes claimed as a means of discerning who is fated to become an immortal but precisely what aspects of an immortal's appearance are revelatory are not specified.

We can anticipate two conclusions to be drawn from the discussions of ideas concerning immortality in this chapter. The first, that the biographies could not have been used as a guide for the seeker after immortality, helps to define the nature and purpose of *Shenxian zhuan*. The biographies appear to function as evocations and demonstrations of the existence of immortals and stress their acquisition of powers beyond those of normal folk. In this way they fit into a broad biographical tradition in early medieval China concerned with exemplary types. This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The second conclusion addresses the ideas of immortality current in China in the early centuries C.E. It is clear that while certain conceptions of the nature of human existence and its transcendence into a higher state were broadly shared there was no single model of immortality current at that time. Frequently, the information that the various biographies contain concerning the specific features of immortals is not the same. In different places throughout the biographies different details are given on almost every aspect of the immortal's quest and existence. Some possible reasons for these differences are discussed in the conclusion to this chapter.

### **The Prerequisites for Immortality**

In texts from the Eastern Han and Sanguo periods that accept immortality as a possibility the idea of "fate" or "destiny" is usually called upon to explain why some people can attain it and others not. Some of these texts have been discussed in chapter one. Those figures who receive biographies in *Shenxian zhuan* have by definition attained immortality, yet only a few of the biographies mention why their subjects were so privileged. One case that is typical of these few occurs in the biography of Laozi. Before he arrives at the western passes where he composes the *Daode jing* for Yin Xi, Laozi "knew that Yin Xi's fate corresponded with attaining the Dao". The biography of Maojun also directly refers to fate. It begins:

Lord Mao was a native of Youzhou and studied the Dao in Qi. After twenty years, when he had completed the Dao, he returned home. When his father and mother saw him they exploded in fury and said "You are not filial. You have not looked after us yourself. You roamed in all directions chasing after the weird and wild".

To which Maojun replies

I am fated to ascend to Heaven so it is my destiny to attain the Dao. I could not follow two paths so I had to abandon the provision of food. Although a long time has passed and there has been no advantage in this for you, I am now able to grant peace to all in the household. Father and Mother, you will enjoy long life. (Maojun)

It is clear from what Maojun says that both fate and study were necessary for him to attain the Dao. With the exception of this biography, the ability to pass on the blessing of long life to family members is only found in the biography of Yin Changsheng.

Lü Gong was also fated to gain immortality - he is told so by three immortals - but the reasons they give for picking him out are not those which rely on his birthdate or on a corresponding system. One of the immortals, Lü Wenqi, says:

At the time you came to pick herbs it was right for us to admit a new student. Since you and I share a family name, and since half your courtesy name [Wenjing] is the same as mine, your fate corresponds to eternal life.<sup>2</sup> If you are able to follow me I will tell you the recipe that prevents death. (Lü Gong)

One of the marks that indicates a destiny of immortality is a peculiar physiognomy - sometimes expressed as "immortal's bones".<sup>3</sup> Cai Jing was picked out by Wang Yuan because the "conformation of his bones indicated the possibility of transcendence". Conversely Cheng Wei's wife refused to allow her husband the recipe she possessed as "Wei's bones do not correspond with attaining it". When Liu Gen encountered the immortal Han Zhong, Liu was told:

Be seated, I have an announcement for you. You have the bones of an immortal - that is why you have been able to meet me. (Liu Gen)

The idea that possession of a destiny for immortality, expressed here in physiognomy, enables the aspirant to meet the immortal is found in two other biographies: Fei Changfang and Feng Yu are told that their ability to meet Hugong and Kong Yuanfang respectively indicates that they are teachable.

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<sup>2</sup> See *Lunheng* (*Lunheng jiaoshi*, Huang Hui, ed., Beijing, 1990), 25 (section 74, "Jieshu"):1027-1040 for one explanation of the five phase correspondences, and therefore meanings, of surnames. See also Chard, R.L., "Divination and Dream Interpretation in the *Ch'ien-fu Lun*", pp.14-25. These discussions, however, do not explain the rationale of Lü Wenqi.

<sup>3</sup> See *Qianfu lun*, (*Qianfu lun jianjiaozheng*, Wang Jipei, ed., Beijing, 1985), 27 ("xianglie"):308-314, for divination by physiognomy.

Just as Maojun had to study the Dao even though he was destined to attain it, the quality of teachability that Fei Changfang was told he possessed did not mean that his attainment of immortality was automatic. After Hugong had revealed who he was, Fei still had to undergo three tests to be deemed appropriate to receive the Dao that conferred immortality. He successfully passed the first two tests: not showing fear when left alone with tigers and not moving when a huge rock that was suspended above his head on a flimsy cord was about to be gnawed through by snakes. Fei recoiled from the third test - eating excrement infested with inch-long worms. Hugong responded:

You cannot attain the Dao of immortality. I will confer a position of earthly power upon you and it will be possible for you to gain several hundred years of life. (Hugong)

A comparable example is the case of Zhao Sheng, an acolyte of Zhang Ling.<sup>4</sup> Zhang not only predicts Zhao's arrival and describes his appearance exactly but also knows that he will attain the elixir. This indicates that Zhao is also, in some sense, predestined. Nonetheless, like Fei Changfang, he is forced to undergo trials - in this case seven of them - but unlike Fei he passes them all. The final step requires Zhao to throw himself off a cliff in his desire to follow his master.

In the two other cases where testing occurs there is nothing to indicate that either acolyte is predestined. The biography of Li Babai reads, in part:

[Li Babai] knew that Tang Gongfang<sup>5</sup> had the will but had not met with an enlightened teacher. He wanted to hand the knowledge over to [Tang] so first went to test him, working in his household as a servant. Gongfang did not know that he was an immortal. Running errands, Babai voluntarily exceeded what was expected of other servants and Gongfang loved him all the more. Later Babai feigned an illness that put him on the verge of death. Gongfang ordered a doctor to come and blend herbs and the cost was several hundred thousand cash but he did not consider it a loss. His thoughts were full of grief and it showed on his face.

Babai then produced evil boils all over his own body through cyclical transformation. The boils burst. They were rank and foul smelling and nobody was able to get close to him. Gongfang wept, "You have worked hard for my household over the years yet you have this dangerous illness. I really want you to be healed. There is nothing I would not do to have you remedied now! What else can I do for you?" Babai said, "My boils can be healed. Hurry and get somebody to lick them." Gongfang ordered three female slaves to lick them. Then Babai said, "The licking of slaves cannot heal me. If you, Sir, will lick them healing will result." Gongfang then licked them himself. Babai said, "You licking cannot heal me either.

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<sup>4</sup> In this thesis the "Dao" of Zhang Daoling is not used as the earliest extant citation of the biography simply has Zhang Ling. In the previous chapter, where the form "Zhang Daoling" was used, this referred to biographies in later versions of *Shenxian zhuan* that included the "Dao".

<sup>5</sup> The *Taiping guangji* version of this biography has Tang Gongfang of Hanzhong.

If your wife will lick them I will be cured." Gongfang then made his wife lick them. Babai said, "My boils are about to be cured! Please get thirty *hu* of high grade wine for me to bathe and I will be completely healed." Gongfang then prepared 30 *hu* of wine and poured it into a vessel. After bathing Babai was healed. His body looked like congealed fat and there was no scarring. Then he told Gongfang, "I am an immortal. You had the will so I came here to test you. You certainly can be taught so now I can truly hand over to you the instructions for transcending the generations". Then he sent Gongfang, his wife and the three servants who had licked his boils to bathe themselves in the remaining wine. After they had washed themselves they were all young again. Their faces were beautiful and full of joy. He handed over to Gongfang the Elixir Scripture in one roll. Gongfang then entered Yuntai shan and blended the elixir. When it was complete he took it and went off as an immortal. (Li Babai)

There is nothing in this biography to indicate that Tang Gongfang possessed anything more transcendental than the wish to become an immortal and a great deal of devotion to his servant. The other case of testing is of Yin Changsheng who sought out Ma Mingsheng as he had heard that Ma had attained the Dao of transcending the generations. Yin served him in the capacity of a slave. Of the twelve followers Ma had, Yin alone remained over ten years later. At that point Ma Mingsheng said:

Truly you are able to attain the Dao. (Yin Changsheng)

These last two cases, and possibly that of Zhao Sheng, do not raise the question of recognizing signs of predestination in a disciple when a teacher decides to impart the secrets of immortality. Instead the teacher subjects the disciple's faith in the teacher and sincerity to severe tests.<sup>6</sup>

In the biography of Shen Xi there is a case of someone whose destined lifespan was overridden. In this text, translated in full in chapter four, Shen Xi was destined for a short life but received immortality as a reward for virtuous behaviour. While returning from the family of his daughter-in-law, Shen and his wife were met by three officials from the other world who transported them to heaven where they were presented with foods which conferred immortality. The biography states that "his virtue and merit moved Heaven and the Heavenly spirits recognized this". Compassion is, of course, recognized in *Baopuzi* as a requirement of long life<sup>7</sup> but compassionate behaviour by itself is not rewarded in that text as Shen Xi is in *Shenxian zhuan*.

In determining what are considered prerequisites for immortality it is equally rewarding to examine the reasons why those who are rejected, like Fei Changfang and Cheng Wei, are not successful. A student of the surname Zhang was not accepted by Li Zhongfu as his "essence is cramped and constricted and not suitable for teaching." Li

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<sup>6</sup> In the surviving fragment of Guijun's *Shenxian zhuan* biography, he is tested by Ganjun who has him tend horses for three years, however, in this case it seems that the test is a means of curing Guijun's disease - not a prerequisite for immortality.

<sup>7</sup> *Baopuzi*, 6:125-6.

continued: "Even if you protect it unceasingly and spend several hundred thousand in offerings of wine and food you will not achieve anything at all." This would appear to indicate that Zhang's fate was the problem.

In the biography of Wang Yuan a neighbour of Cai Jing surnamed Chen who held the rank of Defender:

begged to be allowed to accompany him and compared himself to Cai Jing. Fangping said "Get up and face the sun." Fangping looked at him from behind and said "Ah, your heart is perverse and not upright like Jing's. It is impossible to teach you the way of the transcendent. I can bestow the responsibility of earthly power on you." (Wang Yuan)

Thus, rejection was also possible on what seem to be moral grounds - although given the extraordinary nature of Wang Yuan's diagnostic method he may have meant something more literal. Interestingly Chen, like Fei Changfang, received the lesser reward of earthly power and longevity. It is also significant that the expression rendered here as "your heart is perverse and not upright" is exactly the inverse of the way Zhang Ling described Zhao Sheng: "Zhao Sheng's heart is naturally upright".

Finally, in two of the biographies featuring encounters between immortals and Han Wudi, the emperor did not succeed in achieving everything he might have by reason of his position - or, perhaps, failings of character. In the biography of Wu Yan, for example, Han Wudi is said to put Wu Yan's method into practice "to some extent" and to have gained length of life equal to the ancient emperors but he did not gain the maximum effect. Li Shaojun, in his biography, gave Han Wudi a "lesser medicine recipe" having warned him that he could never concoct the superior Spirit Elixir while he was

unable to cut off arrogance and luxury nor banish sensual pleasures, end killings and overcome joy and rage; while in his dominions there were ghosts [of dead soldiers] who could not return and in the marketplaces punishments that required the spilling of blood were meted out. (Li Shaojun)

These two cases might indicate that the position of emperor precluded the ability to attain immortality. While some of the things Li Shaojun referred to were normal imperial actions - which may lend weight to this theory - his injunctions certainly indicated that lapses from a strict morality prevented success. Certainly, in Liu An's biography, when he expresses a desire to execute two of his officers he regards as treacherous the eight worthies admonish him:<sup>8</sup>

"It is not possible. If you are to go off as an immortal you must not desire to harm even a creeping worm - how much worse would it be where a person is concerned !" (Liu An)

The varied accounts of the roles of fate, of physiognomy, of virtuous behaviour or of testing the disciple in those biographies that address the question of the prerequisites of

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<sup>8</sup> Ironically, the two officers he wishes to execute, Lei Bei and Wu Bei, are identified elsewhere as two of the eight worthies.



immortality indicates that there was no clear agreement on what qualifications were regarded as necessary for the seeker to be successful. This is all the more striking as in these biographies there is no doubt expressed that immortality is itself attainable. Clearly within the religious culture of the time different opinions were current on who was eligible to have immortality conferred on them and why.

### **The Attainment of Immortality**

As there appears to have been more than one model of who could claim candidacy for immortality, so there was more than one way of actually attaining it and more than one type of immortal. This section will examine how figures recorded in *Shenxian zhuan* reached a state of transcendence. As has been noted in relation to the prerequisites for immortality, not every biography provides the kind of information that is under discussion here: some simply assume an immortal state has been achieved. The following discussions, therefore, come from biographies where the compiler regarded the means of attainment as a stage in the immortal's career worthy of inclusion.

#### Encounters with Immortals

In most cases discussed above, where a person was fated to become an immortal someone who had already attained that state informed them of it. Thus, Wang Yuan identified Cai Jing after Wang had attained immortality himself; the three immortals from the Palace of Extreme Purity and Extreme Harmony found Lü Gong when he was collecting herbs; Liu Gen received vital knowledge from the immortal Han Zhong. Shen Xi, despite the different rationale for his acquisition of immortality, attained the transcendent state through an encounter with immortals. The importance of a meeting between the immortal and the seeker can also be seen in those cases where the immortal noted that the seeker's ability to meet them was itself an indication of their suitability to receive the desired information. These encounters can be seen as a model for the later Daoist insistence on master to student transmission as the orthodox method of dissemination of religious knowledge. This aspect of the meeting is well illustrated in the biography of Kong Yuanfang. Feng Yu had proved his special status by succeeding in meeting Kong who, in turn, bestowed "plain writing" on him. In doing so he said:

These are the essential words of the Dao. Every forty years you can pass them down to a single person. If there is no-one suitable in that generation you must not recklessly bestow them simply because the period has elapsed. If no-one has been bestowed with them in forty years and there are two people to whom you can bestow them after eighty years then it is the turn of two people to receive them. If it is possible to bestow them, but you do not, this is closing Heaven's Dao. If it is not possible to bestow them, and yet you do, this is leaking Heaven's Dao and calamities will be visited on your descendants. As I have found the person to whom to give them I shall depart. (Kong Yuanfang)

Typically the function of the encountered immortal is simply annunciation but there is one case where the immortal acts as a kind of teacher:

Jie Xiang, courtesy name Yuanze, was a native of Guiji.... When he heard of the *Wudan jing* he went all over the empire to seek it out but did not find a teacher. Then he entered the mountains and refined his thoughts in the hope of meeting an immortal... Xiang entered a mountain ravine. At the head of it were some stones which were purple and brilliant,<sup>9</sup> very beautiful and as big as a hen's eggs. It was impossible to estimate how many there were. He took two of them. The ravine was so deep he could not go on, so he returned... In the mountains he saw a beautiful girl of about fifteen or sixteen. Her face was extraordinary and her clothes were of many colours. She was an immortal. Xiang begged for a recipe for long life. The girl said, "If you, Sir, were to return what you have in your hands it would be possible. You ought not to have taken them. For this reason I must cease attending to you." When Xiang returned the stones he saw the girl in front of him. She said, "You have not completely cleared yourself of the *qi* of flesh. Stop eating grains for three years and then come back. I shall stay here." Xiang returned home.

He went back after three years without grains and saw the girl in front of him in the same place as before. She then presented Xiang with the *Huandan jing*<sup>10</sup> in one chapter and she announced to him, "With this you can attain immortality - you will need nothing else." (Jie Xiang)

Once immortality is attained meetings with other immortals seem to be perfectly normal social occasions. In the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies two notable cases are when Wang Yao treks with his disciple of the Qian family to play trios with two other immortals in a cavern<sup>11</sup> and the gathering of notable immortals on a cliff-top from Wei Shuqing's biography.<sup>12</sup>

It is worth stressing that encounters with immortals can assume various forms: sometimes they take the form of quiet rendezvous in isolated and numinous places, typically mountains; sometimes the immortal makes his or her appearance in the public arena, often accompanied by an invisible retinue, revealed to those present by the music they played.

<sup>9</sup> Reading the *cai* (綵, that is 彩) of the *Siku quanshu* version rather than the *lu* (綠) of the *Taiping guangji* text.

<sup>10</sup> Not, as he previously sought, *Wudan jing*. The *Sandong zhunang* citation (3:3b) does not include the passage concerning *Wudan jing* but like the basic text has *Huandan jing*. In one *Taiping yulan* citation of this biography (51:5a), Jie receives *Huandan fang*; in another (381:1b) it is an elixir recipe- *danfang*. In the *Siku quanshu* version of this biography, Jie Xiang hears about the Scripture of Nine Elixirs - *jiudan zhi jing* - and the immortal bestows an elixir recipe on him.

<sup>11</sup> They play "five-tongued bamboo pipes", which appear to be a type of *sheng*.

<sup>12</sup> The three identifiable members of the group were Mr Hongya, one of Huangdi's ministers, and the two ancient exemplary hermits Xu You and Chao Fu.

The presence of the spirit world in the lives of immortals is also evident in the appearance of the "travelling kitchen" (*xingchu*) which has been studied by Rolf Stein.<sup>13</sup> At its most basic this simply consists of the mysterious appearance of a banquet; in two of the three references to the travelling kitchen in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies this is almost all the information that we are given. In the biography of Zuo Ci it is listed as one of his extraordinary powers: "without his exerting himself the travelling kitchen would appear". In the biography of Li Gen the same formula is used but there is a little more information: "without his exerting himself the travelling kitchen would appear. In all, twenty people could be provided with the most delicate of food, things to be marvelled at anywhere. They were not of this world." The most complete account is from the biography of Wang Yuan:

They took their seats and each person came forward to the travelling kitchen. All the vessels were golden bowls and jade cups. Most of the meats and delicacies were all sauced<sup>14</sup> and shaped like flowers and their fragrance spread everywhere. They tore off strips of dried meat like the Maek people do with a whole roasted beast.<sup>15</sup> It was said to be *lin* meat. (Wang Yuan)

#### Ascension to Heaven in Broad Daylight

It would appear that the most preferred way of attaining immortality was ascension to heaven in broad daylight. This method was ranked highest by Pengzu and the spirit who discourses with Liu Gen. It was certainly superior to the method known as "corpse-liberation" which will be discussed next. Wang Yuan made this clear to Cai Jing:

At present you have not enough *qi* and too much flesh - you could not ascend to heaven. Corpse-liberation is appropriate. (Wang Yuan)

Some indication of how these methods were assessed comes from a valuable passage from a lost work of Yin Changsheng, a fragment of which is preserved in his biography under the designation "nine pieces he wrote" (*zhushu jiupian*):

In deep antiquity there were many immortals and it is not possible to speak of them all. However, since the rise of the Han forty five people have attained the Dao, forty six if I am included. Twenty were corpse-liberated and the rest ascended to heaven in broad daylight. (Yin Changsheng)

In some of the records of immortals who ascended to heaven no more information is provided beyond the fact of their ascension. The biography of Yin Changsheng, for instance, simply records that "later he departed, ascending to heaven in broad daylight on

<sup>13</sup>Stein, R.A., "Speculations mystiques et themes relatif aux cuisines du taoisme", *Annuaire du College de France*, 72 (Paris, 1972/3), 489-499. See also *Baopuzi*, 4:78, 11:196, 11:205, 16:292 and 19:337 for references to the travelling kitchen. A *Xingchu jing* is also listed in *Baopuzi*, 19:334.

<sup>14</sup> Reading *zhu* ( 諸 ) as equivalent to *zu* ( 蒞 ).

<sup>15</sup> This reading comes from the citation at *Chuxue ji*, 26:642. See *Shiming* (*Shiming suzheng bu*, Shanghai, 1984), 4:22b for a definition of the "Maek roast". See also *Soushen ji* cited at *Taiping yulan*, 859:10a. The Maek were a tribal people who lived in parts of modern Manchuria and northern Korea.

the east of Pingdu shan." Chen Anshi's biography only has "when [Chen] Anshi had completed the Dao he ascended to heaven in broad daylight". Similarly, in the biography of Zhang Ling we read, "later, [Zhang] Ling, [Zhao] Sheng and [Wang] Chang departed together, ascending to heaven in broad daylight." In the biography of Wu Yan, "when Zidu [ie Wu Yan] was two hundred he took quicksilver and rose to heaven in broad daylight." A variation is provided by the biography of Huangluzi where "one day he took his leave of his relatives, mounted a dragon and left." Madame Fan and her husband Liu Gang both ascended to heaven but it should be born in mind that structurally this biography betrays a degree of narrative intervention (see chapter five). The following passage functions, in narrative terms, as a kind of punchline to a series of incidents where, in each case, Madame Fan outperforms her husband:

Whenever they tested their skills together Gang never won. When the time came for him to ascend to Heaven Gang climbed several *zhang* up a big acacia tree that formerly stood at the side of the county buildings - then he was able to fly off. His wife sat calmly (*pingzuo*)<sup>16</sup> - and slowly ascended like cloud *qi* when she, likewise, went off by ascending to Heaven. (Fan Furen)

The most famous ascension is that of Liu An yet even in this case details are sketchy:

The eight worthies sent [Liu] An up the mountain to perform the great sacrifice and bury gold in the earth. Then he ascended to heaven in broad daylight. (Liu An)

The biography reports further, that:

People at that time related that when the eight worthies and [Liu] An were about to leave the remaining medicine was left in a container in the courtyard and chickens and dogs lapped it up - and all of them ascended to heaven too. That is why the cackling of chickens and the barking of dogs could be heard from the clouds. (Liu An)

Finally, a more detailed description of a possible ascension is given in the biography of Maojun but it is unclear in the original whether his journey takes him across the land or into the sky:

Lord Mao's younger brother had attained the rank of two thousand bushels in government service and was due to take up office.<sup>17</sup> Several hundred local people had come to see him off. Lord Mao was among those seated. He said, "Although I do not have the rank of two thousand bushels I fill an office of Spiritual Power. On a certain day of a certain

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<sup>16</sup> See a translated passage from the biography of Luan Ba, below in the section of transformations, for a parallel use of this term. In both cases the immortal's body is described as becoming like cloud *qi*.

<sup>17</sup> This represents an extremely high position. There were only two ranks higher than two thousand bushels in the Han. Examples of positions at this rank were Provincial Shepherds (during the two dynasties this position alternated with that of Inspector ranked at six hundred bushels) and the Supervisor of the Household and Grand Prolonger of Autumn, two of the Empress's highest officials (Bielenstein. H., *The Bureaucracy of Han Times*, pp. 4, 69, 90-91).

month I will be due to take up office." The guests all said, "We would like to see you off." Lord Mao said, "As you are willing to farewell me, you, gentlemen, are of generous spirit. However you should come unencumbered - there is no need for any expense as I shall provide for you." When the appointed time came, all the guests arrived to make a huge gathering for the banquet. They were all under a green double-silk canopy. Below, heavy white felt was laid out. Wondrous delicacies, strange fruit and fragrances were everywhere. There were girls making music, bells and stone chimes were all being played. The sound shook Heaven and Earth and could be heard for several *li*. There were more than a thousand followers and every one of them was full and drunk.

Then the Reception Officials came. There were several hundred Literary Officials dressed in red with white belts. Encampments of Military Officials stretched several *li* with armour, weapons, banners and engines of war that shone in the sun.

Lord Mao made his farewells to his mother and father and clan members then mounted a carriage with a feathered canopy and left. There was a forest of standards and pennants. There were dragons in harness and tigers being driven, birds in flight and soaring beasts leaping about above. Drifting clouds and pink mist interwove, winding around on all sides. It was over ten *li* from the house before he disappeared. (Maojun)

#### Corpse-liberation<sup>18</sup>

Wang Yuan's advice to Cai Jing regarding the proportions of his *qi* and his flesh has already been cited. The method he recommended instead was corpse-liberation (*shijie*) which entailed passing through what appears to be a kind of false death. In the earlier part

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<sup>18</sup> On this topic see Isabelle Robinet, "Metamorphosis and Deliverance from the Corpse in Taoism", *History of Religions*, 19 (1979), 37-70, Miyakawa, *Chūgoku shūkyōshi kenkyū*, pp. 439-457. Seidel notes that *shijie* is "usually translated as 'liberation from the corpse'" and elucidates its meaning in these terms, "*Shih* 'corpse, cadaver', in the Taoist context, means all corruptible aging factors of the body, and the Taoist understanding of *shih-chieh* is always linked with physiological efforts to preserve the body and render it imperishable." ("Traces of Han Religion in Funeral Texts found in Tombs", pp. 689-90.). The two parts of this definition appear to contradict each other to some extent. If the body is to be preserved and rendered imperishable, it is unlikely that the person undergoing *shijie* would attempt to be liberated from it. Robinet says, "The term *shih-chieh* has been variously and often poorly translated. The most faithful translation is that of Maspero: 'déliverance du cadavre.' Faithful but ambiguous: It is not the corpse which is delivered, as the French could be read, but the spirit which is delivered from the corpse. It disencumbers itself 'without loosening either the clothing or the belt'. The adept is an 'Immortal who has slipped out of his belt in midday.' He 'moults like a cicada,' or 'like a snake'; he is even said to abandon his bones like the dragons whose bones are found in the mountains. In its primary sense, the term *chieh* means, 'to moult,' 'to quarter,' 'to expel an affliction.'" (p.58) In the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies we certainly find examples of most of Robinet's phrases but it is striking that in these biographies spirit is not mentioned; it is a liberated but transformed body we encounter not a spirit. It should be born in mind that a grammatically equally possible translation is "liberation of the corpse". In this dissertation *shijie* is rendered as "corpse-liberation".

of that biography Wang Yuan himself undergoes corpse-liberation. There are several other examples of it described in the biographies.

Those who will be transformed into immortals through corpse-liberation typically predict their own passing. Wang Yuan himself provides a good example of this:

Later, [Wang Yuan] said to [Chen] Dan "My time has come around and I must leave - I can stay no longer. Tomorrow, in the middle of the day, I must go." At exactly that time Fangping died. Dan knew he had left through transformation so he did not dare bury him. But he wept, grief-stricken, and sighed "The master has forsaken me. Who will I rely on?" He prepared the coffin and grave goods, burned incense, then laid him on a bed and dressed him. After three days and three nights, suddenly there was no sign of him. His clothing and belt had not been undone - they were just like a sloughed snakeskin. (Wang Yuan)

The term that Chen Dan used to describe Wang's liberation - leaving through transformation (*huaqu*) - is instructive.<sup>19</sup> Not only does it allow us to identify certain other examples of this process in other biographies where the term corpse-liberation is not used but it also indicates that the process involves a change of category of being. If figures who undergo corpse-liberation were no less immortals than those translated to heaven in broad daylight, the process of becoming an immortal in general can be seen as a form of transformation. This would imply that those who were able to ascend directly to heaven were already transformed by some other means. Ge Xuan indicates that ingesting "the great medicine" can achieve this end:

[Ge] Xuan said to his disciple Zhang Dayan, "The emperor urges me to stay. Since I have not trifled to concoct the great medicine, I must now undergo corpse-liberation. I shall depart on the thirteenth day of the eighth month in the middle of the day." When that time came he entered a chamber in cap and robes and lay down. His *qi* ceased. His colour did not change. His disciple burned incense and looked after it for three days. In the middle of the night a great wind arose which destroyed the house and broke trees. It sounded like thunder and all the torches were extinguished. After a considerable time the wind stopped and suddenly Xuan was not to be seen. There were simply his clothes abandoned on the bed with the belt still fastened. When day came he enquired of the neighbours but the people of the neighbouring clan said there was definitely no strong wind. The wind stopped at the edge of the house. The fences had collapsed and all the trees had been destroyed. (Ge Xuan)

The process of predicting death, appearing to die and disappearing, leaving the clothes intact and in position, is repeated in this passage. These two examples provide the view from the outside. Unfortunately an insider's record has not survived in *Shenxian zhuan* but - for whatever reason - the record of Cai Jing's transformation appears to have been recorded from a closer vantage point. The passage begins with Wang Yuan's words:

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<sup>19</sup> The *Taijing guangji* version of this biography reads *xianqu*, see below.

"At present you have not enough *qi* and too much flesh - you could not ascend to heaven. Corpse-liberation is appropriate. In a short time it will be like passing through a dog's hole." He then told him the essentials, abandoned him and left. Later Jing's body suddenly gave off heat like a fire and he wanted cold water to douse himself. The whole family drew water and doused him, as if they were pouring water on a fire. This continued for three days. He melted away until he was just bare bones. He entered a chamber and covered himself with a quilt. Suddenly he was nowhere to be seen. If you looked into the quilt all that could be seen was skin, a head and feet with everything in place like a cicada's shedded exuviae. (Wang Yuan)

Although Li Shaojun's biography does not classify his passing as a case of corpse-liberation, the emperor indicates that this is what happened by saying that he "left through transformation":

[Li] Shaojun then became seriously ill and the emperor went to see him and also sent an envoy to record his recipes - but before he had finished Shaojun had died. The emperor said, "Shaojun did not die, he has left through transformation." The corpse was then prepared for burial and placed in a coffin but it was suddenly nowhere to be seen - all that remained were his clothes, still untied, like the exuviae of a cicada. (Li Shaojun)

Perhaps the most vivid description of corpse-liberation - although the term is not used - comes from the biography of Ji Zixun. The honourable Chen is not known elsewhere and there is no clue as to his identity in the rest of the biography:

[Ji] Zixun arrived at the house of the honourable Chen and said "I must depart tomorrow in the middle of the day." The honourable Chen inquired whether he would be going somewhere close by or far away to which Ji replied, "I will not be returning". The honourable Chen presented him with a simple cotton robe and when the time came, Zixun died. His corpse became stiff with his hands and feet all entangled above his chest and it could not be straightened out. It was shaped like bent iron. The corpse exuded perfume of the five fragrances which spread throughout the surrounding lanes and fieldpaths - it was a miraculous smell. It was then interred in the coffin. Before long the rumbling of thunder was heard coming from inside <sup>20</sup> and a bright light filled the room. Those present cowered, and after a time, they saw that the lid of the coffin had been shattered and had flown about the room. There was no-one inside it - there was simply a single shoe. After a short time they heard the sound of pipes and drums and men and horses from above the path, heading east, and leaving. Zixun was never seen again. More than one hundred days after

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<sup>20</sup> This reading comes from *Chuxue ji*, 16:400.

Zixun left, the fragrance still persisted for several tens of *li* along the fieldpath. (Ji Zixun)

There is one other named example of corpse-liberation - Cheng Wei's wife - but there are several other examples of false deaths. The coffins of Dong Feng and Jie Xiang were both opened to find their bodies missing. In place of Dong's was a "length of silk with the image of a man's body on one side and a talisman written in vermilion on the other." Xiang's coffin contained only a talisman. In both of these cases, and that of Sun Deng, later sightings are recorded in such a way - details of places they were seen, the circumstances of the sighting, the identity of the witnesses - that the veracity of their passage through death is authenticated.<sup>21</sup>

There are two episodes that reveal a practice that seems to be related to the cases of Dong Feng and Jie Xiang, if only because they use similar images. These relate to the transformation of lengths of bamboo into substitute corpses for the purposes of subterfuge. In the first case Li Changzai placed a length of bamboo in each of the beds of his two young disciples. The families saw these as the bodies of their sons and buried them. Later, another of Li's disciples met the two boys in a town close to Chengdu. They gave this third disciple letters for their parents to prove they were not dead. The families dug up the coffins and found they had buried bamboo. In the second case Hugong transformed a length of bamboo into what appeared to be Fei Changfang's body when he took Fei away to test him. As in the case of Li Changzai, Fei's family buried the bamboo thinking he had died.

#### Departing as an Immortal

There are several biographies that do not mention either of the means of attaining immortality that have been discussed above. This does not mean that the figure at the centre of them did not attain immortality; rather, the biography typically states baldly that "he departed as an immortal" (*xianqu*). Liu Gen and Feng Gang entered a mountain in their biographies then departed as immortals; Tang Gongfang, Wei Dushi (Wei Shuqing's son) and Nanjizi took elixirs then departed as immortals and Lord Gan completed the Dao before he departed as an immortal. These cases indicate the nature of the term as shorthand. One case, although it also falls into the category of shorthand, is different:

Subsequently, [Chen Anshi] passed on the essential techniques of the Dao to [Quan] Shuben. Shuben himself later departed as an immortal.  
(Chen Anshi)

Here, it is clear that Quan's "departing as an immortal" has the same goal or status as Chen's own attainment - and Chen, as cited above, ascended to heaven in broad daylight.

In some ways the situation regarding the attainment of immortality is similar to that regarding the prerequisites of immortality: the proportion of biographies that provide detailed information is relatively small. Of those that do enlarge on a simple statement of attainment, there are examples of both the two generally accepted routes to immortality

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<sup>21</sup> See chapter four for a detailed discussion of authentication.



among the biographies. The apparent consistency here may be partly accounted for by taking into account the relatively large numbers of biographies that do not give information on this topic. In other words, it is among those biographies where a description of the process of attainment of immortality is provided that we find a large measure of agreement on the forms that process can take. The absence of this kind of information in other biographies may indicate ignorance of any such process; at the very least it indicates a lack of interest in the topic. Nonetheless, even in biographies that include detailed descriptions of the attainment of immortality, there is no sense in which the biographies can be seen as providing instructions. Rather, they appear to provide models to emulate, but a person seeking to emulate them would have to go elsewhere to find out what they should do.

## Diet, Elixirs and Techniques

### Diet

Diet has always formed an important part of the discipline required of a seeker after immortality - and special diets have been an indication of the attainment of special status. Eating grain has always been one of the primary dietary prohibitions and many of the figures in *Shenxian zhuan* abstain from cereals as part of their regimen to gain immortality.<sup>22</sup> Abstention from grains is noted in the biographies of Ge Xuan, Chen Zihuang<sup>23</sup> and Taishan Laofu where it is linked with his eating atractylis root. Kong Yuanfang first adhered to a vegetarian diet but later abstained from grains when he moved away from his family to live in a cave by a river. Shen Jian began flying as a result. Finally, Jie Xiang was instructed to follow this regime by an immortal he encountered on a mountain.

Not eating appears in the biographies as a mark of the attainment of immortality. Zuo Ci, for instance, was not harmed when Cao Cao imprisoned him for over a year without providing food. Chen Chang is recorded not to have eaten or drunk anything, while Gan Shi "excelled at circulating *qi* and did not eat"; Sun Deng "was never seen eating" and Chen Anshi stopped eating after he was given medicine by two immortals. Shen Jian, in a complementary case, was able to give medicine to slaves and domestic animals while he was away:

Once when he went on a long journey he gave a ball of medicine to each of his four or five slaves and servants, his donkey and several tens of

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<sup>22</sup> Catherine Despaux notes that "The word cereals [ie grains] in expressions like 'not eating cereals' or 'abstention from cereals' must be understood as referring in a general way to the common diet of the people of the day, which of course consisted in large part of cereals. The texts specify quite clearly that the practice of abstention is not a total fasting, but rather a replacement of ordinary food with more refined and subtle materials, usually concoctions of drugs with vegetable and mineral bases", "Gymnastics: The Ancient Tradition", in Kohn, L.(ed. in cooperation with Yoshinobu Sakade), *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques, Michigan Monographs in Chinese Studies*, 61 (1989), 225-261 (pp. 247-8).

<sup>23</sup> This reference comes from the citation in *Xianyuan bianzhu, zhong*:16b.

goats. He said to the man in charge, "Just tether them up in the house. Don't bother giving them food or drink." Then he left. The man in charge thought this very strange and said, "This gentleman has provided less than a *cun* of food for more than fifteen slaves and beasts. What should I do?"

After Jian left the man in charge gave food and drink to the slaves and servants. When the slaves tasted the food they spat it out and would not look at it. He also gave grass to the donkey and the goats but they avoided it and would not eat. Then they started to butt people. The man in charge was astounded.

More than a hundred days later the bodies of the slaves and servants were glowing and shining - different from when they had been eating. The donkeys and goats were fat. Shen Jian returned after three years and gave each of the slaves and servants and the donkey and goats another ball of medicine and they returned to eating and drinking as before. (Shen Jian)

Three special diets are also recorded in the biographies. Lu Ao, in the biography of Ruoshi, ate "crabs and clams" and Baishi Xiansheng - Mr White Stone - gained his name from his practice of eating white stones, a diet also practised by Jiao Xian:

Usually he ate white rocks which he divided up with other people. When he heated them they were like taro and then he ate them. (Jiao Xian)

The special diet of dried meat and jujubes is more widespread. Li Yiqi ate nothing else, Shen Xi was presented with these foods in Heaven and Dong Feng was feasted on them by Shi Xie after he raised him from the dead.<sup>24</sup> Li Shaojun claimed to have eaten dates "as big as melons".

Thus, there is clear agreement in these examples that diet is an important feature of the attainment of immortality and that certain diets are more favoured than others. It is not possible, however, to isolate a single model that an aspirant should follow, especially when the many biographies that make no mention of diet are considered. It is likely that where no special diet is noted, we can infer that the immortal did not eat anything out of the ordinary.

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<sup>24</sup> The *Taiping guangji* version of this story has Du Yan while *Siku Quanshu* has Du Xie. In *Sanguo zhi* this person's name is written as Shi Xie, and in the commentary, quoting *Shenxian zhuan*, Xie is also used. The *Sanguo zhi* version is preferred. See below for a translation of this incident. Shi Xie's biography can be found in *Sanguo zhi*, 49:1191-1194. See also Holmgren, J., *Chinese Colonization of North Vietnam: Administrative Geography and Political Development in the Tongking Delta, First to Sixth Centuries AD* (Canberra, 1980), pp. 72-77, Taylor, K.W., *The Birth of Vietnam* (Berkeley, 1980), pp. 70-80 and de Crespigny, R.R.C., *Generals of the South: The Foundation and Early History of the Three Kingdoms State of Wu* (Canberra, 1990), pp. 341-53 for details of Shi Xie's career.

### Medicines and Elixirs

Medicines and elixirs form an important part of immortality theory.<sup>25</sup> Two statements from *Shenxian zhuan* on the relative power of substances the adept can ingest are translated below. The first comes from the spirit's speech in the biography of Liu Gen:

For the pursuit of the Dao of immortality the essential thing is to take medicine. There are better and worse medicines - as there are several grades of immortals. But without knowledge of sexual practices, of circulating the *qi*, gymnastics and of the spirit medicines you will never attain immortality. Among the high grades of medicines are the nine cycled reversion elixir (*jiuzhuan huandan*) and Taiyi liquified gold (*taiyi jinye*). Everyone who takes these will ascend straight to Heaven before many days or months have passed. Next comes those of the types mica (*yunmu*) and realgar (*xiong huang*). Although they do not immediately allow you to ride on clouds and yoke dragons in harness, it is possible to order ghosts and spirits about as servants, to undergo transformations and gain long life. After this comes all the medicines derived from plants. They can cure the hundred diseases, supplement what is lacking, maintain your looks, allow you to abstain from grains and increase your *qi*. They do not enable you to avoid death. At best you may live until you are several hundred years old. At worst you will completely live out your endowment but no more. They are not strong enough to be relied on forever. (Liu Gen)

The second passage comes from the *Yinjun zixu* citation of Yin Changsheng's biography:

The Dao is in the spirit elixir.  
Circulating the *qi*, practising gymnastics,  
Looking up and looking down, extending and retracting,  
Ingesting substances from plants -  
These are able to lengthen your years  
But are unable to help you transcend the generations.  
(Yin Changsheng)

These two passages make clear that immortality does not simply mean the indefinite extension of life. That is certainly seen as preferable to dying at the age non-adepts accept as natural - and indeed a great deal of *Baopuzi* concerns substances that will achieve just this - but the true goal of the adept is to attain immortality itself and transcend the world of generational change.

The way that most of the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies refer to medicines and elixirs indicates the non-technical nature of the text. The two passages cited above are unusually

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<sup>25</sup> On this topic, see Akihori Akira, "Drug Taking and Immortality", Kohn, L.(ed. in cooperation with Yoshinobu Sakade), *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques*, *Michigan Monographs in Chinese Studies*, 61(1989), pp. 73-98.

specific in defining the classes of medicine necessary to the attainment of immortality,<sup>26</sup> most of the biographies simply do not contain the kind of information it would be possible to follow. One indication of this lack of interest in technical detail is the number of biographies where the substance ingested is referred to simply as "medicine" (*yao*): those of Chen Anshi, Feng Heng, Huang Chuping, Ji Zixun, Wei Shuqing, Liu An. In the discussion of elixirs below, the same observation could be made: those elixirs that are referred to by name are not explained as they are in, say, *Baopuzi*. The biographies are clearly not intended as any kind of instruction book. This is also clearly indicated in the biography of Taishan Laofu where we are told he made use of what is referred to as a spirit pillow (*shenzhen*). It contained thirty two items: twenty four of them were said to correspond to the twenty four (seasonal) *qi*, the other eight for the (directions of the) eight winds. None is named.

The second observation that can be made about medicines in the biographies is how broad the choice of named substances is. There are only two named substances that have more than two users. Atractylis root (*zhu*) is the chosen medicine of Chen Zihuang, Ge Xuan, Lu Nusheng and Taishan Laofu while the cypress or parts of it are favoured by four people: Zhao Qu (cypress fruit, *songzi*, cypress resin, *songzhi*), Kong Yuanfang (cypress resin), Huang Chuping (cypress, *songbai*), Huang Shanjun (cypress). The remainder of named substances have only one or two users each: deerhorn powder (*mijiao san*), Pengzu; water cassia (*shuigui*), Pengzu; *lingfei* powder (*lingfei san*), Dongguo Yannian; stone marrow (*shisui*), Wang Lie; lead (*yuan*), Wang Lie; solomon's seal root (*huang jing*), Feng Heng, Wang Lie; various flowers (*baicao hua*), Feng Gang; asparagus root (*tianmen dong*), Gang Shi; quicksilver (*shuiyin*), Feng Heng, Wu Yan; sesame seeds (*huma*), Lu Nusheng; mica (*yunmu*), Wei Shuqing (*wuse yunmu*), Pengzu (*yunmu fen*); *pachyma cocos* fungus (*fuling*), Huang Chuping, Kong Yuanfang; and cinnabar (*dansha*), Li Shaojun, Wang Yuan.

The third, and perhaps most striking, feature of the information we are given about these substances is that some of them are credited with producing immortality when according to the two passages quoted at the beginning of this section, and other Daoist sources, notably *Baopuzi*, they are incapable of performing this function. For instance, Chen Zihuang and his wife are both said to have gained immortality from eating atractylis root - a plant *Baopuzi* does not regard as powerful enough to confer immortality although it claims it can produce great effects:

Lin Ziming took atractylis for eleven years and his ears grew five *cun* long, his body became so light he could fly and he could leap across chasms more than twenty *zhang* wide.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, in the biography of Zhao Qu, the following passage indicates that other lesser substances are able to grant immortality. Zhao, stricken with leprosy, was abandoned by his family on a mountain but encountered three spirits who helped him:

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<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, they both occur in unusual positions in each biography. For the importance of the position of this speech in the Liu Gen biography see chapter four. The Yin Changsheng citation comes from a text quoted within the biography, see textual appendix.

<sup>27</sup> *Baopuzi*, 11:208.

The spirits then bestowed on him five *dou* each of cypress fruit and cypress resin and said "Take this. It will not only cure your illness but it will also enable you to transcend the generations." (Zhao Qu)

Huang Chuping's brother Chuqi is also said to have "taken nothing but cypress and *pachyma cocos* fungus"<sup>28</sup> and gained the Dao of immortality (*shenxian dao*). Moreover, the biography ends noting that "those who later gained immortality by taking these medicines numbered several tens of people". Again, although *Baopuzi* recommends its use he regards cypress as an inferior substance - it appears in seventeenth place in his hierarchy of medicines, below all those based on minerals.<sup>29</sup> The position of cypress and atractylis is summed up in a discussion of fasting in *Baopuzi*:

Refined cypress and atractylis are also able to protect the interior - it is simply that they do not equal the great medicines.<sup>30</sup>

There are fewer elixirs mentioned in *Shenxian zhuan* than the medicines cited above. While it is true that three elixirs appear once only - the water elixir (*shuidan*) of Li Zhongfu, the cloud fog elixir (*yunshuangdan*) of Nanjizi and the wine elixir (*jiudan*) of Ban Meng - there are a group of references that should be considered together. These are related to the spirit elixir (*shendan*) and liquified gold (*jinye*). Isabelle Robinet has argued for complex lines of transmission for these elixirs as well as others that she sees as linked with them.<sup>31</sup> We need not reexamine these networks and interconnexions in their entirety here - for the purposes of this study only those links that can be established from *Shenxian zhuan* biographies will be noted.

The fact that the spirit elixir and liquified gold are linked is most clearly seen in a text preserved in the *Daozang* that deals with them, *Taiqing jinye shendan jing*,<sup>32</sup> different parts of which are ascribed to Zhang Ling, Yin Changsheng and Ge Hong. In addition texts that are related to the spirit elixir and liquified gold are also linked with the nine tripod elixir scripture (*jiuding danjing*) in the following important passage from *Baopuzi*:

Formerly Zuo Yuanfang [Zuo Ci] refined his thoughts on Tianzhu shan and received the *Jindan xianjing* from a spirit. Because of the rebellions at the end of the Han he had no opportunity to blend [the elixir]. To escape the troubles he fled to Jiangdong<sup>33</sup> intending to dwell on a famous mountain and refine the Dao. My paternal great-uncle the Immortal Lord [Ge Xuan] received it from Yuanfang. In all he received

<sup>28</sup> *Baopuzi*, 11:199 says that cypress buried for one thousand years becomes *pachyma cocos* fungus.

<sup>29</sup> *Baopuzi*, 11:196.

<sup>30</sup> *Baopuzi*, 15:267.

<sup>31</sup> Robinet, I., *La Revelation du Shangqing dans l'Histoire du Taoisme*, 1, pp.10-11, 16-17. On these texts see also, Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanliu kao* (Beijing, 1985), pp.89-98.

<sup>32</sup> *Yunji qiqian*, 65:1a-8b and as DZ 582, HY 879.

<sup>33</sup> Jiandong is south of the Yangtze downstream from Wuhu in modern Anhui. In the Sanguo period this territory was all part of Wu.

the *Taiqing danjing* in three chapters, the *Jiuding danjing* in one chapter and the *Jinye danjing* in one chapter.<sup>34</sup>

The following references to these substances demonstrate that while they were relatively widespread it is impossible to show in *Shenxian zhuan* a line of transmission related to their use extending beyond one generation. This should not be taken to indicate that no such lines of transmission existed; simply that *Shenxian zhuan* appears interested only in the figure from whom an immortal personally received information.

Yin Changsheng's biography in *Shenxian zhuan* says that Ma Mingsheng bestowed a *Taiqing shendan jing* on Yin: the biography gives no details as to the elixir's recipe. Clearly, however, it referred to the production of gold as Ma Mingsheng transforms some earth into gold to demonstrate his powers to Yin and later Yin himself produces gold to relieve the poor. Later in the same biography, in the section cited from *Yinjun zixu*, Yin says:

In the first year of the Yanguang reign period of the Han (122 C.E.), I received the essential instructions of the immortal lord's spirit elixir (*Xianjun shendan yaojue*) on the north side of Xinye shan. (Yin Changsheng)

In Li Shaojun's biography the "method of smelting the spirit elixir" (*shendan luhuo zhi fang*) is bestowed on Li by Anqi Xiansheng. Again the link is made to the production of gold when, in his submission to Han Wudi, Li says "Cinnabar (*dansha*) can be transformed into gold. When the gold is made and ingested, you can ascend to immortality."

Sun Bo also is said to have blended the spirit elixir but there is no indication from whom he received it or to whom, if anyone, he transmitted it. Likewise, liquified gold (*jinye*) is found, with no information on transmission, in the biography of Baishi Xiansheng.

Zuo Ci, in his biography, is said to have obtained the *Jiudan jinye jing* from a stone chamber on Tianzhu shan. The connexion between Zuo Ci and Ge Xuan is made in the final line of the biography where it reads :

Later, Ci announced his intentions to Lord Immortal Ge [Ge Xiangong, that is Ge Xuan]: "I must enter Huoshan [another name of Tianzhu shan] and blend the Nine-cycled elixir (*jiuzhuan dan*)". He subsequently went off as an immortal. (Zuo Ci)

In his biography, Ge Xuan is said to have received the *Jiudan jinye xianjing*<sup>35</sup> from Zuo Ci.

Finally, Zhang Ling is reported to have obtained Huangdi's Nine Tripod Elixir Method (*Huangdi jiuding danfa*) but, again, no details of transmission are given.

#### Techniques

<sup>34</sup> *Baopuzi*, 4:71.

<sup>35</sup> *Yiwen lejju*, 78:1328 has *Jiudan ye xianjing*.

The same kind of heterogeneity that is found in what medicines and elixirs various immortals ingest is demonstrated, too, by what techniques they practise or prescribe; as with medicines and elixirs, most references do not provide any explanatory information. The biography of Pengzu is one of few in which techniques are stressed yet even here there is little that amounts to more than a list of practices - many of which are found nowhere else in the biographies:

As a rule, [Pengzu] obstructed his *qi* (*biqu*) and breathed internally (*neixi*). From dawn until noon he sat formally and rubbed his eyes, massaged his body, licked his lips and swallowed his spit, ingesting *qi* (*fuqi*) several tens of times. (Pengzu)

Several practices are reported in only one biography; *sishen* (thinking on the spirit) is found in the biography of Chen Anshi;<sup>36</sup> *cunshen* (visualization of the spirit), *shouyi* (protecting the one) and *zuo sangang liuji* (sitting in the three mainstays and the six strands) appear in the biography of Liu Gen. Of the more popular practices, *daoyin* (gymnastics) is reported in the biographies of Shen Jian, Zhang Ling and Wei Shuqing and *xingqi* (circulating *qi*) in those of Gan Shi, Liu Gen and Zhang Ling.

The inferiority to the great elixirs of some of these techniques, and of some of the medicines discussed above, is noted in the biography of Zhang Ling:

[Zhang Ling] said to his followers "Many of you have not yet disencumbered yourselves of common ways of thinking and are unable to leave the world behind. It is right that you could attain my teachings on circulating *qi*, gymnastics and sexual practice (*fangzhong*); or else you could get the recipes for ingesting vegetable medicines that will give you several hundred years of life; but only Wang Chang, and one who is to arrive later from the east, are suitable to receive the Grand Essentials of the Nine Cauldrons. (Zhang Ling)

Zhang Ling is not the only figure to recommend sexual practices. The term he used, *fangzhong*, literally "within the chamber", is found elsewhere only in the biography of Liu Gen but an alternative term *jiaojie*, "to deliver and receive" is found in the biographies of Baishi Xiansheng and Pengzu, both of whom insisted on its primacy:

[Baishi Xiansheng] based his practice on regarding the *jiaojie* Dao as primary and the medicine of liquified gold as superior. (Baishi Xiansheng)

Pengzu said, "...If the body does not know the *jiaojie* Dao, even ingesting medicines will be of no benefit." (Pengzu)

A more nuanced version of this view, however, is found in *Baopuzi*:

There were more than ten masters of the methods of *fangzhong*... These methods were transmitted orally by realized men to each other and originally were not written down. Even ingesting the famous medicines you will not gain long life if you do not know these essentials...Unless

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<sup>36</sup> In *Baopuzi*, 5:23:11, 18:94:7 *sishen* is linked with *shouyi*, *Yunji qiqian*, 55:1a-4b has a *sishen jue*.

the techniques in the oral instructions can be obtained, not one person in ten thousand will avoid injury or death in the process....Among those *daoshi* who only follow a single approach, some desire to pattern themselves on the immortals by confining themselves to *jiaojie* techniques without making the great medicines of gold and cinnabar. This is foolishness indeed!<sup>37</sup>

In the biography of Pengzu, after the sentence cited above, a justification for following a certain sexual regimen is given, along with more instructions on what practices people should follow:

Heaven and Earth attain the *jiaojie* Dao and that is why there is no point at which they will come to an end. It is because people have lost the *jiaojie* Dao that their period of existence is injured and harmed. If they can avoid the things that commonly do harm and attain the techniques of yin and yang - this is the Dao of No Death. Heaven and earth part in the daytime and come together at night - in one year there are three hundred and sixty meetings when their essential *qi* merge. This is why they can endlessly produce the ten thousand things. If people are able to pattern themselves on this they are able to continue for a long time. (Pengzu)

Only two figures are named as receiving a tradition from another: Sun Bo received the techniques of Mozi and Huangshijun the techniques of Pengzu. In this latter case what remains of the biography does little more than note Huangshijun's spiritual relationship with Pengzu.

Finally, the practice of *jingsi*, "refining one's thoughts" is attributed to four figures who receive biographies.<sup>38</sup> Jie Xiang and Liu Gen are recorded as "entering a mountain and refining their thoughts" while Zuo Ci "entered Tianzhu shan and refined his thoughts". In the biography of Zhang Ling he is said to have and "refined his thoughts and purified his will" (*jingsi lianzhi*).

It is in the area of diet, elixirs, medicines and techniques that the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies display a marked tendency to heterogeneity. The further one takes this analysis on these more detailed features of the biographies the less do they appear to share a common set of ideas. Immortals may eat nothing, abstain from certain foods, live on one or two special items or appear to eat as normal people do. They take different medicines and claim different effects from their ingestion. Although there are fewer elixirs than medicines named in the biographies, there are not many instances of information on transmission which would provide evidence of a shared complex of ideas. This variety among the biographies is also displayed in what techniques are used and, again, little stress is given to transmitted knowledge. It is also clear that an aspirant to immortality

<sup>37</sup> *Baopuzi*, 8:150.

<sup>38</sup> In her preface to Livia Kohn's *Seven Steps to the Tao: Sima Chengzhen's Zuowanglun* (Monumenta Serica monograph series XX, Sankt Augustin, 1987, p.11) Robinet notes that *jingsi* is recorded as being the same as *zuowang*, "sitting in oblivion" in *Sandong zhunang*, 5:2a-b (note that the page reference is misprinted as 5:20b in *Seven Steps to the Tao*). Chapter five of *Sandong zhunang* is called "*Zuowang jingsi pin*".



could find little helpful information in these records. Typically, medicines, elixirs and techniques are simply named, appearing as brief notices which seem peripheral to the main thrust of the texts.

## Extraordinary Powers

### Transformations

There are two broad categories of transformation (*bianhua*) found in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies: transformations of the immortal's own body and transformations of other objects. The latter category is in many ways simpler - a typical example is the transformation of goats into white rocks in the biography of Huang Chuping - and will be considered first. The biography of Nanjizi is almost solely a catalogue of such transformations. It is presented here in its entirety:

Nanjizi had the surname Liu and the given name Rong.

He could put flour into his mouth and make hen's eggs. He spat out several tens of them. When you boiled and ate them they were no different from hen's eggs. In the yolks they also had a few spots of flour like fingertips.

He took a cup and made an incantation over it. It turned into a tortoise. He boiled it and it was edible, with all its innards in place. Even though the cup became a tortoise shell, when it was boiled and the meat was taken out, the shell reverted to being a cup.

He took water and made an incantation over it and it became fine wine. Someone who drank it, became intoxicated, raised up his arms and became a large tree. People sometimes came and broke off its smaller branches to use as skewers. Kept inside for a few days they withered and went rotten like real wood.

He took cloud mist elixir and went off as an immortal. (Nanjizi)

Making food and wine is one of the most common forms of transformation: Zuo Ci, in a passage reminiscent of the biblical miracle, feeds "more than ten thousand men" from Liu Biao's army with what looked to be one person's ration of wine and dried meat. Ge Xuan makes wine from cut grass and dried deer meat from stones and dirt as well as producing unseasonal fruits - such as melons - in the winter and ice and snow in the summer for the comfort of his guests. There are several cases of fish being made to appear:

[Liu] Gang spat into a tub and his spit turned into a carp. His wife spat into the tub and hers became an otter which ate the fish. (Fan Furen)

Heaven and Earth darkened and a large amount of rain fell. The floor of the hall in which they were seated was over a *chi* deep in water. The Emperor [Sun Quan] said, "Is it possible for you to make fish in the

water?" [Ge] Xuan said, "It is possible." Again he wrote a talisman and submerged it in the water. After a short time more than one hundred large fish - each of them more than one or two *chi* long - swam in the water. The Emperor asked, "Can you eat them?" Xuan said, "You can." He took one from the water and prepared it and it was a real fish. (Ge Xuan)

The Chief of Wu [Sun Quan] discussed with [Jie Xiang] which kind of minced fish was the tastiest. Xiang said, "The *zi* fish is best." The Chief of Wu said, "I was talking about fish that come from local districts. That is a sea fish. Would it be possible to get one?" Xiang said, "It is possible." Then he ordered someone to go into the hall and dig a square hole. He filled it with water and asked for a hook. Xiang baited up a line and dangled it into the hole. After a short time he had succeeded in catching a *zi* fish. The Chief of Wu was amazed and delighted. "Is it edible?" he asked Xiang. Xiang said, "I caught it so Your Majesty could have fresh minced fish. Why would I dare catch something inedible?" Then he sent it to the kitchen to be chopped up. (Jie Xiang)

There are also two cases of transformation which appear, in general terms, to be alchemical. The first is the transformation of earth into gold by Ma Mingsheng that has already been cited from the biography of Yin Changsheng. The second is from the biography of Wang Yuan:

[Magu] requested a few grains of rice and she flung them down.<sup>39</sup>

Everyone watched as, falling to the ground, they turned into cinnabar.<sup>40</sup> [Wang] Fangping laughed and said, "Magu plays the games of youth. I have grown old and I do not enjoy these transformation tricks." (Wang Yuan)

Finally, there are two cases of transformations that, although they belong to the different categories that were set out at the beginning of this section, are parallel. In both a transformation is requested, in what would appear to be a contravention of proper etiquette, and in being realized, ends up as a punishment. The first comes from the biography of Ge Xuan:

Xuan had a meal with one of his guests. They spoke together about matters of transformation. The guest said, "When the meal is finished would you, Master, perform a particularly entertaining trick?" Xuan said "Sir, ought you be so incautious about what you want to see?" Then he spat out the rice that was in his mouth. All of it turned into hundreds of giant hornets that swarmed around Xuan's guest but did not sting anyone. After a good while Xuan opened his mouth and every one of them flew

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<sup>39</sup> Following this sentence *Taiping guangji* has "She said that the rice would rid her [the new baby of Cai Jing's younger brother and his wife] of impurities".

<sup>40</sup> *Yunji qiqian* has "true pearls" (*zhenzhu*) in common with the *Taiping guangji* "Magu" text. All other versions including "*Fuzhou Nanchengxian Magu shan xiantan ji*" - an unimpeachable early source - have "cinnabar" (*dansha*).

back in. Xuan chewed them up. This was because they were his rice.<sup>41</sup>  
(Ge Xuan)

The second category - where the immortal himself changes - comes from the biography of Luan Ba:

Once the prefect personally paid Ba a visit and pleaded with him to take up the position as the [official in the] Department of Merit. When he treated him with the courtesy due a teacher or friend Ba accepted. The prefect said, "I have heard that the Department of Merit possesses the Dao. Would it be possible to show me something marvellous?" Ba agreed. Then sitting calmly he passed through the wall, gradually assuming the form of cloud *qi*. After a short time Ba had completely disappeared. From outside there was a tiger's roar.<sup>42</sup> The tiger walked back into the office of the Department of Merit. People came to look at the tiger - and then it became Ba again. (Luan Ba)

There are a number of these relatively simple transformations of the immortal himself in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies. Liu An's eight worthies changed from old men into youths to prove their powers to Liu An's gatekeeper - they are said to have possessed the "Dao of transformation". Zuo Ci demonstrated the same ability when he assumed the guise of a sheep. Laojun himself, in Shen Xi's vision of heaven, underwent "several transformations" while Shen watched. And from the biography of Li Zhongfu:

There was someone Zhongfu knew who lived over five hundred *li* away and generally spread nets for a living. One day he caught a bird in one of the nets and recognized it as Zhongfu. After he spoke with Zhongfu, they parted. Zhongfu returned home the same day. (Li Zhongfu)<sup>43</sup>

Jie Xiang, it is reported, "could disguise himself by transforming himself into plants, trees, birds or animals." Later in the same biography Jie is also said to have taught this skill to Sun Quan:

The Ruler of Wu summoned him to Wuchang where he did him great honour and addressed him as Lord Jie. He ordered that a house be erected for him and supplied screens of embroidered silk. He bestowed one thousand *yi* of gold on him. He learnt the techniques of hiding his form from Xiang, trying it out when returning to the Rear Palace. He went in and out of the doors of the women's apartments and nobody saw him. With such methods of illusion he performed all sorts of transformations - more than could be counted. (Jie Xiang)

This kind of transformation is clearly a variety of disappearance. The biography of Sage Mother Dongling explicitly makes the connexion between transformations in

<sup>41</sup>This passage comes from *Yiwen leiju*, 78:1328.

<sup>42</sup>*Taiping guangji* has "people saw him turn into a tiger and they were shocked" rather than "From outside there was a tiger's roar".

<sup>43</sup>*Baopuzi*, 12:228 says that "Zhongfu adopted the shape of a wild duck".

general, shape changing and disappearance - although some care must be taken as the terminology used is somewhat obscure. She could "change her shape and transform and could appear and disappear wherever she pleased (*yin jian wufang*)".<sup>44</sup> Another probable case of disappearance is that of Ban Meng who could "sit in emptiness (*zuoxu*) and speak with people". The meaning of this would be obscure but for the parallel case of Li Zhongfu. He:

was able to become invisible using the pacing instructions... At first he was invisible for one hundred days, becoming visible after a year. Later he proceeded to become invisible for long periods but his voice could still be heard and he would have conversations with other people. He ate and drank as normal - it was simply that he could not be seen. (Li Zhongfu)

Huang Chuqi, in the biography of Huang Chuping, is credited with "being present when sitting, disappearing when standing" (*zuozai liwang*). That this is also an acquired skill related to shape changing or disappearance is made clear in *Baopuzi*:

Someone asked about the Dao of seclusion. Baopuzi replied, "There are five methods in the spiritual Dao. One of them is "being present when sitting, disappearing when standing". On the other hand they will not be of advantage in extending your years. If practised amongst men without good reason, it will be ridiculed and it is unwise to do this."<sup>45</sup>

The third of Liu An's eight worthies is said to have possessed this skill. In the biography of Huang Chuping, Huang Chuqi's power of "sitting and being present, standing and disappearing", is linked with his ability to cast no shadow in the middle of the day. In *Baopuzi* this ability is said to derive from taking the "lesser elixir" (*xiaodan*) - a cinnabar-based drug<sup>46</sup> - and "edible cinnabar".<sup>47</sup> These substances, along with peach-gum steeped in a solution of mulberry wood ash<sup>48</sup> and certain minerals called "seven lights" (*qi ming*) and "nine radiance fungus" (*jiu guang zhi*) are also credited with causing the body to glow, enabling the person to live to one thousand and to see in the dark.<sup>49</sup> (The "seven holes" and "nine holes" of these minerals are themselves luminous.) In the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies the bodies of Dongguo Yannian and Laojun (in Shen Xi's biography) are said to have glowed. It is possible that the ability of Dongguo Yannian and Zhao Qu to write in the dark is related to this, although in *Baopuzi* it is related simply to superior eyesight.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Baopuzi*, 19:337 says that the *Mozi wuxing ji* enables the adept to be "concealed and submerged in the directionless" (*yinlun wufang*).

<sup>45</sup> *Baopuzi*, 15:270. Other *Baopuzi* references are at 3:46, 3:51 (where the text cites a *Hou Han shu* which says that Wei Shang possessed this skill but the present *Hou Han shu* does not contain the reference), 9:173, 11:208, 14:259. *Baopuzi*, 19:335 lists a work called *Liwang jing*.

<sup>46</sup> *Baopuzi*, 4:86

<sup>47</sup> *Baopuzi*, 11:210.

<sup>48</sup> *Baopuzi*, 11:205.

<sup>49</sup> *Baopuzi*, 11:198.

<sup>50</sup> *Baopuzi*, 15: 274, 16:289.

Zuo Ci's transformation into a sheep was cited as an example of the immortal's ability to transform his own body. In fact, Zuo's abilities extended far beyond this. He also could create dual images of himself, bamboozling a jail-keeper, and simultaneously transform himself, and a whole town full of people, into men wearing dark headscarves and robes who were blind in one eye. Multiplication of the immortal's body is found in several other biographies. Zhang Ling could divide himself into several tens of bodies which simultaneously could receive guests and go boating. Ge Xuan's biography reports that, in a very similar way, he was able to receive, entertain and farewell various guests at the same time by multiplying his body. Ji Zixun represents the most extreme example of body splitting. In his biography, a student at the academy whose family lived near Ji was asked by a group of nobles who had heard about Ji's powers to arrange a meeting with him. Ji agreed, as the student had been promised easy promotion, and made an appointment to see them:

He [Ji Zixun] arrived at the appointed time. In all twenty three houses there was a Zixun and all the court officers maintained that Zixun had come to their house first. The next day he went to court and each asked Zixun what time he had gone to their house. All twenty three had seen him at the same time. There was no difference in how he was dressed or how he looked. It was only in what he had said in reply to the thoughts of each host that there was a difference. (Ji Zixun)

#### Extraordinary Bodies

The bodies of immortals become extraordinary but the ways in which they are different from normal people's bodies are not always the same. Most commonly, the signs of aging have been expunged from them. Typically, the colour of their hair, the presence of teeth (or the fact that they have regrown) and the youthfulness of their complexion is commented upon. These observations are so widespread in *Shenxian zhuan* that no specific instances need be given.

Secondly, the bodies of immortals often appear to have abilities beyond those of normal bodies. Taishan Laofu and Lu Nüsheng could walk three hundred *li* in a day, Baishi Xiansheng, three to four hundred *li* in a day and Ji Zixun, two thousand *li* in half a day. Lu Nüsheng could, like several other immortals, run at great speed. She is reported to have been able to run as fast as a roebuck; Huangluzi could run as fast as a horse. Wang Lie's steps were as if he were flying and, no matter how fast Sun Ce tried to chase him, Zuo Ci always managed to stay in front of him. As well as great speed, Huangluzi possessed great strength: at the age of two hundred and eighty he was able to lift one hundred *jun*. Similarly, Zhao Qu at more than seventy could lift heavy weights and Hugong was able to carry a quantity of wine with one finger that ten men had been unable to lift. Wang Lie "could draw back a bow of two stone and shoot over one hundred paces. Of ten arrows that he shot off, nine would break the target." Kong Yuanfang could turn himself upside down while grasping his staff.

Thirdly, immortals are often reported not to have been subject to the susceptibilities of normal people. Like the realized man in *Zhuangzi*, they could "enter water without getting

wet and enter fire without getting burnt".<sup>51</sup> Li Gen and Sun Bo are reported to have had precisely these abilities while Wang Yao was only impervious to water. Ge Xuan's powers are described graphically:

He was able to sit above a roaring bonfire - when all the wood had been consumed his clothes and cap remained unburnt. He would drink a *hu* of wine then go and sleep in a spring or cataract. When the wine had worn off and he left, his body was not wet at all. (Ge Xuan)

Jiao Xian could withstand both fire and snow. A characteristic which may be related to this is the sometimes reported propensity of immortals to go naked or semi-naked. This often seems to be related to being hirsute.<sup>52</sup> Liu Gen, for instance:

did not wear any clothes in winter or summer. His body hair was over one or two *chi* long. His complexion was that of a fourteen or fifteen year old. His eyes were deep-set and he had a great deal of facial hair - all yellow and three or four *cun* long. When he sat with others, occasionally he would suddenly be wearing a high cap and dark clothes but nobody noticed him changing his clothes. (Liu Gen)

Winter and summer [Sun Deng] wore a single layer of clothes. During periods of great cold people would come to look at him as he would cover his body with his own hair which was over one *zhang* long. (Sun Deng)

Winter and summer [Jiao Xian] wore a single layer of clothes. (Jiao Xian)

Furthermore, four biographies describe emanations rising above the heads of their subjects:

[Huangluzi] constantly had multi-coloured *qi* above his head. (Huangluzi)

White light rose from [Taishan Laofu's] head for several *chi*. (Taishan Laofu)

Purple *qi* rose luxuriantly for more than a *zhang* above [Wu Yan's] head. (Wu Yan)

Purple clouds rose luxuriantly above [Wei Shuqing]. (Wei Shuqing)

It is, perhaps, significant that the last three stories concern encounters with Han Wudi - in the case of Taishan Laofu and Wu Yan it seems to be their auras that attract the emperor's attention.

Finally, there are three cases of strange bodily composition - perhaps wondrous physiognomy - in the biographies. Ji Zixun said that the reason the nobles wanted to see him was that he had "doubled pupils and eight colours [in his eyebrows]".<sup>53</sup> Ruoshi is

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<sup>51</sup> *Zhuangzi*, 3 *shang*:226.

<sup>52</sup> This is possibly a remnant of the belief that immortals were covered with feathers.

<sup>53</sup> Doubled pupils refers to the emperor Shun, while Yao was said to have eight coloured eyebrows (see, for instance, *Huainanzi*, 19:9a).

reported to have had "deepset eyes and a dark nose; the shoulders of a hawk and a stretched out neck; broad above and narrow below." Finally Magu's fingernails are described as being shaped like bird's claws.<sup>54</sup>

### Control

Another facet of the extraordinary powers of immortals related in some biographies but which is by no means universally reported is the ability to control objects, animals and people in their environment. *Baopuzi* explains this control in terms of *qi*: *qi*, he says, pervades all existence and nothing comes into being without it.<sup>55</sup> The practice of circulating *qi* (*xing qi*) aids in the preservation of health and the avoidance of evil influences. The people of Wu and Yue used a method of "inhibition spells" (*jinzhou*) which increased their *qi* and thus granted immunity from epidemic diseases. The unwelcome activities of evil ghosts and mountain spirits could be alleviated through the use of *qi*:

Those who are skilled at inhibition (*jin*) use *qi* to inhibit these activities and so they cease. Thus *qi* can be used to inhibit ghosts and spirits.

Similarly, those who enter mountain forests can use *qi* to inhibit the activities of dangerous animals. Tigers, leopards and snakes can be "made to stay prostrate and not be able to rise". *Qi* can be used to inhibit bleeding, to aid in the restoration of broken bones, to prevent being cut by swords and to cure snake bite. Moreover:

Recently people like Zuo Ci and Zhao Ming have used *qi* to inhibit rivers so that they flow upstream for one or two *zhang*. When a fire was lit on a thatched roof, food was cooked and eaten but the thatch did not catch fire.<sup>56</sup> They drove large nails seven or eight *cun* into a pillar, blew on them with *qi* and the nails shot straight out. They used *qi* to inhibit water from boiling: they threw more than one hundred coins in and told someone to reach in and retrieve them - yet his hand was not scalded. Water on which an inhibition had been placed was left uncovered in the courtyard and during severe cold it did not freeze. They were able to inhibit cooking throughout a whole village so nothing could be steamed. They inhibited dogs from barking.

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<sup>54</sup> Like being covered by hair, Magu's fingernails point to a link between immortals and birds. Kominami Ichirō has raised the possibility that belief in immortality is connected to ancestral spirit worship. He points to the prevalence of birds - an ancient symbol of ancestral spirits - as well as the return of Wang Yuan on the seventh day of the seventh month - a date associated with the return of ancestral spirits to their temple - to substantiate his claim. See Kominami, "Gishin jidai no shinsen shisō: Shinsenden o chūshin toshite", p. 574. Birds appear in *Shenxian zhuan* either as the immortals in bird form or as envoys of them in the biographies of Jie Xiang, Dongling Shengmu, Dong Feng, Li Zhongfu and Maojun. On the connexions between birds and immortals see Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, pp.10-18.

<sup>55</sup> The following descriptions and translations come from *Baopuzi*, 5:114-5.

<sup>56</sup> For a parallel example of these skills, see the record of Xu Deng and Zhao Bing in *Soushen ji* (Beijing, 1985), 2:21 and in *Houhan shu*, 82 *xia*:2741.

There are parallels for many of these occurrences in the biographies of *Shenxian zhuan*. Inhibition (*jin*) is explicitly referred to in the biographies of Madame Fan where she inhibits fire and a tiger. For example, Huangluzi:

was skilled at the Dao of inhibiting with *qi*. If he inhibited tigers and wolves or any of the hundred insects they could not move. Flying birds could not take off. Rivers would run upstream for one *li*.(Huangluzi)

Jie Xiang:

was able to light a fire on a thatched roof in order to cook a chicken yet not burn the thatch.<sup>57</sup> He could command that all the cooking in the households within one *li* would not produce cooked food and that their dogs and chickens would not cackle or bark for three days. He could command that all the people in a market sit and be unable to rise.(Jie Xiang)

In other cases, events are described which appear to be related to these activities but for which no explanation is given. For instance, Li A restored a knife to its former shape after breaking it and mended his own broken leg. Zuo Ci moved an ox into the branches of a tree and made a wine cup bob about in the middle of the air. Maojun made a staff his father was about to strike him with disintegrate. Finally, Ge Xuan seems to have made rivers stop flowing and to flow backwards; to have caused a washerwoman to run away when she had no idea what was happening; to have made coins leap out from a well into which he had thrown them and so on. He is also reported to have warmed his guests with a fire produced from *qi* flaming out of his mouth.

#### Other Abilities

There are three cases of the immortal's body being able to enter walls or the earth. In addition to Luan Ba passing through a wall, translated above, Ban Meng could sink bit by bit into the ground until only her hat remained on the surface and Sun Bo could walk into cliffs.

The ability to fly is commonly reported. Ban Meng, Dong Feng, Sage Mother Dongling and Shen Jian all could. Ge Xuan and Heshangong are reported to have levitated as well.

There are two cases of immortals creating extraordinary writing. When Wang Yuan refused to serve Huandi of the Eastern Han, he wrote his reasons on the palace gate. The emperor was angered by this and ordered them to be scraped off but the more the characters were scraped the clearer they got. Ban Meng is reported to have been able to write characters by blowing ink from her mouth onto paper. Her breath powers were also displayed in her ability to blow tiles from one person's house into another and to blow mulberries back on to the trees from which they came. She could also poke her fingers into the ground to make wells from which water could be sucked.

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<sup>57</sup> *Taiping guangji* does not specify exactly what does not get burnt. The text is emended on the basis of the citation at *Taiping yulan*, 996:6a.



There are two examples related to shrinking the earth. Li Yiqi made a miniature replica "just over a *cun* in length" of the state out of shovelled earth which had all the palaces and markets in place. It disappeared a short time later. Fei Changfang was able to "shrink the veins of the earth" so that one thousand *li* of territory could be viewed at one time.

Four immortals succeeded in relieving drought. No details are given as to Dong Feng's method. Ge Xuan made rain by placing a talisman on the earth altar of the region suffering drought. Huangluzi was able to go into the depths to order the dragons out to make rain. Fei Changfang released the spirit lord of Donghai from the confinement into which he had put him as a punishment and ordered him to produce rain.

There are three examples of great distances being covered in mysterious ways. Li Yiqi could provide someone with a talisman and elixir texts which, when held under their arms, enabled them to go one thousand *li* and back in a single day. Jie Xiang was able to send someone from Wu to Chengdu using as transport a bamboo staff in which he had placed a talisman and have him return with local ginger in the time it took to mince a fish. Luan Ba, while in the capital, spat wine, which turned into alcohol-scented rain, to put out a fire in a temple his followers had dedicated to him in Shu.

### Healing

One of the most commonly reported abilities of immortals is healing disease, but the various biographies reveal little in common between the techniques of different individuals. As has been shown in other parts of this chapter, the biographies are characterized by heterogeneity and an emphasis on description over instruction. The situation is no different with the healing of disease. Often the description of a cure, or the ability to cure, is presented without elaboration: Feng Heng is reported simply to have used "medicine". Gan Shi did *not* use acupuncture or moxibustion. Li Changzai could cure serious diseases in three days, mild ones in one. Chen Chang cured with "sacrificial water". Sage Mother Dongling, Shen Xi and Shen Jian simply cured people - no details of how they did it are given. In several other cases the wondrous nature of the cure is stressed. Sun Bo healed by pointing at people. Huangluzi could cure from a long distance - all he needed was the person to send him his name. Zhao Qu's leprosy was cured with medicine delivered by a spirit. It is clear in these cases, and those described below, that the description of healing is provided as a demonstration of the power of the immortal, not as a model for imitation. The cures often appear to have been recorded by people who were not privy to the immortal's secrets, however where a more detailed description is provided the methods employed by immortals implicitly demonstrate the variety of theories of disease current at the time.

The intervention of beings from the other world in disease is implicated in one set of descriptions of cures, namely exorcisms. Ge Xuan, Wang Yao, Dong Feng, Defender Chen (in Wang Yuan's biography) and Fei Changfang (in Hugong's) all cure through exorcism but with the exception of Defender Chen and Fei Changfang their methods appear dissimilar. Ge's biography simply reports that he cured disease and banished or slaughtered evil spirits. If the problem was caused by evil spirits, Wang Yao would draw a prison on the ground and make the spirit return to its normal form by calling it. The

spirit would then be imprisoned and destroyed and the sick person cured. Defender Chen was told that he could use the talisman Wang Yuan bestowed on him to:

"avoid disasters and cure diseases. If the sick have not yet lived out their fate and have committed no transgressions, take this talisman to their house and they will be cured. If there is a perverse ghost eating blood and creating disasters, tie the talisman around your waist to command the altar official. He will capture the ghost and send it away. You will know in your heart how serious it is and cure the person with your thoughts."  
(Wang Yuan)

Like Defender Chen, Fei Changfang received a talisman when he proved unsuitable for immortality and was, similarly, instructed:

"Tie this around your waist and you can command the ghosts and spirits and they will always serve you. It will be possible for you to cure disease and avoid disasters." (Hugong)

Finally, Dong Feng makes use of a "white water lizard" in his exorcism:

The prefect had a daughter who was possessed by an evil spirit (*jingxie*). The doctor's cures proved inefficacious so he sought out Feng to cure her. If Feng was able to heal his daughter he would present her to him to wait on him with comb and towel [that is, to be his wife]. Feng agreed to this. He ordered that a white water lizard several *zhang* long be summoned. He had it walk on dry land in the direction of the sick girl's gate and ordered a servant to chop it in half. The girl's illness was healed and Feng received her as his wife. (Dong Feng)

The closest that the biographies come to a consistent cure for a given condition is the prescription of licking for ulceration but the two cases of this are rather dissimilar. It is unclear whether the first - in the biography of Li Babai which has already been cited - is truly a normal disease as Li Babai inflicts it on himself to test Tang Gongfang. The second, from the biography of Dong Feng, concerns "natural" ulceration but is equally unhelpful as a model to emulate:

Later he returned to Yuzhang and lived at the foot of Lushan where there was a person who suffered from ulcers and was on the verge of death. He paid a visit to Feng in a carriage. He kowtowed and begged pity. Feng made the sick man sit inside a room and wrapped him up in five layers of cotton cloth so that he could not move. The sick man said, "At first I felt something come and lick my body. The pain was intolerable as it sucked everywhere. Its tongue was about one *chi* wide. It smelled like a cow. I did not know what kind of beast it was. After a long time the animal left and Feng took me to a pond <sup>58</sup> and washed me in the water and sent me away. He instructed me, 'Before long it will heal. Do not face the wind.'" More than ten days later the sick man's body was red and

<sup>58</sup> The Ming abbreviated edition of *Taiping guangji* adds "removed the wraps" here.

skinless and was very ulcerated but the pain stopped when it was washed in water. After twenty days the skin had grown and was healed and his body was like congealed fat. (Dong Feng)

Three other incidents should be cited in this section, neither of which have any parallels in the other biographies. The first is from the biography of Liu Gen where Liu rid the commandery of an epidemic attributed to Taisui, the great year star, by having the local official pour wine over sand that had been placed in a hole in the ground. Taisui is, in the words of Hou Ching-lang, "chief of the spirits of pestilence".<sup>59</sup> The second describes one way Wang Yao cured disease:

Wang Yao was particularly skilled at healing disease - there was no disease he could not cure. He did not use sacrifices, nor did he employ talismanic water or moxibustion. When he cured disease he simply used a cotton cloth eight *chi* long. [The sick person] spread it out on the ground, sat on it and did not eat or drink. In a short time they were cured and were able to get up and leave. (Wang Yao)

The final incident describes a procedure by Lord Mao which appears in his biography after his ascent to heaven. It may, therefore, represent an addition to the biography but as it has been passed down in *Sandong zhunang* it goes back to the early Tang at latest:

[Maojun] healed on Mao shan. When someone was sick and went to petition him, the petitioner would normally place ten boiled hen's eggs within the screens. After a short time Lord Mao would fling them back out one by one. When they were returned, they had to be broken. If none had a yolk inside the sick person would be cured; if they were filled with dirt he or she would not. This was considered the normal method of enquiry. The eggs were as before: none of them had been cracked. (Maojun)

### Raising the Dead

Bringing the dead back to life might be regarded as the ultimate form of healing. It is practised by almost as many immortals as those whose healing exploits are recorded in *Shenxian zhuan*. One of the biographies, that of Feng Gang, of which only a fragment appears to have survived, is almost entirely concerned with the means Feng used to raise the dead. As the medicine he used appears also to have been an elixir, there is an implied connexion between healing, raising the dead and immortality. In its probably fragmentary state it reads:

Feng Gang was a native of Yuyang. He commonly plucked all varieties of flowers and encased them, covering the lid with mud. He would leave them sealed from the beginning of the first month until the end of the ninth month, then bury them for one hundred days and cook them over nine fires. When he placed this medicine in the mouths of those who had died suddenly, they would come back to life. Gang constantly

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<sup>59</sup> Hou Ching-lang, "The Chinese Belief in Baleful Stars" in Welch and Seidel, *Facets of Taoism*, 193-228 (p. 209). See pp. 200-209 for a detailed study of Taisui. See also Chard, "Divination and Dream Interpretation in the *Ch'ien-fu Lun*", 25-30. Liu Gen's biography is translated in full in chapter four.

ingested this medicine and for several hundred years did not age. Later he entered Difei shan and departed as an immortal. (Feng Gang)

Despite the fact that the practice of raising the dead is relatively common, the circumstances in which it is done vary considerably, as was the case with healing the sick. One example of raising the dead from the biography of Dong Feng is especially important as it reveals a rare vision of the other world of the dead. Here Dong Feng recalls the incident:

"Shi Xie was Inspector of Jiaozhou [ie Hanoi] and died from poisoning. Three days after that I was there according to my schedule so I went and gave him three tablets of medicine. I put them in his mouth and poured water in. Then I made someone lift his head and shake it about until they dissolved. Within a short time his hands and feet started to move and his colour gradually returned. After half a day he was able to sit up. Four days later he could speak. He said, 'When I died it was suddenly like a dream. I saw ten men in black clothes come, lift me up and take me off in a cart. We entered a large red gate and I was transferred straight into a prison cell. Each of the cells had a single door and could only hold one person. They put me inside one of the cells and then sealed it from outside with heaped up earth. I did not see light from outside again. Suddenly I heard voices outside saying, "Taiyi has sent an envoy to come and summon Shi Xie." I also heard the earth at the door being removed. After a good length of time I was led out and saw a carriage with horses and a red umbrella. There were three men sitting together on the cart. A man who held a staff instructed me to get on. We returned to the gate and that is when I woke up and was alive again.'" (Dong Feng)

The next example, also from the biography of Dong Feng, stresses the fact of raising the dead rather than any method employed:

Feng lived on the mountain but he did not cultivate the fields. Each day he cured diseases for people but did not ask for any money. Those he cured of severe diseases were made to plant five apricot trees, those cured of mild diseases one... Later, when the apricots were ripe, he built a thatched granary in the forest and made an announcement to the people of that time, "If you want to buy apricots you don't have to pay me - simply put a potful of grain into the granary and go and take a potful of apricots." There were always people who took more apricots than the amount of grain they put in. All the tigers in the forest would appear and come roaring after them. In their terror, they would hurriedly offload apricots as they fled. They tipped them out by the side of the road and by the time they reached home the amount of apricots they had left would be the same as the amount of grain they had contributed. Once someone stole some of the apricots. The tiger chased him home and chewed him to death. His family members knew the apricots were stolen. They returned them to

Feng, kowtowed and apologised for the transgression, whereupon he was brought back to life. (Dong Feng)

Another example comes from the biography of Ji Zixun:

Seeing a neighbour holding a baby, Zixun<sup>60</sup> asked to hold it. The baby slipped from his hands, fell to the ground and died. The neighbours up to then had honoured Zixun so they did not dare show their grief, and buried it. More than twenty days later Zixun went to ask them to about it: "Have you been missing your child?" The neighbour replied, "When the child's fated span was read, it was foretold that it would die before it grew up. In the days that have passed since it died I have not been able to miss it." Zixun then went outside and came back with the child in his arms. The whole household said the child was dead and did not dare take it from him. Zixun said, "There is no harm in taking it - it is your child." The child recognized its mother and laughed joyfully at the sight wanting its mother to take it and hold it. They were still suspicious so when Zixun left, the mother and father went together to look at the child they buried - all there was in the coffin was a clay figure of a child six or seven inches long. The child grew to adulthood. (Ji Zixun)

In two interesting variants Li A raises himself from the dead, and Ge Xuan brings a fish back to life:

[Gu] Qiang followed [Li] A when he returned to Chengdu. Before they got there they happened to come across a man rushing along with a cart. A put his foot under it and the bones were run over and broken. He died. Qiang kept watch over him. After a short time A got up and rubbed his foot with his hand and restored it to normal. (Li A)

[Ge] Xuan saw someone selling<sup>61</sup> fish by the side of a river. Xuan asked the fish-seller, "I wish to take the trouble to send this fish to the place of the river god. Would that be possible?" The fish-seller said, "The fish is already dead. How can you do that?" Xuan said, "It's not hard." The fish-seller gave the fish to him. Xuan inserted some paper with vermilion writing on it into the fish's gut and flung it into the river. Shortly after the fish leapt back onto the river bank and spat out some ink writing. It was as green as leaves on a tree.<sup>62</sup> Then it flew off. (Ge Xuan)

Finally, in only one biography can we read of any restrictions on who may or may not be raised from the dead. Lord Mao responded to his father's question "Can you raise the dead?" by saying:

<sup>60</sup> The text simply reads Xun here.

<sup>61</sup> *Taiping guangji* has *mai* ( 買 ). The text is emended on the basis of *Chuxue ji*, 21:520 and *Taiping yulan*, 935:9a.

<sup>62</sup> Accepting the reading of *mu* ( 木 ) from *Chuxue ji*, 21:520 rather than *Taiping guangji's da* ( 大 ).

If the crimes of the dead are grave indeed and they have accumulated evil, it is not possible for them to obtain life. If they have had their lives cut short through an unexpected injury, it is possible to raise them.  
(Maojun)

### Precognition

Several immortals can predict the future. Zhang Ling, for instance knows that his disciple Zhao Sheng is about to arrive; Zuo Ci knew that Cao Cao was going to kill him; Wang Yuan is said to have been able "to foretell the times when the empire would flourish or decline and knew of auspicious and inauspicious events in the nine regions as if they were pictured on his palm." There are also two cases where knowledge of a future disaster for political figures is passed on to them using a kind of encoded message. One recipient understands the message; the other does not. First, from the biography of Sun Deng:

When Yang Jun was Grand Tutor he sent his rapid carriage to welcome [Sun Deng]. Sun made no reply to the inquiries. Jun handed him a cotton gown which Sun accepted. Leaving through the gate, Sun immediately went over to someone and borrowed a knife and cut the gown. Everyone was astonished. And then he put it down at Jun's gate and chopped it into pieces. At the time people said Sun was mad. Later they realized that Jun was going to be executed and that this was a sign of it. (Sun Deng)

The second example is from the biography of Li Yiqi:

When Liu Xuande ( i.e. Liu Bei ) was about to attack Wu to avenge the death of Guan Yu he sent for Yiqi. When Yiqi arrived, he was treated with great honour. Liu asked whether it was auspicious or inauspicious to attack Wu. Yiqi did not reply but only asked for paper. He drew several hundred thousand soldiers, mounts and weapons and then destroyed them one by one. He said "*duo*". Then he drew a large man and buried him in the earth. He then went straight back.

Bei was not pleased. As things turned out he was routed by the Wu army. More than one hundred thousand men had been assembled but only several hundred returned. Equipment and supplies were all used up. Xuande was full of rage. He died in Yongan palace. (Li Yiqi)

Li Yiqi also performed a more general kind of precognitive service:

Yiqi said little. When asked something he did not reply. When the people of Shu were in great distress they went to question him. There are constant indications of auspicious and inauspicious that they simply divined from his face. If he was joyful then the answer was "good", if griefstricken then it was "evil".<sup>63</sup> (Li Yiqi)

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<sup>63</sup> This bears a striking resemblance to what *Baopuzi* (9:174) says Li A did. The passage concerned reads, "When asked him about things, A would not utter a word - however the answer could be divined from

### Power over spirits

In other parts of this chapter examples have been given of meetings with immortals and spirit envoys, otherworldly meals and retinues of heavenly officials. This is often referred to simply as controlling or being able to summon ghosts and spirits, as in the biographies of Fan Furen (speaking of her husband Liu Gang) and Zuo Ci. A notable example of this ability comes from the biography of Liu Gen where Liu is challenged to produce ghosts by a local official who regarded Liu as a sorcerer. Liu has the official's dead parents arrive to scold him for treating Liu so badly. A month later the official, his wife and son were all killed by these ghosts.<sup>64</sup>

Another more adversarial form of interaction with the spirit world which appears in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies is exorcism. There appear to be three kinds of spirit that require exorcism: those that possess a human being and cause illness, those that take the form of a human being and those which haunt a particular place. Exorcizing a person is regarded as a form of healing. In the section of this chapter devoted to healing the examples of Ge Xuan, Wang Yao, Dong Feng, Defender Chen (in Wang Yuan's biography) and Fei Changfang (in Hugong's biography) were cited. The two experts at the second and third varieties of exorcism were undoubtedly Ge Xuan and Luan Ba.

Xuan was once passing by a temple. The resident spirit always made people who were coming or going get down from their carriages within one hundred paces of the temple. Inside there were several tens of large trees with a flock of birds perched in them. No-one dared offend them. When Xuan went by in his carriage he did not get down out of it. In a moment there was a strong wind which whirled around, chasing Xuan's carriage. The dust blotted out the sky. The people who followed him all scattered. Xuan was very angry and said, "Small evils dare to approach! I raise my hand and stop the wind!" The wind stopped. Xuan returned and threw a talisman into the temple. All the birds perched in the trees fell to the ground dead. Although it was the height of summer, all the trees in the temple had rotted within a few days. Subsequently a fire started in one of its rooms and the whole temple burned to the ground. (Ge Xuan)

In the biography of Luan Ba there is also an example of an immortal cleansing a temple of unwelcome spirits:

Later [Luan Ba] was recommended as Filially Pious and Incorrupt and appointed as a Gentleman-of-the-Palace. He was transferred to be prefect of Yuzhang. In a temple on Lushan there was a spirit which spoke to people from behind a curtain, drank wine and threw the cup in the air. People would come to beg for blessings. It was able to split the wind on

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how A looked. If he was happy, it was auspicious; if he looked grave, it was inauspicious. If A smiled broadly, then there would be great blessings but if he sighed faintly there would be deep grief. By observing him like this there was no need to enquire after the future." This passage is included in the *Taiping guangji* version of Li A's biography but not in *Yunji qiqian's*.

<sup>64</sup> This biography is translated in full in chapter four.

rivers and lakes to fill the sails so that one boat would pass another. When Ba arrived in the commandery he went to the temple. The spirit was nowhere to be seen. Ba said, "Temple Ghost, you pretend to be a heavenly official but you have long been injuring the common people. Your crimes will be punished and you will be handed over to the Department of Merit because of this. I will catch you and expel you myself. If you are not punished in time I fear you may later roam the empire drinking the blood sacrifice and harming the law-abiding folk. I upbraid you with repeated prayers." Then, he gave a circularizing order to the spirits of the mountains and rivers and the gods of soil and grain to seek out the ghost's tracks no matter where he went.

With that the ghost left, went to Qijun and turned into a student who loved to converse on the five classics. The prefect gave him his daughter in marriage. Ba knew where the ghost was and sent a memorial asking for permission to leave his post as Commandery Administrator to go and catch it. The ghost did not appear. Ba said to the prefect, "Your worthy son-in-law is not human. He is an old ghost that used to pretend to be a temple spirit. Now he has left there and come here. That is why I have come to apprehend him." The prefect summoned it but it did not appear. Ba said, "Making it appear is very easy." He asked the prefect for a brush and inkstone and set them up on a table. Then he wrote a talisman. After he had written it he let out a long whistle. People suddenly came from nowhere to lead the talisman away. Nobody could see their bodies and everyone was astounded.

When the talisman arrived the student burst into tears and said to his wife, "I am going. I must die." After a short time the student himself brought the talisman into the room. He saw Ba but did not dare face him. Ba abused him and said, "Old Ghost, why don't you return to your own shape." Responding to these words the student changed into a fox, knocked his head on the ground out of respect and begged for his life. Ba ordered him to be killed. Everyone saw a knife come down out of thin air and the fox's head fall to the ground. The prefect's daughter had already borne a son and it turned into a fox. It was also killed. Ba left and returned to Yuzhang.

In the commandery there were a lot of ghosts. Many single-footed ghosts harmed people. After Ba arrived none of these calamities happened and all uncanny and evil occurrences disappeared. (Luan Ba)

### Concluding Remarks

In the section of the last chapter concerned with comparing *Shenxian zhuan* with the inner chapters of *Baopuzi* the observation was made that while the two texts share some



similar interests *Baopuzi* is concerned to explain how procedures related to gaining immortality are performed while *Shenxian zhuan* stresses the lives of individuals. This is not to say that *Baopuzi* has no biographical material and *Shenxian zhuan* has no instructions but it does provide a broad categorization which helps to understand the nature of the information in both texts.

As far as *Shenxian zhuan* is concerned, this leads to the question: if the biographies were not intended to function as models for imitation, what was their purpose? This question need not have a single answer - the compilers of the biographies may not all have had the same motivation - but it would appear that one answer is revealed in the preface attached to *Shenxian zhuan*. This preface, of course, is of dubious provenance but even if we regard it as a late addition it can be seen as posing the question that *Shenxian zhuan* seeks to answer. Teng Sheng, Ge Hong's interlocutor, asks, "You say, Master 'It is possible to attain transformation into an immortal; it is possible to study how never to die.' Were there really people in ancient times who achieved immortality?" *Shenxian zhuan* can be seen, then, primarily as proof of the existence of immortals. In doing so it proclaims the possibility of the attainment of immortality in much the same way as biographies of filial sons or exemplary women demonstrate what some people have attained in the past.<sup>65</sup> In these other cases there are separate works which give instruction on the proper way to become a filial son or an exemplary woman; the case of immortals is no different. *Shenxian zhuan* has a similar relationship to *Baopuzi* as these other biographies do in relation to manuals of proper behaviour.

One form of evidence of an immortal's status that can be provided are feats beyond the capacity of ordinary people. Simply providing a record of these feats can be seen as proof that a particular person must have attained a state beyond ordinary humanity. Thus, evidence that someone was seen by successive generations provides the basis for assuming that person overcame death; being witnessed in places far apart on the same day showed their powers of superhuman speed; changing one thing into another demonstrated they had powers over the phenomenal world and so on. Simple lists of powers would appear to be one basic form of proof that a particular figure achieved a state beyond the normal. However, this basic form of biography could still be placed firmly in the tradition of the "strange occurrence" or "wondrous event" literature were it not for a statement of the attainment of immortality. It is true that in some cases such a statement is not present - the notable example of Jiao Xian is discussed in chapter five - but a concluding line such as "and he departed as an immortal" makes the claim that the subject was not simply special but was special in a significant way. A more developed form of evidence can be seen as an amplification of the simple statement of the attainment of immortality. This is found in those biographies where the mode of attainment of immortality is specified and sometimes described. Finally, the recorded words of subjects after they have attained immortality are perhaps the most powerful evidence that they have transcended normal human life.

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<sup>65</sup> The importance to Ge Hong of this possibility is seen in the biography of Laozi where he argues that Laozi cannot have possessed a cosmic nature rather than a human one because this would mean that ordinary folk could not aspire to immortality, an option he regards as unacceptable. See chapter five for an extended discussion of this biography.

This basic similarity of motivation between the biographies collected in *Shenxian zhuan*, however, cannot obscure the fact that there are some fundamental differences in ideas on specific questions related to immortality. The body of this chapter has catalogued many of the claims made on behalf of their subjects in the biographies and it is clear that very basic ideas of what the immortal state constituted, how it was obtained and who could obtain it were not uniform. Bearing in mind that the stories were collected, as far as can be ascertained, at about the same time, the huge variation in the periods in which the figures were supposed to have lived the normal part of their lives can be discounted as a reason for this heterogeneity. These biographies are artefacts of the period during which they were recorded, not of the period in which their subjects are supposed to have lived.<sup>66</sup> The other possible reason for the observable variations is geographical. It could be hypothesised that ideas related to immortality were regionally specific. In some ways this would make good sense: the traditional centres of Daoist activity have been regarded as the old states of Qi and Lu where court records indicate *fangshi* related activities thrived, and the old state of Shu where Zhang Ling was active and where the first Daoist state was established at the end of the Han. These regions were at opposite ends of the Chinese world. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that they may have developed different religious cultures.<sup>67</sup> In the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies some evidence for such a distinction can be found. In those biographies which provide information on prerequisites for immortality those who achieved immortality because they were fated to do so tended to come from the north-east<sup>68</sup> while those who have to undergo testing before achieving it come from the southwest. Zhao Sheng who is said to come "from the east" and who Zhang Ling knows will obtain immortality before he arrives is both tested and fated. Shen Xi, who was rewarded for his behaviour, came from Wu in the east but studied the Dao in Shu. Without exception those who are recorded to have attained immortality through corpse-liberation came from the northeast or along the coast - Dong Feng came from Houguan and Jie Xiang from Guiji.<sup>69</sup> These examples point strongly to a regional distinction, but in other cases, such as the evaluation of medicines and elixirs, no discernible pattern is present to make sense of the variations noted here.

The biggest problem in testing the hypothesis of regional variation is, however, the limited number of cases that have been considered in this chapter. Unfortunately, for textual reasons, the breadth of information that would be required to reach statistically convincing conclusions is not present in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies alone. This is

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<sup>66</sup> See Maeda Shigeki's article "Rikuchō jidai ni okeru Kan Kichi den no henshen", *Tōhō shūkyō*, 65 (May, 1985):44-62, for a discussion of the changing period in which a particular biography, in this case that of Gan Ji, is set in relation to the time in which it was recorded.

<sup>67</sup> It may even be anachronistic to regard the people who inhabited these regions at the extremes of the empire as "Chinese" - or at least of belonging to the same ethnic cast. Clearly some interrelationship existed, after all Zhang Ling himself came from Peigu, not far from the centre in the north-east. The question of the influence of the local religions of the south-west on Zhang's religion is discussed by Wang Jiayou "Zhang Ling Wudoumi dao yu xinan minzu", *Daojiao lungao* (Chengdu, 1987), 151-166.

<sup>68</sup> The exceptions are Liu Gen who came from the capital and Lü Wenjing whose place of origin is not specified.

<sup>69</sup> In one example of corpse-liberation - Cheng Wei's wife - no place of origin is mentioned.

not to say that consideration of other collections of biographies, both extant and surviving only in fragments, would not provide the range of cases needed to test this hypothesis - but that task is beyond the scope of this study.

## Chapter Four: Narrative and Structural Features of the Biographies

In chapter three the biographies of *Shenxian zhuan* were analysed for their ideas of immortality and related topics. By describing the various constituents of the concepts of immortality in the biographies we approached a definition of the nature of *Shenxian zhuan* as a text concerned with certain ideas. However, this concentration on content related to immortality meant that many other features of the biographies went without comment. This chapter will examine the biographies of *Shenxian zhuan* in relation to how they function as texts although, of course, this will entail a degree of overlap with the previous chapter as ideas and structures often cannot be easily untangled.<sup>1</sup> The analysis in this chapter will be complementary to the analysis of ideas of chapter three.

As was shown in the introduction, the biographies of *Shenxian zhuan* were regarded as history in the earliest catalogues in which the text appeared. That they are "lively and entertaining narratives", in Durrant's phrase, did not disqualify them. Indeed, in a useful discussion of Chinese narrative theory Andrew Plaks has written:

Any theoretical inquiry into the nature of Chinese narrative must take its starting point in the acknowledgment of the immense importance of historiography and, in a certain sense, "historicism" in the total aggregate of the culture. In fact, the question of how to define the narrative category in Chinese literature eventually boils down to whether or not there did exist within the traditional civilization a sense of the inherent commensurability of its two major forms: historiography and fiction.<sup>2</sup>

What is there, then, in the biographies of *Shenxian zhuan* that is comparable with other examples of early biographical narrative? To answer this question requires a digression into the development of the Chinese biographical form. I begin by discussing the exemplary nature of biographies that were compiled before *Shenxian zhuan*. Next I analyse how the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies work as texts focussing on various formal features - the construction of the narrator, the arrangement of events and so on - in order to show how these formal elements work towards the construction of exemplary figures. Often, this simply entails "proving" the reality of immortality itself. Finally, on the basis of these analyses, I consider whether the biographies of *Shenxian zhuan* are characterized by the same degree of formal as of religious heterogeneity and whether there are observable patterns in a narrated immortal's life.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the concerns of this chapter are related to those of K.J.DeWoskin's article, "Xian Descended: Narrating Xian among Mortals", *Taoist Resources*, 2 (1990), 70-86, where he argues "that along with the maturation of certain xian narratives toward the more literary, the xian characters themselves evolved, shaped by literary as well as doctrinal factors" (p. 71).

<sup>2</sup> Plaks, A.H., "Towards a Critical Theory of Chinese Narrative" in Plaks, A.H. (ed.), *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays* (Princeton, 1977), 309-352 (pp. 311-12).

## The Exemplary Nature of Early Biographies

One of the primary motivations for the writing of biographies in early China was to represent the lives of exemplary figures, both good and bad. The standard Chinese historical biography is generally reckoned to be an invention of Sima Qian, exemplified in the *liezhuan* section of *Shiji* and followed in all the successive dynastic histories. The precise meaning of *liezhuan* has been a matter of some dispute. The conventional view, dating from the Tang commentaries to *Shiji* of Sima Zhen and Zhang Shoujie<sup>3</sup>, is that *lie* has the sense of *xulie*. Burton Watson glosses this "generally agreed" meaning as "arranged" or "set forth" - he translates *liezhuan* simply as "Memoirs" leaving *lie* out completely.<sup>4</sup> Denis Twitchett translates *liezhuan* as "connected traditions" pointing to the possibility that the form and the name *zhuan* may have been taken over by Sima Qian "from some existing form of writing used in ancestral cult worship".<sup>5</sup> In his rendering *lie*, then, has the meaning "connected". Another view which, in many ways, is more convincing is that put forward by Pierre Ryckmans. He proposes that *liezhuan* be rendered (for his French translation of *Shiji*) as "Les vies exemplaires".<sup>6</sup> He writes: "What determines Ssu-ma Ch'ien's selection of actors is not so much the importance of their historical role, as their value as archetypes of human behaviour, and among their actions those which merit his attention are not necessarily those which had a significant impact on history, but those which best reveal a character, a temper, a personality."<sup>7</sup> The exemplary nature of biography in the Han dynasties and after - even beyond the standard histories - is made explicit if we bear this meaning of *lie* in mind, as it commonly occurs as the first word in a collection's title. A notable trio of examples are the three collections ascribed to Liu Xiang that appear in the *Suishu* editorial notes translated in the introduction: *Lienü zhuan* (*Biographies of Exemplary Women*), *Lieshi zhuan* (*Biographies of Exemplary Officers*) and *Liexian zhuan* (*Biographies of Exemplary Immortals*). It is likely that with *Shenxian zhuan* where *lie* does not appear in the title, as with other collections of biographies in this class like *Gaoshi zhuan*, the sense of the subjects being exemplary is still understood.

Does this carry over to biographical writing beyond the dynastic histories? Twitchett has shown that, in the Tang, biographies in the standard histories owed much to funerary inscriptions and other commemorative forms of writing requested or commissioned by

<sup>3</sup> *Shiji*, 61:2121, cited in Ryckmans, P., "A New Interpretation of the Term Lieh-chuan as used in the Shih-chi", *Papers on Far Eastern History*, 5 (March, 1972), 135-47 (p. 136).

<sup>4</sup> Watson, B., *Ssu-ma Ch'ien: Grand Historian of China* (New York, 1958), pp. 120-21.

<sup>5</sup> Twitchett, D., "Problems of Chinese Biography" in Wright, A.F. and Twitchett, D., *Confucian Personalities* (Stanford, 1962), 24-39, (p. 25). See also his essay "Chinese Biographical Writing" in Beasley, W.G. and Pulleyblank, E.G. (eds.), *Historians of China and Japan* (London, 1961), 95-114 (p. 95).

<sup>6</sup> Ryckmans, "A New Interpretation of the Term Lieh-chuan as used in the Shih-chi", p. 144.

<sup>7</sup> Ryckmans, "A New Interpretation of the Term Lieh-chuan as used in the Shih-chi", p. 137-8.

the family after the death of their relative.<sup>8</sup> Far less material of the sort survives from this earlier period on which to make judgements about its links to biographies in standard histories. Patricia Ebrey, however, has analysed some of this material in her work on Late Han epigraphy, referred to in the introduction. "On the whole", she says, "the qualities extolled in the *Hou-Han shu's* nonpolitical biographies, such as classical learning, filial piety, adherence to ritual form, indifference to wealth and rank, and generosity to those beneath one, were also the qualities second-century epitaph writers sought to reveal in their subjects."<sup>9</sup> She cites the inscription of Wu Liang of 151 as typical of those which stress classical learning and indifference to wealth and rank:

Wu Liang was credited with teaching the *Shih ching* even before he was capped and mastering several versions of the *I ching*. He declined the requests of the Grand Administrator (*t'ai-shou*) and Inspector (*tz'u-shih*) to serve as a subbureaucrat. Indeed, "he was at peace in rustic quarters behind a wooden gate, and found joy in the idea of 'if in the morning one hears [of the Way, in the evening one can die content]". He was said to have disapproved of the empty activities of his contemporaries and "paid no attention to the powerful families," content to act as teacher and hold fast to his convictions."<sup>10</sup>

This description indicates that the exemplary nature of early biography is not limited to the dynastic histories. It can also be seen in the commendatory stele erected in memory of Cao Quan. In part, it reads:

When young our lord loved to study. He looked into the abstruse and was attentive to the details, there being no written works he did not investigate. A wise and filial nature took root in his heart. He supported his grandfather's concubine and respectfully served his stepmother, anticipating their thoughts and attending to their wishes. He omitted nothing in his reverence and ceremonies for the living and dead. For these reasons the villagers had a saying about him: "The one who has made two generations of relatives happy is Ts'ao Ching-yüan." Many generations record his virtue; his name will not be lost.

With regard to his government service, in pureness [our lord] copied [Po] I and [Shu] Ch'i, in straightforwardness he emulated the Historian Yü....He brought to order an area of ten thousand *li*, and the nobles did not go astray. When he went out to inspect the commanderies, he would bring charges against the wrongdoers. The hearts of the greedy and the violent

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<sup>8</sup> Twitchett, "Problems of Chinese Biography", p. 27-30.

<sup>9</sup> Ebrey, "Late Han Stone Inscriptions" p. 334. One aspect of these inscriptions that distinctly differs from later standard history biographies is the attitude to ancestry - in terms of what details were regarded as vital for inclusion - which Ebrey characterizes as "ambivalent". In one case a putative famous ancestor - Zhang Liang - was named but the line of descent was not detailed. On the other hand details about his immediate family - the careers of his brothers - were. In another case, however, the inscription includes in the subject's ancestry the names and offices of sixteen people over seven generations (pp. 333-4).

<sup>10</sup> Ebrey, "Late Han Stone Inscriptions" pp. 334-5.

were purified, his colleagues fell under the influence of his virtue, and far and near stood in awe....

His benevolent rule spread faster than the courier network. The common people, carrying their children on their backs, converged like clouds...[That year] the weather was seasonable and there was an abundant harvest...<sup>11</sup>

The predictable features of early brilliance, great filial piety and administrative acumen are all exemplified here. The common people flock to the area of Cao's administration and, to go one step further, the cosmos itself responds positively by providing appropriate conditions for agriculture. This is, of course, quite in keeping with the political cosmology of the Later Han. In short, in this commemorative stele, and the others that Ebrey discusses, the same exemplary patterns of biographical writing occur that have been noted in biographies in the early standard histories.

There are two other collections of biography from this period that should be considered: *Lienü zhuan* and *Liexian zhuan*, both ascribed to Liu Xiang. *Liexian zhuan* has been discussed in chapter one and a third collection ascribed to him - *Lieshi zhuan* - is lost except for quotations in *leishu*, commentaries and so on, <sup>12</sup> so this discussion will focus on *Lienü zhuan*.

The exemplary nature of the biographies in *Lienü zhuan* is apparent from the very organization of the text. It has seven authentic chapters (the eighth is a late addition) each of which contains a set of biographies of women who incarnate one of six virtues - "motherly correct deportment", "virtue and sagacity", "benignity and wisdom", "purity and obedience", "chastity and righteousness", "reasoning and understanding" - or embodies their opposite, "perniciousness and depravity".<sup>13</sup> Most of the biographies cite only one anecdote encapsulating the virtue or vice for which the woman is famous - these biographies could not be said to possess a "plot". Sometimes the bulk of the biography is simply a recitation of a single speech. In each case a summary of the facts of the case and the moral to be learnt from it appears at the end of the biography.

These examples of biographical writing give some indication of the types of text that were produced before the compilation of *Shenxian zhuan*. It is clear that despite their differences they all display an exemplary character and that the division between the historical and fictional is not of consequence. Within any one collection the information is not sorted according to categories of reliability of source material. Where biographies are sorted, it is by theme. Thus, historically reliable figures and patently legendary figures are placed side by side in categories of behaviour of which both kinds of figure are considered equally exemplary. Often, in these collections the exemplary nature of the biographies leads to a predicability in the types of anecdote recounted - the number of

<sup>11</sup> Ebrey, "Late Han Stone Inscriptions" pp. 340-2.

<sup>12</sup> For a Qing recompilation, see *Yühan shanfang ji yishu bubian*.

<sup>13</sup> See Hou, Sharon Shih-jiuan, "Women's Literature" in Nienhauser, *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, pp. 178-9.

ways that an ideal mother or a paragon of administration could be represented in ancient China are about equally few.

### Narrative Features of the *Shenxian zhuan* Biographies

In this section the biographies of *Shenxian zhuan* will be analysed for those features they display which are related to narrative. Two points need to be made in relation to the discussions that follow. First, as was made clear in chapter two, many of the biographies which were definitely extant in the early Tang survive only in fragments. In modern editions these fragments have been reconstituted into what appear to be integral biographies but which nonetheless, in many cases, show the marks of editorial intervention. Such a process of selection may have damaged the structures of the original. While it also may not, as there is no opportunity to compare the original with the edited version, detailed analysis of structure and narrative will be carried out only on biographies which do not show obvious signs of such intervention.

A second point that should be made here concerns the nature of this analysis and the kinds of conclusions that can be made. In chapter three observations on the nature of immortality were limited to what was clearly stated in the text - the methods that were used, the elixirs that were mentioned, the processes that were named. These observations were necessarily limited in their scope but the method led to conclusions that were, perhaps, less subject than other methods to the biases of individual interpretation. In this section, however, a different kind of analysis is employed which attempts to go beyond the clearly defined features that lie on the surface of the biographies, and which therefore leads to different kinds of conclusions. It is, I would argue, no less useful an analysis but since it relies on reading the structures of the text rather than noting its details, it is always possible that different readers will come to different conclusions.

#### The Narrator

The type of narrator in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies is typically no different from the narrator in other biographies of the period, including those in the standard histories.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Joseph Roe Allen in his article "An Introductory Study of Narrative Structures in the *Shi ji*", *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*, 3 (1981), 31-66 says that the narrator in the *Shiji* biographies is "the omnipresent reporter who is often seen in earlier Chinese historical prose" and is generally invisible. Only when Sima Qian regards the quality of the information recorded as in any way suspect is the source for information given, as in "It is said that..." - the example given is the biography of Laozi (p.61). In Allen's analysis, however, the narrator is not absent: he appears through the use of irony. He cites Jurij L. Kroll on Sima Qian's use of the comments of protagonists and other characters in the *Shiji* narratives (see, Kroll, J.L., "Ssu-ma Ch'ien's Literary Theory and Literary Practice", *Altorientalische Forschungen*, 4 (1976), 313-325): "He [Kroll] notes that these comments sometimes coincide and sometimes do not coincide with the narrator's own opinions. In the latter cases there are two possible variations: 1) a third person comment about the protagonist is at odds with the narrator's own opinion of the protagonist, or 2) a protagonist's self-appraisal is at odds with the narrator's judgement of him. Although Kroll does not use the term, both of these situations are examples of irony, a disparity of understanding between the characters and the narrator (or reader)" (p.63). One weakness in this part of Allen's analysis is his



Generally, he is unidentified, omnipresent and speaks in the third person - although there are interesting exceptions to this model. A typical biography, as far as the position of the narrator is concerned, is that of Sage Mother Dongling. It reads, in full:

Sage Mother Dongling came from Hailing in Guangling. She was the wife of a Mr Du. She studied the Dao under Liu Gang and was able to change her shape and transform and could appear and disappear where ever she pleased

Du did not believe in the Dao and was constantly angry with her.

Sage Mother cured disease and saved people's lives. Once when she went to consult someone Du became even more enraged and laid a complaint with the authorities which stated that Sage Mother was having dealings with demons and did not fulfill her household duties. The authorities arrested her and threw her in jail. A short time later she flew straight out of the window of the jail. Everyone gathered around to watch as she wheeled around and rose up into the clouds. She left the pair of shoes she was wearing behind under the window.

Then people from far and wide erected a shrine and worshipped her. In any matter the common folk brought to her attention, invoking her name proved efficacious.

There was always a blue bird at the place of sacrifice. Someone who had lost something beseeched her to indicate where it was. The blue bird flew around above the person who had received the stolen property - "what was left behind on the road did not end up in someone else's hands"<sup>15</sup> - and for years afterwards nobody picked up things that had been dropped by others.

Up till now there has been no thieving in Hailing county.<sup>16</sup> (Dongling Shengmu)

The three features of the typical narrator - unidentified, omnipresent and speaking in the third person - are clearly shown in this biography. We have no idea who the narrator is but that narrator writes as if he saw and heard everything that occurs in the biography and relates those events as if he is not involved. A certain degree of omniscience is also implied - the narrator knows that Mr Du did not believe in the Dao and was constantly angry at the Sage Mother, for instance - but that knowledge is not complete.

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assumption that the narratorial point of view is accepted unproblematically by the reader. The bracketing of "the narrator (or reader)" in his definition of irony indicates that he sees the positions of narrator and reader as equivalent. This is a naive position that discounts the possibility of a "disparity of understanding" existing between the narrator and the reader.

<sup>15</sup> This may be a citation from Jia Yi's *Xinshu*, see *Jia Taifu xinshu* (*Sibu congkan* edition), *xia*:17b.

<sup>16</sup> A final sentence "The big ones are drowned by the wind and waves or eaten by tigers and wolves. The small ones get sick again" appears to have been absorbed from some kind of commentary. What it refers to is mysterious.

In the biography of Wang Yuan the same kind of model is followed, as it is in most of the biographies most of the time. However, in Wang's there are interesting variations. The biography begins in the typical manner with a narrative voice that unproblematically relates Wang's early history. In the section set at Chen Dan's house there are hints of narratorial omniscience:

Each morning Chen paid him [Wang Yuan] obeisance and simply begged for blessings; he desired to follow him but did not mention his intention to study the Dao.

Dan knew he had left through transformation so he did not dare bury him. (Wang Yuan)

In these two instances it is arguable that the narrator is claiming to know a character's mind - in neither case are Chen's desires or knowledge related in conversation or indirect speech as occurs in this later passage:

Someone said that it was because Fangping knew that Dan was about to die that he abandoned Dan and left. (Wang Yuan)

In this case the onus of knowledge is placed on someone else - the narrator does not make the claim that he knows Wang's mind. A few lines later, however, such a claim is made:

Cai Jing was a commoner but the conformation of his bones indicated the possibility of transcendence. Fangping knew this so he went to his house and spoke to Jing. (Wang Yuan)

It may be argued that the passage that follows - a speech by Wang - provides the evidence for this knowledge but while Wang says that he can tell what Cai's fate is, he does not say how he knows. That information comes only from the narrator. Later, after Cai Jing has attained immortality, returned to his family's house and announced the imminent return of Wang Yuan, we read:

Before [Wang Yuan] arrived at Jing's house [Cai Jing's family] all simultaneously heard gongs and drums, flutes and pipes and the sound of men and horses. [The noise] was so close it surprised them and they did not know where it was coming from. (Wang Yuan)

Again the narrator claims to know the minds of characters but in this case it is their ignorance of what is happening around them that he knows. This knowledge is, then, selective - it does not extend to the activities of those who have gone beyond the earthly realm. The claim to know of the ignorance of the family is again made when Wang Yuan sends for Magu:

Then he sent someone to question Magu - but no-one had any idea what kind of spirit Magu was. (Wang Yuan)

One paragraph from a little later helps to put these distinctions into focus:

Magu's fingernails were not shaped like those of a human but were like birds' claws. When Jing saw her he thought to himself, "When your

back was really itchy it would be excellent to use nails like that to scratch yourself." Fangping knew what Jing was thinking so he made someone drag Jing over and had him whipped. He said, "Magu is a spirit. How could you say that her nails could scratch your back?" Although a whip could be seen landing on Jing's back, no one could be seen holding the whip. Fangping told Jing, "My whip never lands without reason." (Wang Yuan)

Here the narrator reports the thoughts of both Cai Jing and Wang Yuan as well as what they say, but he only describes what can be seen and does not provide any explanation for it.

The position of the narrator in this biography is, then, more complex than in the biography of Sage Mother Dongling. This narrator clearly has the standard characteristic of omnipresence but instead of simply reporting everything that can be seen from any position, he also has the ability to know - in some cases - what is being thought or felt. He is not, however, completely omniscient.

#### Witnesses and Tokens of Authenticity

In Wang Yuan's biography it is possible to go further in the analysis of the narrator's knowledge and ignorance. In a number of the cases where he claims knowledge of people's minds he does so to express their ignorance about the behaviour of those who have gained transcendence. Apart from those cases that have been mentioned above, it is possible to cite the way that Wang Yuan's entourage disappeared from view on arrival, the fact that his envoy could be heard but not seen and the whip falling on Cai Jing's back to show that the narrator, while anonymous, does not occupy a position beyond the characters in the story. He is firmly located among the ordinary folk, watching the actions of the immortals but not understanding them, seeing only what the ordinary folk see and not seeing what they also do not see. He understands no more than they do. To a large extent in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies the powers of immortals are described but never explained. All the reader is told is what an observer can see - the biography of Sage Mother Dongling can also serve as an example of this. She transforms, she cures, she appears and disappears at will, she flies out of the prison. We see all this with the narrator, even seeing the shoes she leaves behind. We are not told how she did these things.

It is worth bearing Sage Mother Dongling's shoes in mind when reading these excerpts from the last part of Wang Yuan's biography:

When he was about to leave he bestowed on Defender Chen a talisman and a *zhuan*<sup>17</sup> in a small box....Defender Chen used this talisman to cure disease to good effect. It was used on several hundred families. He died when he was one hundred and ten. After he died his descendants used the talisman but it never proved effective....Fangping wrote real writings and bestowed them on defender Chen. They were written in wild and unruly

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<sup>17</sup> The precise meaning of this *zhuan* is unclear. It may be some kind of biographical record, even one relating to the events described in the *Shenxian zhuan* biography.

characters; they were big and were not in the standard style. At first none of these people knew that Fangping's given name was Yuan but from then on they knew. The family of Defender Chen has handed down Lord Wang's handwritten letters generation by generation until now, together with the little box for the talisman and the *zhuan*. (Wang Yuan)

Like Wang Yuan's biography, Sage Mother Dongling's ends with the narrator bringing the record up to date - "Up till now there has been no thieving in Hailing county" - although in neither case is the date of the narrator's "present" made clear. The notable feature about Wang Yuan's biography is that specific items are named that connect the narrator's present with the events of the biography. The box for Defender Chen's talisman, *zhuan* and his real writings provide a concrete link with the narrative, and act as a kind of token of the truth of the story. The narrator claims, in essence, that the events he has related have the same degree of authenticity as the objects that ultimately derived from Defender Chen. It is possible that the narrator could have seen events from so long before, but he can establish an authentic link with them. In short, the events have been witnessed and the possession of tokens authenticates the witnessing. The shoes of Sage Mother Dongling serve a similar function. Sage Mother Dongling, like Wang Yuan, Cai Jing and Magu no longer exists in our world - these objects are cited as proof that she once did and authenticate the narrator's record.

This witnessing motif plays an important role in other biographies. One striking example of the token of authentication occurs in the biography of Hu Gong where the tokens are stressed by their position, appearing immediately after the formulaic opening. The authentication is not retrospective here but prospective. The biography begins:

Nobody knew the name of the Honoured One of the Gourd.

The talismans for summoning the armies and the jade palace talismans for summoning ghosts and spirits to cure disease of which the present generation possess more than thirty chapters, all derive from the Honoured One. This is why they are collectively known as the talismans of the Honoured One of the Gourd.

Once, in Runan, one Fei Changfang... (Hugong)

Another good example is the biography of Shen Xi:

Shen Xi was a native of Wujun. He studied the Dao in Shu. He was simply able to dissipate pestilence, expel disease and save and relieve the common people. He did not know about taking elixirs. His virtue and merit moved Heaven and the Heavenly spirits recognized him.

Xi and his wife who was of the Jia family were returning from visiting the family of their daughter-in-law Zhuo Kong<sup>18</sup> when they were met by a chariot being pulled by a white deer, one being pulled by a green dragon and one pulled by a white tiger. They were followed by several tens of riders all dressed in vermilion carrying lances and wearing swords at the

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<sup>18</sup> The *Tai ping guang ji* version of this biography has Kongning.

waist. Shimmering light filled the road. Xi was asked, "Are you Shen Xi the *daoshi*?"<sup>19</sup> Xi was scared and did not know what was going on. He replied, "I am. Why do you ask?" The rider said, "Xi, you have acquired merit amongst the people. In your heart you never forget the Dao. Ever since you were born your conduct has been blameless. The fated lifespan you received at birth was not long and is about to be used up. Huang-Lao decrees that these transcendent officials be sent down to welcome you. This is Gentleman-in-Attendance Bo Yan in the chariot with the white deer. This is The Lord of Passing Beyond the Generations Sima Sheng in the chariot with the green dragon. This is the Envoy for Meeting and Seeing Off Xu Fu in the chariot with the white tiger."

After a short time the three immortals, who were wearing feathered clothes and holding staffs, bestowed a white jade tablet on Xi. It had green jade borders and red jade letters but he was unable to read them. The immortals then carried him up to Heaven. All the ploughmen and hoers who were on the road at the time saw it but they did not understand what was going on. After a short time there was a great fog. When it lifted he had disappeared but they saw the ox that had been pulling Xi's cart eating shoots in a field. Someone recognized it as Xi's cart ox and told his family. His several hundred followers were afraid that it was a malevolent spirit so they went into Xi's mountain valley and split up to search for him over one hundred *li*. They could not find him.

After more than four hundred years, he finally returned to his home village and found his descendant of several tens of generations later whose given name was Huai. Huai happily said, "I have heard my forebears tell of our immortal ancestor. Now the immortal has come." Xi stayed several tens of days and explained how he first ascended to Heaven. "I did not meet the Emperor of Heaven but I did meet Lord Lao. Lord Lao sat facing east. His attendants summoned me. I could not decline and simply sat in silence. The halls of the palace were like swirling clouds or multi-coloured mist that I can't describe. There were several hundred servants, mostly women with a few men. In the hall there were pearl and jade trees which grew all kinds of fungus in clumps. Dragons and tigers and *pixie* beasts gambolled around inside. All I could hear was a ringing like the sound of bronze and iron bells but I did not know what it was. The four walls glittered and sparkled with talismanic script on them. Lord Lao's body was one *zhang* tall. His hair fell down his back and his body was tattooed. He glowed and within a short time underwent several transformations. Jade girls bestowed on me gold dishes and jade bowls full of medicine that

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<sup>19</sup> At the time the biographies of *Shenxian zhuan* came together, the term *daoshi* had not yet come to mean "ordained Daoist priest". It had, rather, a similar meaning to *fangshi*, that is someone skilled in certain techniques we would term occult (see *Lunheng*, 6:300, 16:702, 18:780 for parallel examples of this usage). This accounts for why it is possible to ridicule *daoshi* in some of the biographies (a situation we would not expect in a Daoist book) though not, of course, in Shen Xi's.

they were holding saying, 'This is spirit elixir. The one who drinks it will not die.' My wife and I each received a spatula of medicine with the words, 'When you have drunk this, bow but do not express your thanks'. After we had taken the medicine we were given two jujubes, each one as big as a hen's egg and five *cun* of dried meat. They sent me away saying, 'Return and live among men. Cure the diseases of the common people. If you wish to ascend to this world write this talisman and hang it from the end of your staff. I will meet you.' I was then granted a talisman and a recipe for transcendence. As suddenly as waking up he was back on earth.

Now a great many have this talisman. (Shen Xi)

The first half of this biography - until Shen Xi's disappearance - follows a standard narratorial pattern with an anonymous, all-seeing narrator relating events in the third person. Most of the biography after Shen Xi's return is a single speech describing his journey to Heaven. This speech, heard only by his descendant Huai, relates, among other things, how Shen received a talisman. The final statement - "Now a great many have this talisman"<sup>20</sup> - comes from the narrator. By presenting this token to the reader, the narrator authenticates the speech in which the circumstances of the acquisition of the talisman are presented. He therefore establishes a connexion with Huai who, alone, is said to have heard the story. The link with Huai who had "heard [his] forebears speak of [their] immortal ancestor" in turn retrospectively authenticates the first half of the biography which is, plausibly, just what his forebears said about Shen Xi. Thus Huai acts as the witness for both parts of the biography. The difference in narrative position in each part relates, precisely, to the knowledge Huai had.

The biography of Lü Gong follows a pattern similar to that of Shen Xi. Two hundred years after Lü Gong attains the Dao he returns to seek out a descendant. The descendant, Xi, receives a spirit recipe from Lü Gong. This enables Xi to live on for another two hundred years after which he disappears into the mountains. Here Xi acts as the witnessing link between the narrator and Lü Gong.

Another form of the witnessing motif has to do specifically with documenting the historicity of exemplary immortals. As we have seen in the preface to *Shenxian zhuan*, the stated reason for compiling the collection was to prove the existence of immortals. Whether or not this preface is authentic it undoubtedly encapsulates a prime motivation for the collection. One way of asserting that immortals do exist is for the narrator to claim a witness, usually anonymous, who authenticates the reality of transcendence. The biography of Kong Yuanfang provides an example of this while also making use of the motif of returning home - even if, in this case, he did not return to his family:

Then he abandoned his wife and entered the sacred mountain in the west. After more than fifty years he briefly returned to his village and some of the people of that time still recognized him. (Kong Yuanfang)

The biography of Jie Xiang also provides a good example of anonymous witnesses authenticating transcendence. It ends in this way:

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<sup>20</sup> Shen Xi's talisman - but not Shen Xi himself - appears in *Baopuzi*, 19:335.

Later Xiang announced that he was ill. The Emperor<sup>21</sup> sent his courtiers and concubines to give Xiang a makeup-case full of beautiful pears. Xiang ate them and a short time later was dead. The Emperor interred him. He died at noon and by mid-afternoon the same day Xiang reached Jianye. He handed over seeds from the pears he had been given to the orchard official to plant. Later the official sent in a report about it. The Former Ruler [ie Sun Quan] immediately disinterred the coffin and looked inside. There was only a talisman there. The Emperor pondered on this and erected a shrine. From time to time he went there himself and made offerings. White cranes often came and gathered on the shrine then slowly returned whence they came.

Later a disciple saw him in Gaizhu shan. He looked as if he had reverted to youth. (Jie Xiang)

Here, both an unnamed orchard official and a disciple witness the transcendence of Jie Xiang; the former is a particularly powerful witness as he, presumably, did not know that Jie Xiang had died when he received the pears. Moreover, Jie Xiang's transcendence is *bureaucratically* documented which is a particularly powerful form of proof.

#### Typical Constituents

From the discussion of the narrator and the authentication of the record, we now turn to the record itself. Herbert Franke has drawn attention to the "traditional schemes" and typical constituents which reappear in traditional Chinese biographies.<sup>22</sup> Such *topoi*, it can be argued, do as much to generate a written life as do the details of the subject's upbringing and career. Franke remarks that "Many of those features [which recur again and again in the biography of a model servant of the state and which are as characteristic as the debauches of a last emperor] can be traced back to feudal antiquity; they are to be found already in the Shi-ki."<sup>23</sup> The seven typical constituents are:

- 1.) The person is a very clever child. He can speak or write already at an early age. If he is a future general, he plays with weapons etc.
- 2.) Friends or relatives say he will have a brilliant career.
- 3.) He serves father or mother or both with great filial piety. He is assiduous, modest etc.
- 4.) When he is introduced to the emperor, the latter is deeply impressed by his new servant.
- 5.) The emperor addresses him with his personal appellation (*tsi*) instead of his cognomen (*ming*)

<sup>21</sup> This emperor, referred to below as the Former Ruler, is Sun Quan. Elsewhere in the biography he is also referred to as the Ruler of Wu.

<sup>22</sup> Franke, H., "Some Remarks on the Interpretation of Chinese Dynastic Histories", *Oriens*, 3 (1950), 113-122 (p. 120).

<sup>23</sup> Franke, "Some Remarks on the Interpretation of Chinese Dynastic Histories" pp. 120-21.

6.) If he holds office in the province, people regard him as 'father and mother'. His administration is so efficient that 'lost things are not picked up on the streets', etc.

7.) The learned official has no personal wealth. He is poor, and owns perhaps nothing more than a collection of books, paintings or antiquities."<sup>24</sup>

In Franke's scheme an exemplary biography would appear to be one that is constituted by these elements. Although we will find that Franke's typical constituents do not apply to the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies, the question of whether any other set of typical constituents can be found in them will be examined.

There are two things that should be borne in mind when discussing Franke's typical constituents. The first is that they refer to biographies which describe whole lives in a sequential manner. In *Shenxian zhuan* there are some biographies, including some that do not seem to have suffered damage, containing large sections which do not follow this pattern and which, therefore, cannot be considered narrative. The biography of Pengzu contains an exposition of the nature of immortality which takes up a large proportion of the biography. The biography of Laozi includes editorial discussion of the competing theories related to Laozi's name, parentage and physiology. It would not be reasonable in these cases to expect a narrative structure. In this latter case it may be just as well to think of the *zhuan* as a "tradition", the term that Twitchett prefers, rather than as a "biography".

It is also the case that not all the biographies arrange the episodes that comprise the "life" of their subject in a temporal sequence at all. While each episode may have a temporal structure, and therefore can be regarded as chronological, the arrangement of the episodes may not be narrative. The biography of Ban Meng, translated in full in chapter two, can serve as an example. In this biography none of the separate sections - rendered into paragraphs in the translation - is sequentially related to any other except the last section which is logically posterior to all the rest. The episodes concerning sinking into the earth, the mulberries, the ink, the elixir and, arguably, the tiles have internal temporal sequencing and can therefore be defined as narratives but taken together they do not form a narrative structure.

Secondly, Franke's typical constituents generally refer to an official's life and, as immortals' lives cannot be expected to follow the same course as officials', we should not expect the typical constituents to correspond in each case with the biographies examined here.

Nonetheless, there are interesting variations on Franke's constituents in those biographies from *Shenxian zhuan* which deal with material similar to that in officials' biographies. Where Franke's subjects display filial piety and moral uprightness, the family relationships of immortals - when they are shown - imply that they are no longer subject to conventional morality. In Lord Mao's case, for instance, the quest for immortality was incompatible with the conventional role of the dutiful son - "I could not

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<sup>24</sup> Franke, "Some Remarks on the Interpretation of Chinese Dynastic Histories" p. 121.



follow two paths" - so providing for his parents had to be forgotten. Nonetheless, on his return he did offer them long life. Although it could be argued that his earlier non-filial behaviour was compensated for by this later bonus offer we are not presented with an unproblematic model of filial piety. Over the course of his "four or five hundred" years Li Changzai is recorded as having three families. He deserted the first two and punished a son from his first marriage who came to find him when he was married to his second wife.

In Franke's biographies, the emperor is impressed with his new servant. In the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies there is a kind of parallel in those biographies that concern interactions with Han Wudi on his search for the Dao. In the biography of the Old Father of Taishan, for instance, Han Wudi is uncomplicatedly impressed by the supernatural signs that surround the Old Father. Wudi asks for an explanation - which he gets - and then requests the recipe. The Old Father provides it and receives jade and silk. This conforms closely enough with Franke's formula. The relationship of the sovereign to his new servant that is implied by Franke, however, is different in the biographies of these immortals. As in the case of familial duties, loyalty to the emperor is no longer uncomplicated. In the case of Heshanggong, Han Wendi is forced to kowtow before the immortal before he receives the commentary to *Laozi*. In the cases of Wu Yan and Li Shaojun, Wudi is certainly impressed with their attainments and in both he receives the information on immortality methods he wants but he is shown to be inadequate in putting the instructions into practice. Zuo Ci undoubtedly impresses the three rulers Cao Cao, Liu Biao and Sun Ce that he encounters, but they all want to kill him. Like Heshanggong with Han Wendi, Zuo Ci outsmarts them all.

Efficiency in administration - Franke's sixth constituent - is relevant only in the very few cases where one of the subjects hold office. Often they cast office aside in their quest for transcendence. An exception is Luan Ba who holds the prefectship of Yuzhang. The only feature of his administration that is mentioned is his success in banishing evil spirits and ghosts who had been making the people ill. Certainly, he shows great acumen in this. "In the commandery there were a lot of ghosts. There were a lot of single footed ghosts who harmed people. After Ba got there none of these calamities happened and all uncanny and evil occurrences disappeared." In the case of Liu Gang, the husband of Madame Fan, the traditional characteristics of good administration are shown, even if that is a particularly Daoist kind of administration:

In the execution of his duties he made a principle of peace and quiet. Though brief and simply expressed, government orders were widely put into effect and the common people received his wisdom. There were none of the griefs of flood or drought, pestilence or poison, violence or cruelty. Year after year there was abundance. (Fan Furen)

Nonetheless, even here these positive values are undercut by his being shown inferior to his wife in Daoist techniques, including ascension to heaven.

Poverty - Franke's last typical constituent - is found in some *Shenxian zhuan* cases but in general it is mentioned to show not great moral worth but complete indifference to the common ways of living. Jiao Xian is clearly celebrated for his poverty:

When the Wei succeeded [the Han] he was living on the banks of the He river. He built a hut from grass and lived in it alone. He did not set out a bed roll but used grass as a mattress and sat on that. His body was filthy, as muddy as a swamp. Sometimes he only had one meal every few days. He did not follow paths when he travelled and he had no social dealings with women. When his clothes wore out he sold firewood and bought old clothes to wear. Winter and summer he wore a single layer of clothes. (Jiao Xian)

While this passage illustrates Jiao's complete disregard for socially sanctioned ways of living it does not show the kind of poverty to which Franke refers: one which is embedded within the ideology of conventional ways of living.

Thus, in general, where Franke's typical constituents find parallels in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies, they perform different functions. Franke's *topoi* of the official's biography exemplify his orthodoxy. When immortals are placed in the same situations, their behaviour exemplifies a different orthodoxy. The biography of Wang Yuan, as well as many others, has none of these typical constituents. Does this mean that the idea of typical constituents is without relevance to the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies? One way of rephrasing this is ask whether there is a typical pattern for the narration of an immortal's life.

It is clear that if there are *topoi* in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies, they are different *topoi* from those applicable to Franke's subjects since an immortal's life is different from an official's. In other words, despite the fact that Franke's typical constituents, in a sense, *generate* his biographies, they cannot be regarded as only formal; they are determined by content as much as they determine it. Clearly, however, the more a type of writing is defined by social expectation or the power of generic rules, the less space there is for variation. The funeral notices that Twitchett refers to are more formulaic than other kinds of text because the possibilities open to the writer were extremely limited. Similarly, by the period Franke concentrates on, the Yuan, the range of possibilities in official biography had shrunk when compared with the early histories. The more circumscribed the conditions of writing, the more there will tend to be a limited range of options with which to record a life. Thus, the degree to which the biographies in a given collection conform to a set pattern is a measure of the pressure to conform to a particular model - and will be an indication of whether there existed a socially expected norm. In the remainder of this section I illustrate examples of what might be considered *topoi* in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies and consider if, indeed, there was a model life of an immortal whose component parts can be listed, as Franke did for his biographies.

Franke's typical constituents begin with the early life of their subject. The closest the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies come to narrating that phase of their subject's lives is to describe their official career, if they had one, or their mastery of traditional learning, and the fact that they threw it over to seek the Dao. Thus, in Wang Yuan's biography:

Wang Yuan, courtesy name Fangping, was a native of Donghai. He was recommended for office as Filially Pious and Incorrupt, appointed as a Gentleman-of-the-Palace and subsequently promoted to the post of

Palace Attendant Grandee. He had thoroughly studied the Five Classics and also understood the essentials of astrology, the prognostic texts and charts, the Chart of the He River and the Luo River Writings. He could foretell the times when the empire would flourish or decline and knew of auspicious and inauspicious events in the nine regions as if they were pictured on his palm.

Later he left office and entered the mountains where he cultivated the Dao and completed the Dao. (Wang Yuan)

This pattern is relatively common:

Jie Xiang, courtesy name Yuanze, was a native of Guiji. He studied the five classics thoroughly, had broadly examined the words of the hundred schools <sup>25</sup> and was able to write literary compositions. Later he studied the Dao and entered Dongshan. (Jie Xiang)

Sun Bo was a native of Hedong. He possessed a brilliant talent and showed great skill in writing. He composed one hundred chapters of poems and could recite several hundred thousand words of the classics. Late in life he studied the Dao and mastered the techniques of Mozi. (Sun Bo)

The most famous example is undoubtedly Zhang Ling:

Zhang Ling, courtesy name Fuhan, was a native of Feng in Peiguo. Originally he was a great Confucian scholar and was thoroughly versed in the five classics. Later on, he calculated that they would not increase the length of his life and he proceeded to study the Dao of long life.<sup>26</sup> (Zhang Ling)

Next in the life of the searcher for the Dao might come a meeting with immortals who bestow on him or her a recipe or a text or a method. Examples of this episode were cited from the biographies of Jie Xiang, Liu Gen, Shen Xi and Kong Yuanfang in the last chapter.

Another typical constituent might be the testing of an acolyte. The essential feature here is that a prospective student must prove faith and determination by undergoing trials set by the immortal. In the biography of Zhang Ling, Zhang tests one Zhao Sheng seven times. Zhang predicts Zhao's arrival at his gate but nonetheless denies him entry and makes people curse him for forty days but he refuses to leave; he sends a beautiful woman to Zhao when he is guarding the fields and makes her stay with him for several nights but he does not lapse; he does not touch thirty jars of gold left by the side of the road; he is unmoved by tigers that attack him in the mountains as he knows they are mountain spirits sent to test him; he makes no objection when a cheating merchant claims

<sup>25</sup> The standard *Taiping guangji* text reads "one school" here. It is emended to "the hundred Schools" by the editors of *Taiping guangji* on the basis of the reading in the Ming abridged version.

<sup>26</sup> See chapter five, in the section "Alternative versions of the lives" for more examples of this theme from the biographies of Liu Gen, Zuo Ci and Ji Zixun.

he had not paid for some silk that he had in fact paid for and then takes off his clothes and sells them to him as repayment; he gives up his clothes and food for a beggar who comes pleading for help and finally he throws himself off a cliff to pick peaches for Zhang when asked to as an act of faith in Zhang's powers. Another example of the testing of an acolyte comes from the biography of Li Babai, translated in the last chapter.

Another typical constituent might be that the immortal refuses to serve the ruler. This, of course, has a clear heritage in Chinese culture and is a defining feature commonly seen in relation to those whom Aat Vervoorn calls eremites.<sup>27</sup> Several cases from *Shenxian zhuan* biographies can illustrate this. One is the incident, translated in the previous chapter, where Sun Deng slices Grand Tutor Yang Jun's gowns into pieces to foretell Yang's execution. Two other cases come from the biographies of Wang Yuan and Liu Gen. First from the biography of Wang Yuan:

The Han Xiaohuan Emperor heard of him and continually summoned him but he did not respond. The emperor made the local administration compel him to ride to the capital but with bowed head and closed mouth he was not willing to reply to the edict. He then wrote more than four hundred characters on the palace gate recording why he had resisted coming. The emperor was incensed and had people scrape them off. But as the writing on the outside disappeared, inner writing reappeared. The ink had completely penetrated the wood.<sup>28</sup> (Wang Yuan)

Secondly, from the biography of Liu Gen:

When Wang Mang came to power (ruled 9-23 CE) he repeatedly sent an envoy to invite Gen but Gen refused to go. Resident Official Heng sent his commandery subordinate Wang Zhen to ask after him but Gen did not reply. Next he ordered Lord Zhao of the Office of Merits to go to the mountain to pass on his respects. Gen expressed his thanks to the Resident Official and not a word more. (Liu Gen)

Another typical constituent could be the return of the immortal to the world of men. Normally the immortal returns to his own village or family but he need not do so. Several examples of this have been cited in previous sections of this chapter: Wang Yuan and Cai Jing returning to Cai's family; Kong Yuanfang going back to his village and Lü Gong seeking out a descendant.

As well as these possible *topoi* which lay emphasis on narrative incident, the various types of powers that immortals possess are common enough, perhaps, to be regarded as "typical": multiplication of one's own body, bringing the dead back to life, flying, healing and so on are all practised by several immortals, as was demonstrated in chapter three.

The last typical constituent would be the immortal's transcendence into another class of being. In secular biography the subject ends in the grave but in the biographies of

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<sup>27</sup> See Vervoorn, A., *Men of the Cliffs and Caves: The Development of the Eremitic Tradition to the End of the Han Dynasty* (Hong Kong, 1990), especially pp. 95-101 and 164-169.

<sup>28</sup> *Taiping guangji* adds "The more it was scraped the clearer the characters got."

immortals, where the grave appears, it is only a staging post. The various ways immortals depart the world of generational change have been discussed in the previous chapter.

These possible *topoi* for *Shenxian zhuan* can be summarized as follows:

- 1.) The subject shows acumen in traditional learning but throws it over to study the Dao.
- 2.) He has a meeting with an immortal who bestows on him a method, text or medicine.
- 3.) The seeker after immortality is tested.
- 4.) The immortal refuses to serve temporal authority.
- 5.) He returns to his village, or family.
- 6.) He possesses marvellous powers.
- 7.) He departs the ordinary world by ascending to heaven, disappearing into a mountain, and so on.

These are only some of the possible *topoi* that could have been chosen but the striking thing about them, when they are compared with the *topoi* in secular biographies, is how inadequate they are. First, while a possible immortal's biography could be constructed from them, there is no biography which has these seven constituents and no others. Secondly, in some biographies there are counter examples that contradict one or more of these constituents. Thirdly, when they do adequately account for all the immortals, as does number five, they are so general that they cannot be truly described as a motif. Fourthly, they do not cover the whole range of activities and incidents that occur in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies. In one sense, this points to the inadequacy of the notion of *topoi* when applied to these biographies. As was noted earlier, the more constrained a type of writing the easier it is to isolate rules that govern its composition. By the same token the freer the authors are from generic constraint, the less likely it is that such rules can be identified. It is clear that when, under particular social conditions, a social role or type is considered exemplified by a relatively strict set of criteria - as was the official by the Yuan, it would appear - the possibilities open to the author of a life were limited to certain types of characters and actions. That is, there was a prevailing idea of what an official ought to be, so a biographer was obliged to make his subject fit the model. Thus, the biographies tend to share certain characteristics - or typical constituents. The conclusion that can be drawn from this, in relation to the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies, is that a single clearly defined set ideas of what an immortal was meant to be had not been formed. This is not to say that a model was not being formed - that some *topoi* can be found perhaps indicates that such a process may have been going on. In other words, the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies may be evidence of an early stage of the development of narrative *topoi* in immortals' biographies. If that were the case, however, such a model of an immortal's life clearly did not exert the degree of power that the later model of the official's did. What is just as likely, in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies, is simply that similar content was represented. In other words, the potential *topoi* that have been isolated are shared religious features not shared conventional narrative constituents. Some parts of some immortals' biographies look the same because some parts of their actual lives did -

or at least what people remembered about their lives did. In short, the variety of the biographies argues against there being a conventional model of the life of an immortal at the time that the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies were being compiled.

#### "Verbal" and "Adjectival" Structures

The structure of early Chinese biographical narratives has not been discussed at great length. One attempt to analyse the narrative structures of early biographies is that of Joseph Roe Allen III<sup>29</sup> who, in his study of biographies from *Shiji*, follows the model of narrative described by Robert Scholes and Robert Kellog.<sup>30</sup>

Allen claims the two biographies he studies - Wu Zixu and Li Guang - have different plot structures. While both may be termed episodic<sup>31</sup>, Wu's is characterized as "verbal" in that it "is constructed in a nearly unilinear movement that is purposely directed towards a certain end" while Li's is characterized as "adjectival" because it "does not centre on any purposeful movement towards a set goal, but rather...its presentation [is] of thematically associated episodes in a manner that is nearly 'acausal' and 'atemporal'."<sup>32</sup> Loosely, a "verbal" structure generates what is normally called a story where unity is achieved through action whereas an "adjectival" structure more nearly consists of a series of illustrative anecdotes which achieve unity through theme. These categories are not exclusive but the distinction between them is a useful one. Allen maintains, further, that the way that characterization operates in these two biographies is related to their plot structure. Li Guang is central to each incident in his biography so, in a sense, each incident forms part of his characterization. Wu Zixu, on the other hand, is only one actor in a complex plot. Allen observes that "Li Guang performs the movement of his plot, Wu Zixu performs *in* the movements of his".<sup>33</sup> Finally, following Scholes and Kellog's theory, Allen claims that a narrative "means" more as it becomes more symbolic and less mimetic - in the *Shiji* biographies, this would translate as the extent to which a biography illustrates a "type" - Li Guang - rather than represents the events of a life - Wu Zixu. Allen goes one stage further and maintains that "Li Guang is nearly an allegorical figure...His type is offered to explain and, in this case, defend, the personality of Li Ling, grandson of Li Guang".<sup>34</sup>

The applicability of Allen's analysis to the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies, in particular his use of the distinction between "verbal" and "adjectival" structures, will be addressed

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<sup>29</sup> Allen, J.R.III, "An Introductory Study of Narrative Structures in the Shi ji".

<sup>30</sup> See Scholes, R. and Kellog, R., *The Nature of Narrative* (New York, 1975).

<sup>31</sup> Here Allen borrows, to some extent, the use Prusek made of the characterizations of two kinds of history as "Treppenabsatz" and "ununterbrochener Fluss". Prusek attempts to distinguish the Chinese writing of history from the European by stressing its segmented nature, either into yearly packages in the annalistic histories or schematic categories in the dynastic histories, especially the *liezhuan*. See Prusek, J., "History and Epics in China and in the West" in Prusek, *Chinese History and Literature* (Prague, 1970), 17-34. Such a segmentation of experience into discrete episodes, as opposed to representing history as a flowing continuity, also characterizes each narrative.

<sup>32</sup> Allen, "An Introductory Study of Narrative Structures in the Shi ji" p. 48.

<sup>33</sup> Allen, "An Introductory Study of Narrative Structures in the Shi ji" p. 53.

<sup>34</sup> Allen, "An Introductory Study of Narrative Structures in the Shi ji" p. 65.

below but some other observations of the nature of the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies should be made first.

In the previous section it was observed that many of the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies do not arrange the events that comprise the record of an immortal's life in sequence, and the biography of Ban Meng was given as an example. That particular biography also makes clear the essentially episodic nature of the record of these non-sequential biographies. However, even when biographies are arranged sequentially, and therefore constitute narratives, there are only a few cases that present experience as a continuous flow. The biography of Sage Mother Dongling that was cited in full earlier in this chapter is a good example of this. Clearly the various events described in that biography occur one after the other but they are presented in a discontinuous way. The same kind of discontinuity within a sequential structure can be seen in the biography of Wang Lie:

Wang Lie, courtesy name Changxiu, was a native of Handan. He constantly took Yellow essence and lead. At the age of three hundred and thirty eight he still had a youthful complexion. When he climbed mountains or passed through ravines he stepped as if flying. In his youth he was a student the Academy. Of the studied works there was not one he had not read. He constantly discussed the five classics and the hundred schools with others. There was no subject to which his knowledge did not extend.

Palace Attendant Grandee Ji Shuye [Ji Kang] of Qiaoguo greatly respected and loved him. Time after time Shuye would go to study with him and together they entered the mountains to roam together and pick herbs.

Later Lie went alone into Taihang shan. He suddenly heard a landslide on the east of the mountain like the sound of thunder. Lie did not know what it was and went to see. He saw the mountain collapsed and rocks split for several hundred *zhang* - both banks were of a green rock. Inside the rock there was a cave mouth with an entrance about one *chi* across. Green mud like bone marrow flowed out from inside. Lie took some of the mud and formed it into balls. After a short while they became like rock, just as a shape formed out of hot wax sets quickly. They had the smell of cooked non-glutinous rice and were similarly chewy. Lie moulded some together until they were the size of peaches, took them and carried a few back. He said to Shuye, "I have obtained something marvellous." Shuye was extremely happy. He took them and examined them. They had already become like a green rock and when struck they rang out like brass. Then Shuye went back with Lie to have a look. The split mountain had reverted to its previous state.

Lie entered Baodu shan in Hedong. He saw a stone chamber with a white stone stand inside. On the stand was a text written on plain silk (*sushu*) in two chapters. Lie took and tried to read it but he did not know the characters in which it was written. He did not dare take the book away

but put it straight back on the stand. He surreptitiously copied down several tens of the characters and showed them to Kang. Kang knew all the characters, to Lie's delight. Then Lie went with Kang to read it together. When they reached the path it was very clear where they had to go but when they got to the spot they could not find the stone chamber. Lie said privately to a disciple, "The reason for this was that Shuye had not yet attained the Dao."

Also, *Shenxian jing*<sup>35</sup> says "The spirit mountain opens once every five hundred years and stone marrow flows from inside. If you obtain it and ingest it then longevity equal to Heaven will be achieved." This was certainly what Lie previously obtained.

In Wenxi county in Hedong people served Lie for generations. In the Yongning reign period [301-2] he left down the Luo river and roamed around taking part in archery contests. Lie could draw back a two *shi* bow<sup>36</sup> and shoot over a hundred paces. He would break the target with nine out of ten arrows. A year later he returned.

There was also a certain Zhang Zidao of about ninety who came to pay his respects to Lie. Lie received him as his equal, which those present thought odd. Zidao said, "When I was eight or nine I met him. He looked just the same then as now. I have grown old and Lie, alone, has remained youthful".

Nobody knew where he went after that. (Wang Lie)

In this biography, unlike that of Sage Mother Dongling, the sequentially arranged episodes are each quite substantial. Nonetheless, they are not linked into a continuous narrative. It is also worth noting that in Wang Lie's biography no real attempt is made to show the complete record of his life despite the fact that there is some skeleton of the form when the biography mentions what happened "When young..." and ends the record with his disappearance. Much more is left out than is included. In a sense this observation derives from the confusion of referring to these *zhuan* as "biographies" rather than "traditions" or "records" - to some extent this conventional translation sets up expectations which were never intended by the original. However, clarifying this confusion does serve to point out the character of these lives as essentially not of the "womb to tomb" variety. Very often they fit the "some scenes from the life of..." model much better. Each episode is an illustration of the subject's powers that proves the subject's transcendence of the bounds of normal human life. In their structuring, therefore, the basic exemplary character of the biographies is revealed. They do not have to narrate a life; rather they try to prove that their subjects have certain characteristics. This could serve as a definition of what Joseph Roe Allen, in his analysis of two *Shiji*

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<sup>35</sup> The citation of this biography at *Xianyuan bianzhu*, *xia:2a* reads *Xianjing*.

<sup>36</sup> Bows were measured by units of weight - two *shi* is approximately sixty kilogrammes. This was, in fact, a lighter bow than was generally used in the Han, when bows ranged from three to ten *shi*. See Loewe, *Records of Han Administration*, vol. one, pp.125 - 126.



biographies, calls an "adjectival" structure where the biography "does not centre on any purposeful movement towards a set goal, but rather...its presentation [is] of thematically associated episodes in a manner that is nearly 'acausal' and 'atemporal'".<sup>37</sup>

Can all of the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies be characterized as "adjectival" or are there examples of Allen's "verbal" structure where the biography "is constructed in a nearly unilinear movement that is purposely directed towards a certain end"?<sup>38</sup> The answer to this question is not clear. There are certainly candidates for "verbal status" such as the biography of Huang Chuping:

Huang Chuping was a native of Danxi. When he was fifteen his family employed him as a goatherd. A *daoshi* noticed how kind and considerate he was and led him into a rock chamber in Jinhua shan. After more than forty years quite suddenly he did not think of his family at all. His brother Chuqi went to seek out Chuping. Year after year passed but he could not find him. Later in a market he saw a *daoshi* who was skilled with the *Changes* and he asked him, "I have a younger brother who tends goats. He has been lost for over forty years and I do not know if he is alive or dead or where he is. I wish you to divine about this". The *daoshi* said, "A long time ago I met a Huang Chuping on Jinhua shan. That would be your brother, would it not?" Surprised and delighted by the news he accompanied the *daoshi* to find his brother. Finally they stood face to face. After the talk of joy and grief had come to an end the elder brother asked Chuping, "Where are the goats you were tending?" He replied, "Close by, east of the mountain." Chuqi went to look for them but they were not to be seen - there were only piles of white stones. He spoke to his brother again and said, "There are no goats east of the mountain." Chuping said, "The goats are there but you cannot see them." Chuping and his elder brother went together to seek them out. Chuping said, "*chi chi!* Goats arise!" and the white stones all rose up and became several tens of thousands of goats. The elder brother said, "Younger brother, you attained the Dao of immortality alone. Can it be learned?" The younger brother said, "Oh yes. If you love the Dao you can attain it." Chuqi then abandoned his wife and son and stayed with Chuping. Together they took cypress and fuling fungus. After ten thousand days he could practise "being present when sitting, disappearing when standing"<sup>39</sup> and in the middle of the day he cast no shadow. His face was the colour of a boy's.

Later they both returned to their district. All their relatives had died so their plans were ruined and they went back.<sup>40</sup> As they were about to go they taught their recipe to Nan Bofeng who changed his name to

<sup>37</sup> Allen, "An Introductory Study of Narrative Structures in the *Shi ji*" p.4 8.

<sup>38</sup> Allen, "An Introductory Study of Narrative Structures in the *Shi ji*" p.48.

<sup>39</sup> See chapter three for a discussion of *zuozai liwang*.

<sup>40</sup> The *Taiping guangji* text has "All their relatives had died and their property was lost so they went back".

Chisongzi . Chuqi changed his courtesy name to Lu Ban. Chuping changed his courtesy name to Songzi. Those who later took this medicine and became immortals numbered several tens of people. (Huang Chuping)

This biography consists of a single main episode with what might be termed a coda. The single episode both illustrates Chuping's powers and also has a clear narrative impetus. Thus, while it undeniably "moves towards a certain end" and is therefore, in Allen's terms, "verbal" it is no less exemplary than the "adjectival" examples. The more important "verbal" feature in this biography is that the narrative movement has an impetus - Chuping's disappearance prompts Chuqi's actions. The story is presented in terms of a complication that requires resolution, an essentially "verbal" movement.

A conclusion that Huang Chuping's biography is essentially "verbal" could be challenged by comparing it with particular episodes from other biographies that could, when taken as a whole, be characterised as "adjectival". Ge Xuan's biography consists of a good many episodes, very few of which are related sequentially to any other and all of which do little more than give examples of his powers. The following episode is a good example of this:

At the time there was a *daoshi* who was particularly able to cure disease. He came from the central states and swindled people saying, "I am several hundred years old". Xuan knew that this was untrue. Later he gathered up a crowd for a meeting and said to his relatives, "Do you want to know how old this gentleman is?" His relatives said, "That would be good". Suddenly a man descended from Heaven. The whole company stared at him and for a long while gathered around him. He wore red clothes and an "approaching wisdom hat" and entered the presence of the *daoshi*. He said, "The Heavenly Emperor demands your exact age, sir, to ascertain if you are cheating and deceiving the common people." The *daoshi* was extremely frightened and coming down from his sitting-bed, prostrated himself full-length. He replied, "I have offended. The truth is that I am seventy three". Xuan then clapped his hands together and let out a great laugh. Suddenly the red clad man disappeared. The *daoshi* was mortified and after that nobody knew where he went. (Ge Xuan)

In this episode there is a narrative impetus, an action that prompts a certain reaction from Ge Xuan. The complication is resolved; there is directed movement towards an end. Clearly it is, as narrative, as "verbal" as the biography of Huang Chuping - and yet the biography of which it is a part could happily be characterized as "adjectival" when considered as a whole. Huang Chuping's biography, then, may simply be a case of a single "verbal" incident comprising an entire "adjectival" biography. These analytical difficulties make clear that Allen's categories need refining, at least as far as the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies are concerned.

The distinction between "verbal" and "adjectival" structures has some relevance as a way of categorizing certain types of incidents but it is less useful as a way of characterizing whole biographies. Within a set of exemplary anecdotes extracted from a

number of biographies that are concerned with, say, displays of supernatural power, this distinction can be made between those which follow a problem / resolution pattern - something happened, then so and so did an extraordinary thing, and the situation was resolved - and those which are presented in a simple, unstructured form - so and so did an extraordinary thing. Beyond this it would be unwise to use this distinction to make conclusions about the relative degrees of complexity shown in the narrative techniques of the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies, if only because many of them show signs of editorial intervention. An editor whose interests lie in the display of extraordinary powers may easily summarize a whole biography, full of heavily-plotted incident, into simple reports. In other words, narrative complexity may be a casualty of the editing process.

### Structural Features

In addition to considering the ways a biography, as such, may be generated, that is how its being a biography determines how a particular figure is represented, the question of specific structural features in specific biographies should be addressed. In this section certain arrangements of events will be considered in order to show the way that the structure of a biography can serve its exemplary function.

At the beginning of the last section a distinction was drawn between the non-sequential biography - Ban Meng - and the sequential biography - Sage Mother Dongling. Typically, in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies, the sequence of events is established by positioning episodes in relation to the previous one narrated rather than in the absolute terms of specified dates or times. In the biography of Sage Mother Dongling, and those of Huang Chuping and Wang Lie, the passing of time is noted - "Later..." - rather than the date on which an event occurred or how long after the previous event it happened. This may be seen as creating a kind of temporal blur where the relative speed of the passing of time is not clear. Alternatively, it could be argued that such a structure depicts an essentially static, timeless world.

However, in some biographies this is not the case. In previous sections several cases of the immortal returning to a distant descendant were noted.<sup>41</sup> One was the biography of Lü Gong where Lü met three immortals on a mountain. It reads, in part:

After he had followed the transcendents for two days they handed a secret recipe over to him.

They sent Gong away and said, "You can see your village". Gong then bade them farewell and took his leave. The three of them said to Gong, "In the two days you were with us more than two hundred years elapsed among men". Gong returned home but only saw an empty shack without a single descendant. Then he saw an inhabitant of that village several generations his junior called Zhao Fu and asked him where the

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<sup>41</sup> The representation of the passage of time in biographies of immortals is discussed in DeWoskin, "Xian Descended: Narrating Xian among Mortals".

clan of Lü Gong might be. Fu answered, "Where have you come from, sir, that you, enquire about someone from the distant past? Long ago I heard one of my forebears say that in ancient times there was a Lü Gong who took a male and a female slave into Taihang shan to collect herbs but they never returned. He thought he had been eaten by tigers or wolves - but that was more than two hundred years ago." (Lü Gong)

This excerpt represents an added complexity in terms of narrative sequence when compared with those mentioned above. Here, events are not simply rendered into a sequence where the passing of time is blurred, there is a marked shift in the time elapsed between episodes. There are several examples of this feature in the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies. The biography of Wang Yuan provides a good example:

[Wang Yuan] then told [Cai Jing] the essentials, abandoned him and left. Later Jing's body suddenly gave off heat like a fire and he asked for cold water to douse himself. The whole family drew water and doused him, just like pouring water on a fire. This continued for three days. He melted away until he was just bare bones. He entered a chamber and covered himself with a quilt. Suddenly he was nowhere to be seen. If you looked into the quilt all that could be seen was skin: a head, feet and everything in place like a cicada's shedded exuviae.

More than ten years after he left Jing suddenly returned home. When he left he had already grown old but when he returned he was younger and stronger. The hair on his head was all black. (Wang Yuan)

Clearly this shift in time does not simply represent a narrative complexity; it also demonstrates the nature of immortality itself. The disparity between the time of the narrated events and the time of the narration parallels the disparity between the experience of time for the immortal and for those left behind. Of course, we are told elsewhere that immortals' time is different from ours - most directly in this same biography where Magu speaks about seeing mulberry fields becoming the ocean three times - but this structural feature in the biographies reinforces the point.

In the section on witnesses, there were also examples of a more elaborate kind of temporal lapse. In this context the biography of Shen Xi can stand as an example. Shen, like Lü, returns to a distant descendant:

After more than four hundred years [Shen Xi] finally returned to his home village and found his descendant of several tens of generations whose given name was Huai. Huai happily said "I have heard my forebears tell of our transcendent ancestor. Now the transcendent has come." (Shen Xi)

However, the point here is not simply to illustrate the differences in the experience of time. The biography continues:

He stayed several tens of days and explained how he first ascended to Heaven. (Shen Xi)

This explanation accounts for the second half of the biography. The same structure is seen in the biography of Liu Gen, translated here in full:

Liu Gen, courtesy name Jun'an, was a native of Chang'an in Jingzhao. While young he mastered the five classics. In the second year of the Suihe reign period of Xiao Cheng Huangdi of the Han (7 BCE) he was recommended as Filially Pious and Incorrupt and was appointed as a Gentleman-of-the-Palace. Later he cast aside things of the world to study the Dao. He entered a rock chamber on Songgao shan with soaring precipice above and a sheer drop of over five thousand *zhang* below. He did not wear any clothes in winter or summer. His body hair was over one or two *chi* long. His complexion was that of a fourteen or fifteen year old. His eyes were deep-set and he had a great deal of facial hair - all yellow and three or four *cun* long. When he sat with others, occasionally he would suddenly be wearing a high cap and dark clothes but nobody noticed him changing his clothes.

Resident Official<sup>42</sup> Heng himself explained that Gen and his own father were recommended in the same year. In Wang Mang's time (9-23 CE) he repeatedly sent an envoy to invite Gen but Gen refused to go. Resident Official Heng sent his commandery subordinate Wang Zhen to ask after him but Gen did not reply. Next he ordered Lord Zhao of the Office of Merits to go to the mountain to pass on his respects. Gen expressed his thanks to the Resident Official and not a word more. Later when the Chief of Yingchuan Resident Official Gao took up his office the people of the commandery were suffering an epidemic and more than half of them had died. Everyone, old and young, in the Chief's house had caught the disease. Resident Official Gao again sent Zhen to seek out Gen to request his technique for expelling pestilential *qi*. Zhen kowtowed and passed on the words of the Resident Official. Gen instructed him that the *qi* of the Taisui palace was on the rise. Sand should be placed in a hole dug three *chi* into the ground and wine should be poured onto it. The Gentleman followed these instructions and all the sick were cured and the pestilential *qi* was eradicated. Each time it was used it proved effective.

A later Chief, Resident Official Zhang, considered Gen to be a sorcerer. He sent an officer to summon Gen intending to execute him. Although the entire commandery pleaded with him the Resident Official would not release Gen. As this was the case all the officials went to Gen. They wanted to make him leave but Gen would not comply with their wishes. When the Resident Official's messenger arrived and asked Gen to come he said, "What does Resident Official Zhang want with me? He ought to come here but if I do not go I fear that you will receive censure for lacking the courage to come and summon me." That day Gen arrived at

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<sup>42</sup> On the term *fujun* see chapter one.

the Residence and it was completely full of Gen's friends. The Resident Official had made more than fifty people stand there with their swords, staves, cords and ropes. Gen's countenance remained unperturbed. The Resident Official asked Gen in an imposing voice, "What techniques of the Dao do you possess?" Gen replied, "Well..." The Resident Official said, "Can you summon ghosts?" He replied, "I can." The Resident Official said, "Since you can, seize a ghost and have it come to the front of this hall, or else you will be put to death." Gen said, "Summoning ghosts is so easy." He borrowed a brush, an inkstone and the judge's long table. The clanking sound of bronze and iron was heard outside. There was also a long whistle. Its sound was unusually clear - none who heard it were not in awe - and all the guests shook in fear. After a short time a split opened up several *zhang* wide in the southern wall of the hall and four or five hundred soldiers ready for battle could be seen. Gen summoned several tens of vermilion clad soldiers with knives and swords in their hands who brought a cart. It came straight in through the broken wall.<sup>43</sup> Gen ordered the ghosts that were on the cart to descend and the vermilion-clad then threw open the *pi*<sup>44</sup> that was on the cart. In it were seen an old man and an old woman. They were bound with a large rope and were hung by the head in the front of the hall. The Resident Official recognized them - they were his own dead mother and father. The aghast Resident Official burst into tears and had no idea what to do. A ghost then upbraided him. "When I was alive you had not gained preferment so I was not supported from your salary. Now I am dead. Why do you offend the eminent immortal official and have me brought here in such humiliating disgrace! How can you have the effrontery to appear in public?" The Resident Official came down off his platform and kowtowed. He turned to Gen, admitted his crime was worthy of execution and pleaded with Gen to spare his parents. Gen ordered the five hundred soldiers to lead the prisoners out and send them away. The cart left through the southern wall. After it had passed through, the wall reverted to its original state. Then the cart vanished and Gen, himself, disappeared.

The bewildered and confused Resident Official looked as if he had gone quite mad. Just at that time his wife died but a long while later revived and came back to life. She said she had seen his forebears who had been seized and that they were angrily saying, "Why did you offend the eminent immortal official and bring about our seizure? Now I shall

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<sup>43</sup> At this point the text adds "which then reverted to its previous state". This is clearly a late addition as the same phrase occurs in the obvious place, after the heavenly soldiers have departed back through the wall, some lines later.

<sup>44</sup> This *pi* ( 披 ) is normally a kind of silken cord used to balance and pull a funerary cart. Though clearly in this context it is some kind of funerary object, this meaning makes little sense when the *pi* is on top of the cart and can be thrown open, as the text insists. Its exact meaning therefore remains obscure.

come to kill you." A month later the Resident Official, his wife and son were all dead.

The commandery official Wang Zhen was able to see Gen several times. When he could tell from Gen's appearance that he was in a joyful mood he fell to the ground and kowtowed and requested Gen to tell him the story of how he studied immortality.

Gen said "Long ago when I entered the mountains I concentrated my thoughts and travelled everywhere. Later I went to Huayin shan where I saw someone in a carriage drawn by white deer with more than ten attendants following. At the sides were four jade maidens who held staffs with coloured tassels. All were about fifteen or sixteen years old.

"I made my obeisance, bowed to the ground, then begged a word from him. The spirit-man addressed me: 'You have heard of Han Zhong, have you not?' 'In truth, I have heard of him', I replied. 'I am he', the spirit-man said. I made my plea: 'Since I was young I have loved the Dao yet I have never encountered an enlightened teacher. I have often studied the recipes and have followed the instructions but they have mostly had no effect. Is it that my destiny and physiognomy do not correspond with transcending this world? What great fortune it is that today I have encountered a great spirit. This has long been my desire. I wish you to take pity on me and bestow on me the essential instructions.' As the spirit did not consent to address me, I wept and beat myself to implore him.

"The spirit-man replied, 'Be seated, I have an announcement for you. You have the bones of an immortal - that is why you have been able to see me. At the moment your bone marrow is incomplete, your blood is not warm, your *qi* is deficient and your brain has shrunk. Your sinews are atrophied and your flesh has wasted. Therefore when you take medicine and circulate your *qi* you do not gain any benefit. If you wish to attain long life you must first cure your illnesses. After twelve years it will be possible for you to take the medicine of immortality. Now the Dao of immortality includes those who ascend to Heaven and tread on the clouds, those who travel to the five sacred peaks, those who ingest substances and do not die and those who become immortals through corpse-liberation. For the pursuit of the Dao of immortality the essential thing is to take medicine. There are better and worse medicines - as there are several grades of immortals. You will never attain immortality without knowledge of sexual practices, of circulating the *qi* and *daoyin* nor the spirit medicines. Among the high grades of medicines are the Nine-times Cycled Reversion Elixir and the Taiyi Liquified Gold. Everyone who takes these will ascend straight to Heaven before many days or months have passed. Next comes those of the types Mica and Realgar. Although they do not immediately allow you to ride on clouds and yoke dragons in harness it is possible to order ghosts and spirits about as servants, to undergo

transformations and gain long life. After this come all the medicines derived from plants. They can cure the hundred diseases, supplement what is lacking, maintain your looks, allow you to abstain from grains and increase your *qi*. They do not enable you to avoid death. At best you may live until you are several hundred years old. At worst you will completely live out your endowment but no more. They are not strong enough to be relied on forever.'

"I bowed my head and said, 'What you have taught me today is Heaven itself.'

"The spirit-man said, 'If you wish to attain long life you must first expel the three corpses. Once the three corpses are gone, the will and intention can be settled and lusts and desires expelled.'"

"Then he granted me the spirit recipes in five sections and said, 'The hidden corpses ascend to Heaven at the full moon and at the turn of the month to report on the crimes and transgressions of men. The Controller deducts a calculated number of years <sup>45</sup> from each person causing them not to live long. The spirit inside your body desires your body to be alive. The corpses, on the other hand, desire you dead. Once you die, your spirit scatters and becomes a ghost among the Shapeless feeding off the sacrifices that are offered. That is why they want you dead. If you dream of fighting evil men, this is the corpses battling with your spirit.'

"I followed his instructions, blended and ingested the medicine and subsequently attained immortality."

Each time Zhen saw Gen he wrote talismans. When completed, whoever he summoned, it seemed as if someone came and fetched the talisman. It happened that several times he heard an interrogation and someone's reply. Then he heard the sound of a whipping. Yet, never did he see the forms from which the sounds had come. From time to time there was blood on the ground but no-one could understand the reason.

Gen taught Zhen Protecting the One, Circulating the *Qi* and Preserving the Spirit; Sitting in the Three Mainstays and the Six Strands<sup>46</sup> and the method of Confessing Sins by Sending up the Name. Later, Gen entered Jitou shan and went off as an immortal. (Liu Gen)

In this biography the way that Liu acquired immortality is entirely framed as a reminiscence. In this case the witness is not a relative but a character who has appeared briefly in the first half of the biography. It is also worth noting that there has been no time lapse. Nonetheless the biography makes use of a two part structure which recalls the earlier examples based around the idea of the immortal returning to his village. The

<sup>45</sup> A comparable explanation can be found in *Baopuzi*, 3:53 citing *Yuqian jing zhongpian*.

<sup>46</sup> On the mainstays and strands, Schafer writes "These mainstays (*kang*) are the cosmic meridians which bind the stars to each other and to the poles...Perpendicular to the Mainstays are the Strands or Filaments (*chi*) of the sky...", Schafer, E., *Pacing the Void* (Berkeley, 1977), p. 241.



function of these two-part structures is clear and relates to the observations made earlier in this chapter concerning the position of the (anonymous) narrator. In Shen Xi's case, the information we gather from the speech he gives to his descendant concerns heaven itself; in Liu Gen's we receive a description of the meeting between the immortal and the seeker after the Dao with much more detailed material than is provided in the other biographies where this kind of meeting takes place. The two part structure enables information to be given that is not accessible to a narrator who is understood to be part of the ordinary folk.

The various structures that have been outlined here can be seen as progressively more complex models of narrative. They can be shown in diagrammatical form in this way:

<u>Ban Meng</u>	<u>Sage Mother</u>	<u>Lü Gong</u>	<u>Liu Gen</u>
Event	Event	Event	Event
Event	Later, Event	Later, Event	Later, Event
Event	Later, Event	Later, Event	Later, Event
(etc)	(etc)	(etc)	(etc)
		Witness	Witness
			{Event
			Later, Event
			Later, Event
			(etc)}

There is one example of a more complex structure in a single biography that deserves to be mentioned - that of Madame Fan:

Madame Fan was the wife of Liu Gang. Gang served as prefect of Shangyu. He possessed Daoist techniques and was able to summon ghosts and spirits and interdict acts of transformation. Also, he hid his practice and concealed the evidence of it. No-one knew about it.

In the execution of his duties he made a principle of peace and quiet. Though brief and simply expressed, government orders were widely put into effect and the common people received his wisdom. There were none of the griefs of flood or drought, pestilence or poison, violence or cruelty. Year after year there was abundance.

On days off he often matched his skills with his wife.

They sat together on the top of the hall and Gang made a fire and sent it into the mill room. It rose up from the East. His wife stopped its progress and then extinguished it.<sup>47</sup>

In the courtyard were two peach trees. Husband and wife made incantations over one each after which the trees started bashing and hitting each other. After a good while the tree Gang had made incantations over came off worse and several times it ran away out of the fence.

Gang spat into a tub and his spit turned into a carp. His wife spat into the tub and hers became an otter which ate the fish.

Gang and his wife entered Siming shan. Their path was blocked by a tiger. Gang restrained it and the tiger prostrated itself and did not dare move. Gang moved on to where he he was going and the tiger slew him. When his wife came up the tiger faced the ground and would not look up. His wife tied it up with rope at the foot of the bed.<sup>48</sup>

Whenever they tested their skills together Gang never won. When the time came for him to ascend to Heaven, Gang climbed several *zhang* up a big acacia tree that formerly stood at the side of the county buildings before he was able to fly off. His wife sat calmly and slowly ascended like cloud *qi* when she, likewise, went off by ascending to Heaven. (Fan Furen)

The various episodes in this biography are arranged in a structure that is strikingly suggestive of a joke. This series of episodes are all parallel and they are all predicated on a status reversal - Liu Gang is introduced to us as a exemplary administrator. The concluding episode, while conforming to the standard pattern of the end of an immortal's biography, is also parallel but carries the pattern to an extreme point with an incident that looks very much like a punchline.

### Symbolic Structures

The previous sections of this chapter have explored various ways in which the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies are structured using tools that are, to a greater or lesser extent, usually those of literary analysis. In this section I will briefly examine the symbolic structures of the biographies, concentrating on two in particular - Zuo Ci and Sun Bo - in a way that, while increasingly used in literary analysis, derives from the

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<sup>47</sup> *Xianyuan bianzhu*, *xia*:1b has this sentence (not ascribed to *Shenxian zhuan*) reading "His wife made rain rise up from the west and extinguish the fire".

<sup>48</sup> The text gives no indication of how Gang came back to life. Du Guangting's *Daode zhenjing guangsheng yi*, 36:20b has a different version of this incident that makes slightly more sense "They travelled to Siming shan and encountered a tiger. When the tiger saw Gang it prostrated and did not dare rise. By speaking with the Heavenly man [the relevance of this phrase is unclear to me] his wife came up and tied up the tiger and returned with it like a house dog."

anthropological study of myth. To be precise, this analysis will examine the use of systems of cultural meaning encoded in these two biographies. These systems are not made explicit but the position of the biographical subject within them reveals their special status. First, the biography of Sun Bo:

Sun Bo was a native of Hedong. He possessed a brilliant talent and showed great skill in writing. He composed one hundred chapters of poems and could recite several hundred thousand words of the classics from memory. Late in life he studied the Dao and mastered the techniques of Mozi.

He was able to make plants and trees, metal and stone, all catch fire. The light from the flames was dazzling over several tens of *li*. He was able to make his own body burst into flames and fire come spitting from his mouth. When he pointed at big <sup>49</sup> trees or green grass they would wither. When he pointed at them again they would revert to their previous state. He was able to make each grouping of the three armies become a mass of flame.

There was a slave who had escaped and was kept in an army camp. He was sought for several days but without success. Bo said to the slave owner, "I will burn the barracks and sheds for you, sir. The slave will have to run out. You can then just watch and apprehend him, sir." Then he pitched a red ball into the army camp and a short time later fire rose up and covered the sky. The slave finally came out and they got him. Bo then pitched a green ball into the fire and it died down. The buildings and goods that had been burnt and charred all reverted to their previous state.

Whenever Bo made a fire, nobody else could put it out even though they doused it with water. But soon after, when Bo wanted it stopped, it did.

He walked into a great river and not only did he not get wet, <sup>50</sup> he was also able to prevent several hundred of his followers from getting wet.

He was also able to lead others on to the river. They unrolled mats, sat down, ate and drank and made music. He made all the people dance on the river and they did not sink or get immersed. All day they were endlessly happy. Those who were ill, Bo cured. They did not have to say anything - he just pointed directly at them and said "Be cured" and they were cured.

Furthermore Bo walked into mountain cliffs and rocks that had fallen to the ground. At first you could see his back and ears sticking out of the rock. After a while he disappeared.

He was also able to swallow several tens of knives and swords.

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<sup>49</sup> *Yunji qiqian* has *huo* (火) here. This clearly does not make sense. I follow *Siku quanshu* and *Taiping guangji*, in reading *da* (大) in its place.

<sup>50</sup> *Taiping guangji* has this passage as "He walked into water and fire without getting wet or burnt."

When he entered walls, he came and went as if there were crevices.

He could stretch mirrors to make knives and draw out knives into mirrors. It would stay as he had left it for ages and it would not change - but as soon as Bo pointed, it would revert to its original shape.

Later on he entered Linlü shan where he blended the spirit elixir and went off as an immortal. (Sun Bo)

On first reading, this biography does not appear to be particularly unusual; like many others the subject demonstrates his extraordinary powers in several anecdotes which are, in narrative terms, independent of each other. A narrative structure is not, however, the only possible structure. In this case, the biography refers to a preexisting highly structured symbolic system, namely the five phases. Sun Bo's demonstrations of power systematically show his control over fire, water, earth and metal. The phase element that he does not control is wood. This is by no means accidental. In the standard correlations of the five phases wood belongs with spring, the east, green and growth. In terms of its primary opposition with metal, wood is to life as metal is to death or, as it is set out in one contemporary fate calculation scheme, wood is to long life as metal is to premature death.<sup>51</sup> The absent item in the culturally understood group of five - wood - aligns Sun Bo with long life.

Moreover, in the biography Sun is shown, symbolically, to have transcended the normal weaknesses of wood. The two standard arrangements of the five phases are as follows:

Conquest Cycle

Fire conquers Metal  
Metal conquers Wood  
Wood conquers Earth  
Earth conquers Water  
Water Conquers Fire

Production Cycle

Fire produces Earth  
Earth produces Metal  
Metal produces Water  
Water produces Wood  
Wood produces Fire

In the conquest cycle wood is conquered by metal; in the production cycle wood produces fire. Leaving aside the sometimes contorted reasoning behind these arrangements wood is primarily threatened by metal and fire. It is precisely these two that Sun has the power not only to transform from one state to another, but also to change back to their original state. Sun Bo, in short, is aligned with wood, and thus growth and life, but he is also shown to have overcome its usual shortcomings; he is, symbolically, impregnable wood.

The biography of Zuo Ci operates within a different symbolic system. In this biography Zuo rejected the official life and opted to study the Dao. He obtained the *Jiudan jinye jing* and could perform the ten thousand transformations. When Cao Cao,

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<sup>51</sup> See my "A System of Fate Calculation in *Taiping jing*", *Papers on Far Eastern History*, 41 (March 1990), 1-8.

here called the Duke of Wei, heard of this he apprehended him and locked him in a cave. After a year without food Zuo looked the same as when he was locked away, Cao concluded that he practised the evil arts (*zuo dao*) and decided to kill him. Four times Zuo escaped from Cao by using his powers of transformation. Later Zuo Ci turned up in Jingzhou only to find that the so-called Inspector of that province, Liu Biao (a de facto independent ruler) also wanted to kill him, this time on the grounds that he was tricking the people. Zuo divided a small amount of dried meat and wine amongst Liu's more than ten thousand soldiers. Liu was so impressed he let Zuo go. Zuo then travelled to Dantu in eastern Wu, where he encountered the warlord Sun Quan. For an unstated reason, Sun also wanted to kill him but once again Zuo escaped using his marvellous powers. Finally Zuo entered Huoshan, mixed the elixir and went off as an immortal.

The episodes in this biography are arranged sequentially but it is not that arrangement that is of interest here. Cao Cao, Liu Biao and Sun Quan had, for a period between the years 202 and 208, the whole of the eastern part of China divided between them. Following Cao Cao's defeat of Yuan Shao at Guandu in 200 and Yuan's death in 202, Cao Cao took control of the entire north east. Liu Biao ruled Jingzhou until his death in 208 and Sun Quan had taken over in Wu from his brother Sun Ce in 200. Zuo therefore encounters, and is threatened with death by, the three most powerful warlords in the country. There is a symbolically important resonance here which concerns the rulers he visits. In the period that Zuo moves about the country Cao Cao, Liu Biao and Sun Quan comprise the complete set of powerful warlords. In this sense Zuo covers the entire territory showing his supreme power by overcoming all temporal authority. Finally, after this symbolic circumnavigation Zuo returns to his source by retiring to Huoshan, a bare hundred kilometres from his native place in Lujiang, and the nearest practicable mountain. In addition, Huoshan has also been known as Tianzhu shan, literally Celestial Pillar Mountain. The celestial pillar is an axis mundi; it was this, in mythology, that Gong Gong broke in his battle with Zhuan Xu which led to the tilting of the earth.<sup>52</sup> Thus, in one reading, Zuo Ci returns not just to his own beginning but also to that place around which the earth itself revolves, a cosmic enactment of his own circumnavigation.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See, for one version of this story, *Huainanzi* (*Huainan honglie jijie*, Liu Wendian, ed., Taipei, 1978), 3:1b-2a.

<sup>53</sup> It may also be possible to argue that the representation of Zuo resonates with the model of the philosopher-official of the Warring States period who went from state to state seeking employment. The political situation at the end of the Eastern Han, while still nominally unified under the emperor, fits well with that of the earlier period when the competing states still owed loyalty to the Zhou throne. Of course, the exemplary case is Confucius himself but many of the great names of pre-Qin philosophy comply with this model, indeed they could be seen as, to a greater or lesser extent, explicitly following him. Thus, Zuo Ci, in his travels and meetings with the great rulers of his day, may be taken to emulate - and, perhaps, symbolically re-enact - the quest of the great philosophical culture heroes. The difference between Zuo Ci and these philosopher-officials is that Zuo did not offer his services to Cao Cao, Liu Biao and Sun Quan.

## Concluding Remarks

In the conclusion to chapter three, it was noted that one motivation behind the compilation of the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies appeared to have been to provide proof of the existence of immortals. The discussions of the present chapter enable a more nuanced version of that statement to be made. Within the biographical tradition in pre-modern China, a record of a life that simply proves the subject was an immortal can be seen as exemplary. This places the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies firmly within that tradition and sets them apart from other kinds of text that deal with some of the same sorts of material, such as records of marvels. This, in turn, makes comparisons with biographies from the standard histories and other sources possible even though the particularities of the life of the subject or the category of biography into which the subject fits may be very different. Discussions in this chapter have shown that two of the models scholars have used in analysing biographies in the standard histories - Allen's use of the idea of "verbal" and "adjectival" structures and Franke's typical constituents - have limited applicability in the case of the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies. Analysis of biographical records from sources other than *Shenxian zhuan* which specifically feature subjects of *Shenxian zhuan* biographies are discussed in the next chapter.

The previous chapter also demonstrated that despite a broad agreement on the general principles of immortality, the biographies are characterized by heterogeneity in relation to many of the details of an immortal's powers or the process of attaining immortality. In a similar way, it is clear that the pattern of an immortal's life does not follow a single model. Several technical features of the narrative, such as the construction of the narratorial voice, were found to be common to most of the biographies, but the way the lives are told does not follow a single form. Added to the variety in ideas surrounding the concept of immortality, this is persuasive evidence of the lack of a common religious culture at the time the biographies were compiled.

## Chapter Five: *Shenxian zhuan* and Biographical Traditions in Early Medieval China

In the section on *zhiguai* in the introduction it was shown that, far from being regarded as a form of proto-fiction, *Shenxian zhuan* was classified as history until well into the Tang dynasty. This chapter will seek to define some of the parameters of that understanding. In general, of course, the category of history in pre-modern China - and arguably in modern China as well - is as much concerned with judgement as it is with chronicle. We have seen, in the previous chapter, that the prime motive for biography was to produce exemplary lives: in the orthodox standard histories this led to collections of biographies of virtuous officials, filial sons, rebels and so on; in the strange world of immortals the exemplary biography needed only to proclaim its subject's existence. To examine the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies from the standpoint of history means, ultimately, to examine what kinds of judgements are made and, as will be demonstrated, from what position they are made. It will be shown that the biographies constitute a kind of alternative history - one which, nonetheless, demonstrates its accuracy in terms of events - and can, in specific circumstances, be made to act as a critique.

Alternative histories are defined as alternative by their difference from whatever version of history is authorized as standard; this does not, however, imply that they all differ in the same way - it is possible to transgress a norm in many directions. The necessary element in any alternative history is that while its version of the past is recorded from a different point of view, and so may contradict the authorized version of the past, it must adhere to an accepted set of data. Without acknowledgement of these details the alternative view of the past would pass into another mode, which would be characterized by incredibility. As was noted in the introduction, some of the figures who receive biographies in *Shenxian zhuan* also receive biographies in the standard histories (the works that are usually taken to stand near the believable end of the spectrum of historical records), or at least make appearances in them, often in citations from other works consulted by commentators. There are also records of figures who appear in *Shenxian zhuan* in other works that survive from the period - *Shuijing zhu*, *Soushen ji* and so on. These other biographical records, in the standard histories or in non-official texts, all operate on their own terms, too, and it must not be assumed that they can be interpreted as if they are all parts of the same biography as that in *Shenxian zhuan*.<sup>1</sup> This chapter is an attempt to define an interpretative framework in which to understand these different versions of single lives.

The status of the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies as religious, as well as historical, texts produces a different set of problems. Is historical accuracy compromised by a commitment beyond otherwise accepted facts? To agree with this proposition would be to

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<sup>1</sup> This is not to say of course that in the development of the various alternative versions of lives there was not influence from one textual tradition on another. This is, in fact more than likely - one compiler very probably knew of other existing texts - but from an interpretative point of view each text must be considered on its own terms.

misunderstand, in one sense, the nature of the orthodox historical tradition in China as well as the Daoist biographical one. There is a strong magnetic pull towards a middle position for both these traditions - in other words the proposition accepted in the modern west that the sacred and the secular are radically separated applies to a much lesser degree in China. And within unambiguously religious traditions, Daoism adheres most strongly to its version of what is accepted as an orthodox historiography - the writing of biography itself is eloquent testimony to that.

### Historical Accuracy

Partly because of its length, the *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Wang Yuan provides a rich source for comparison with other historical sources. The close alignment of this biography with data recoverable from the standard histories, especially in the case of Chen Dan, at the very least lends a certain credibility to the *Shenxian zhuan* record.

Wang Yuan himself only makes a fleeting appearance only on the margin of standard histories when Pei Songzhi's commentary to the biography of Yu Fan in *Sanguozhi* cites from a lost *Wushu* :

*Wushu* says: At first [Yu] Fan was going to accompany [Wang] Lang to Guangling but Lang was deluded by the message from Wang Fangping [Wang Yuan] which said, "Come urgently, seek for me at the southern peak." Lang followed the road south. When they arrived at Houguan he wanted to go off towards Jiaozhou but Fan remonstrated with Lang, "This is a stupid text. There is no southern peak in Jiaozhou. How can you head for it?" Then they stopped.<sup>2</sup>

Wang Lang, the prefect of Guiji, was on the run from the forces of Sun Ce after his failed defence of Wu in 196. He originally came from Donghai, also the native place of Wang Yuan. Wang's gnomic reference to seeking the southern peak appears to be a citation but I have been unable to locate a source. Clearly, however, this passing reference indicates that Wang Yuan was known to co-provincials at the least and was associated with mountains in the south.

Wang Yuan also makes an appearance in *Shuijing zhu* but the passage concerned has no attribution. The previous section of commentary comes from a text cited as *Jin taikang diji*.<sup>3</sup> Our passage cannot be from this text as it mentions Ge Hong who was born after the Taikang reign period of the Jin (280 - 289) had finished. It reads:

South of [Shangyu] xian is Lanfeng shan... When Ge Hong of Danyang retired from the world he lived there. The foundations of his house and his well are still there. Wang Fangping of Langye loved scenery profoundly, so he too dwelt on Lanfeng. He used to fish in it in order to stretch out the whole morning. A traveller passed him and, not recognizing

<sup>2</sup> *Sanguo zhi*, 57:1317.

<sup>3</sup> *Shuijing zhu*, 40:19a.



him, asked, "Do you sell fish? If, Sir, you catch a fish, would you sell it?" Fangping replied "This hook catches no fish. Anything it caught I wouldn't sell."<sup>4</sup>

There is little that can be concluded from this citation. Lanfeng shan, also known as Lanqiong shan, lies some twenty five *li* north west of Shangyu.<sup>5</sup> It is striking that Ge Hong is associated with this mountain. If we accept that the biography of Wang Yuan passed through his hands, Ge's retirement to Lanfeng shan must postdate that involvement. Nonetheless, that Wang Yuan's name is raised along with Ge Hong's in relation to this mountain in *Shuijing zhu* indicates that his story had some degree of currency even outside Daoist circles - and that at least one other anecdote about him was in circulation.

The few details given by *Shenxian zhuan* of Wang Yuan's official career are eminently plausible. Recommended as Filially Pious and Incorrupt, he clearly survived his probationary period as he progressed to the regular office of Gentleman-of-the-Palace. This was ranked at three hundred bushels and was the lowest of the three possible positions to which he could have progressed. He was then promoted to Palace Attendant Grandee at the rank of six hundred bushels. This position was, according to Bielenstein, created by Wang Mang and continued into the Later Han.<sup>6</sup> These details enable us to conclude that it must have been sometime towards the middle of the Later Han when, according to the *Taiping guangji* account - *Yunji qiqian* does not contain this detail - Wang Yuan resigned office and attained the Dao.

Chen Dan's career can be plotted with more accuracy. In the second month of the third year of the Xiping reign period of Emperor Ling (April/May, 174) he was promoted from the position of Grand Master of Ceremonies to Grand Commandant.<sup>7</sup> In the fifth month of the fifth year of Xiping (May/June, 176) he was dismissed and was replaced by the Minister of Works, Xu Xun.<sup>8</sup> Evidently Chen and Xu actually swapped jobs as the next time we hear of Chen, in the first year of Guanghe (178), he was dismissed from the post of Minister of Works to be replaced by the Grand Master of Ceremonies, Lai Yan.<sup>9</sup> In the tenth month of the fourth year of Guanghe (181), in winter, Chen was appointed to the last of the Three Excellencies he had not so far held, when he became Minister over the Masses after the incumbent, Yang Ci, left office.<sup>10</sup> At this point he is listed as being Grand Master of Ceremonies again so he had swapped jobs as before - this time experiencing a demotion. In the first month of the fifth year of Guanghe (183) he sent a memorial to the Emperor criticizing the then Grand Commandant, Xu Yu (appointed in

<sup>4</sup> *Shuijing zhu*, 40:19a/b.

<sup>5</sup> *Taiping huanyu ji*, 96:15b. This entry retells the *Shuijing zhu* story but refers to Wang Yuan as Wang Hong from Langye.

<sup>6</sup> See Bielenstein, H., *The Bureaucracy of Han Times*, p.30.

<sup>7</sup> *Houhan shu*, 8:335. The commentary of Li Xian lists his alternate name as Hangong and home as Donghai.

<sup>8</sup> *Houhan shu*, 8:338.

<sup>9</sup> *Houhan shu*, 8:341.

<sup>10</sup> *Houhan shu*, 8:346.

the fourth year of Guanghe, 181<sup>11</sup>) and Minister of Works, Zhang Ji (appointed second year of Guanghe, 179<sup>12</sup>). Later that year Chen was dismissed.<sup>13</sup> Xu Yu left the position of Grand Commandant in the eleventh month of Guanghe, 5 (182).<sup>14</sup> Zhang Ji left his position in the fourth month of Zhongping, 1 (184)<sup>15</sup>, as a result of illness.<sup>16</sup> In the tenth month of the second year of Zhongping (185), Chen died in prison with Liu Tao, another enemy of the eunuchs.<sup>17</sup> He is referred to as being "loyal and upright"<sup>18</sup> and one of those officials who would have ceded his position to a worthier man, in this case the eremite Chen Shi who died in 188.<sup>19</sup>

When his death is noted he is given the title "former Minister over the Masses" and as Minister over the Masses when he is compared to Chen Shi. In a passage from the treatise on the calendar where he is called Grand Commandant the dating is very specific: ninety two years starting from the second year of Yuanhe (85), which converts to 176.<sup>20</sup>

In the relevant surviving standard history, *Houhan shu*, Chen Dan was only described as Grand Commandant for those years he held that office, namely the second month of the third year of Xiping until the fifth month of the fifth year of Xiping (174 - 176). On the other hand a posthumous record of an official would have been likely to refer to that official by the *highest* title held rather than the *last* title held. Thus, it is not unusual that Chen Dan is described as the former Grand Commandant rather than the former Grand Master of Ceremonies.

If we use the date of the death of Chen Dan as a fixed point in both records we can test the accuracy of the *Shenxian zhuan* account. Thus if Chen died in the tenth month of Zhongping 2 (185) Wang would have left Chen's house one hundred days earlier, that is about the sixth month of Zhongping 2. More than thirty years before that<sup>21</sup> - in western dating before 155 - he had arrived at Chen's house. The event that occurs in the narrative immediately before his arrival is his refusal to serve the emperor Huandi (reigned 146 - 168). Thus using both the data from the standard histories and the *Shenxian zhuan* biography Wang must have arrived at Chen's house between 146 and 155.

It is not possible to present such a detailed analysis for other biographies but there are several cases of closely fitting accounts in which the *Shenxian zhuan* record places events in relatively restricted time frames. Towards the end of the last chapter the biography of

<sup>11</sup> *Houhan shu*, 8:345.

<sup>12</sup> *Houhan shu*, 8:342.

<sup>13</sup> *Houhan shu*, 8:346.

<sup>14</sup> *Houhan shu*, 8:347.

<sup>15</sup> *Houhan shu*, 8:348.

<sup>16</sup> *Houhan shu*, 45:1538.

<sup>17</sup> *Houhan shu*, 8:352.

<sup>18</sup> *Houhan shu*, 57:1851.

<sup>19</sup> *Houhan shu*, 62:2067.

<sup>20</sup> *Houhan shu, zhi*, 2:3039.

<sup>21</sup> While *Yunji qiqian* and *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* both read thirty years, *Longwei mishu* and *Siku quanshu* both have forty. If Wang had arrived at Chen's house "more than forty years" before Chen's death he could not have refused to serve Huandi as he would not yet have been on the throne.

Zuo Ci was discussed for its use of symbolic structures. Details given in this biography indicate that the events described occurred in an six-year span. It was noted that Zuo travelled in turn to each of the three rulers who together held the whole of eastern China in their grasp: Cao Cao, Liu Biao and Sun Quan. The absence of Yuan Shao from this triumvirate places the events after his death in 202. The presence of Liu Biao, who died in 208, gives a last possible date.

Similarly, the biography of Dong Feng has Dong in Houguan during "the time of Sun Quan" - a period of 52 years from his accession to power in 200 until his death in 252. Fifty years later, that is between the possible dates of 250 and 302, still in Houguan, he was recognized by an acquaintance from the earlier time, now very old. True to form Dong had not visibly aged. At this later time Dong related the story of restoring Shi Xie to life<sup>22</sup> in which Shi was named as Inspector of Jiaozhou.<sup>23</sup> Strictly speaking the designation Jiaozhou did not come into being before 203<sup>24</sup> but until his death in 226 Shi was *de facto* ruler of the region and, indeed, formed an alliance with Sun and started sending him tribute after 210.<sup>25</sup>

The point that is being made here is that where details of careers, places and administrative arrangements mentioned in *Shenxian zhuan* are verifiable in the standard historical sources, it is rare for them not to fit. Many biographies are, of course, set in the historical never-never and make no claims to being set in a specific time nor, often, place. But those that make this claim do not, in general, contradict the orthodox sources.

### Alternative Versions of the Lives

For many of the figures who receive biographies in *Shenxian zhuan* there are also other biographical sources, most obviously in the case of an immortal from *Shenxian zhuan* who turns up as a *fangshi* in the biographies of *fangshi* in *Houhan shu* - Lu Nüsheng, Fei Changfang, Ji Zixun, Liu Gen, Zuo Ci, Gan Shi, Dongguo Yannian, and Feng Heng all appear in the second part of the seventy-second chapter of biographies. These *fangshi* biographies present peculiar difficulties. In his study of the *fangshi* biographies, DeWoskin has observed that

Beginning with Ssu-ma Ch'ien, the Grand Historian, the compilers' jaundiced views of the fang-shih and their methods colored the biographical accounts. There is, for example, persistent understatement of their impact on events and a critical attitude in evaluating their presence at court, an attitude that had become a matter of convention by the first century A.D. Disapprobation of the fang-shih is pronounced in the prefaces that begin their collected biographies and the postscriptural

<sup>22</sup> See chapter three.

<sup>23</sup> The *Sanguo zhi* record does not include Shi Xie's possession of the title Inspector of Jiaozhou.

<sup>24</sup> See Holmgren, J., *Chinese Colonization of North Vietnam: Administrative Geography and Political Development in the Tongking Delta, First to Sixth Centuries AD*, p. 56.

<sup>25</sup> See chapter three, note 24 for Shi Xie.

eulogies that typically summarize the virtues of a subject. Historians of China include both positive and negative examples in their biographies; hence, we find chapters on harsh officials, traitors to the emperor, and the like. But the fang-shih as a group are too diverse, and their treatment too inconsistent, for us to regard them simply as negative exemplars. There is no complementary group to the fang-shih - the equivalent of virtuous officials or loyal generals - that a negative example might illuminate. In the face of this explicit disesteem by the court historians, the mere inclusion of fang-shih in the histories argues for their importance at court, their visibility in elite social circles, and their influence among petty officialdom and the common people. For these reasons, and other reasons discussed below, biographies of fang-shih were unavoidable for court historians.<sup>26</sup>

DeWoskin is certainly right to point out that *fangshi* are under-represented in the standard histories - as a group they are by no means alone in that - and even, perhaps, that it was their influence at court, that could not be ignored and so ensured their inclusion in the histories. However, despite the fact that their treatment is "inconsistent" the historians' motivations for their inclusion are clear. In the preface to the *fangshi* biographies in *Houhan shu* we find that the history of *fangshi* at court is characterized, especially from the reign of Han Wudi until the time of Wang Mang, by crowds of them rushing to court struggling to proclaim their particular skill. "Given this situation", the editor continues, in DeWoskin's translation, "the erudite Confucianists and most esteemed scholars became outraged at the treachery and heterodoxy of the fang-shih...Still, anything seen from one side will have some of its paths obscured. Even what are called the "Great Paths" can be similarly impeded. Thus, the typical failing in the study of the *Book of Odes* is infatuation, and that of the *Book of Documents* is calumny. In the study of the esoteric arts, the typical failing is in deception and vulgarization."<sup>27</sup>

These *fangshi* are presented as figures possessed of possibly real skills who at times practised deceit and misled the credulous, including some emperors. In other words, it is quite possible that both the positive and negative exemplars are to be found amongst those whose lives are recorded, giving rise to the inconsistency of treatment DeWoskin observes. It is not my intention to argue this point in detail here; rather I wish to note the power of the discursive conventions of the standard histories. If DeWoskin is right to see these figures as forcing their way in by virtue of the inability of the historian to ignore them, the editor nonetheless felt obliged to point out that they could be placed in the same kind of binary scheme, of positive and negative evaluation, as students of the *Odes* or the *Documents* - even if he did not so categorize them in the collection. The *fangshi*, then, may be in a different class of biographical subject from the harsh officials, virtuous subjects and the rest, but by their very inclusion they cannot escape the discursive conventions of the standard histories.

<sup>26</sup> DeWoskin, K.J., *Doctors, Diviners and Magicians of Ancient China: Biographies of Fang-shih* (New York, 1983) pp. 3-4. On the *fangshi* biographies see also, Ngo Van Xuyet, *Divination, Magie et Politique dans la Chine Ancienne* (Paris, 1976).

<sup>27</sup> DeWoskin, *Doctors, Diviners and Magicians of Ancient China: Biographies of Fang-shih*, pp. 45-46, *Houhan shu*, 82 shang:2705-2706.

The effect of these discursive conventions can be seen by comparing the *Houhan shu fangshi* biographies with the *Shenxian zhuan* versions of those immortals who also appear in *Shenxian zhuan*. The clearest issue on which the two versions diverge is the question of immortality itself. In the standard histories people are not permitted to transcend the bounds of normal human life. Thus, in their *Houhan shu* biographies nobody knew what happened to Ji Zixun and Liu Gen whereas in *Shenxian zhuan* Ji departs with a heavenly retinue and Liu departs as an immortal on Jitou shan;<sup>28</sup> in *Houhan shu* Fei Changfang suffers the ignominious fate of being murdered by ghosts after he had lost the talisman which gave him power over them. The editors refrain from commenting on this punishment but it seems to carry the weight of a long-held Confucian morality, one which recommends the gentlemen to have nothing at all to do with the spirit world. In the other cases of *Shenxian zhuan* figures in *Houhan shu* the topic of their mortality, or otherwise, is simply not raised. In *Houhan shu* there is simply a limit to what can be discussed - no matter whether in positive or negative terms. Rather than seeing this as a kind of editorial disapprobation, I would prefer to see these biographical records as discursively restricted. In terms of what appears on the page this means there is a reluctance to discuss certain matters pertaining to the supernatural. It also means that some biographical records become extremely short, for instance, Gan Shi, Dongguo Yannian and Feng Heng receive a composite biography of just a few lines and Lu Nüsheng's "biography" amounts to little more than a sentence. Similarly, Liu Gen's *Houhan shu* biography consists of a precis account of his recalling the ghosts of the Grand Administrator's deceased relatives and no more. Thus, these discursive restrictions are sometimes manifest in what is omitted from the account.

Another example of this is provided by examining the information provided on backgrounds of the biographical subjects. Of the four figures who receive biographies of a reasonable size in both texts, Zuo Ci, Ji Zixun and Liu Gen all are recorded in *Shenxian zhuan* as having a background in the orthodox learning and having had, at the least, considered an official career. Thus, in the *Shenxian zhuan* versions:

Zuo Ci, courtesy name Yuanfang, was a native of Lujiang. He understood the Five Classics and also comprehended prognostication by the *qi* of the stars. He noticed that the fortunes of the Han were about to decline and that the empire would erupt in rebellion. He sighed, "Encountering such decline and chaos, high officials are in a perilous position and the wealthy will be slaughtered. One cannot aim for fame and fortune at such times." So he studied the Dao. (Zuo Ci)

Ji Zixun was a native of Qi. When he was young he had held office at the commandery level. Recommended for office as Filially Pious and Incorrupt, he was appointed as a Gentleman-of-the-Palace. He also joined the army and was appointed Chief Commandant of the Attendant Cavalry. (Ji Zixun)

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<sup>28</sup> It may be the case that this silence on the part of the official historians is a way of alluding to other traditions without endorsing them.

Liu Gen , courtesy name Jun'an, was a native of Chang'an in Jingzhao. While young he mastered the Five Classics. In the 2nd year of the Suihe reign period of Xiao Cheng Huangdi of the Han (7 B.C.E.) he was recommended as Filially Pious and Incorrupt and was appointed as a Gentleman-of-the-Palace. Later he cast aside things of the world to study the Dao. (Liu Gen)

This aspect of these three figures is completely elided in the *Houhan shu* versions of their lives. While their supernormal powers can be admitted into the historical record, it is not possible to note the fact that they had chosen this course in preference to an orthodox career. That only information of a certain kind is permitted in authorized history will come as no surprise; by the same token, only information of a certain kind is permitted in *Shenxian zhuan*. All types of record have their own discursive restrictions and the details any one life will overflow the confines of any particular type of record.

There are two *Shenxian zhuan* biographies that demonstrate this well, as each of the subjects has further records in various types of text: the biographies of Jiao Xian and Sun Deng. First, the *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Jiao Xian:

Jiao Xian, courtesy name Xiaoran, was a native of Taiyang in Hedong. He was one hundred and seventy. Usually he ate white rocks which he divided up with other people. He heated them until they were like taro and then ate them.

Each day he went into the mountains to cut firewood to give to other people. He started out at the house at the end of the village and went around each in turn. Then he started again. He carried the firewood and set it outside people's doors. If people saw him they spread out a mat and sat with him and set out food. He would sit but he never spoke with anyone. If he did not see anyone when he delivered the firewood he set it in the doorway himself and then left. It was like this year after year.

When Wei succeeded [the Han] he was living on the banks of the Yellow River. He built a hut from grass and lived in it alone. He did not set out a bed roll but used grass as a mattress and sat on that. His body was filthy, as muddy as a swamp. Sometimes he only had one meal every few days. He did not follow paths when he travelled and he had no social dealings with women. When his clothes wore out he sold firewood and bought old clothes to wear. Winter and summer he wore a single layer of clothes. The prefect Dong Jing went to see him on this account but he refused to speak. This only made Jing consider him more worthy. When a scrub fire came through it set fire to his hut. People came to look for him and they saw him sitting formally in his hut not moving. When the fire had reduced the hut to ashes Xian arose with great dignity. None of his clothes or possessions were burnt. He then rebuilt his hut.

Unexpectedly there was a great snowfall and a great many houses were damaged. Xian's hut toppled over. People came but could not see

where he was. Worried that he might have frozen to death, together they dismantled his hut to find him. They saw Xian lying fast asleep under the snow; his skin glowed and he was snoring as if he had fallen into a drunken stupor.

People knew of his marvellous powers and were keen to learn the Dao from him. Xian said "I do not have the Dao." Sometimes he grew older and then sometimes younger. It was like this for more than two hundred years. Later he took leave of everybody and no-one knew where he went. Those who consulted him did not receive a word in reply. (Jiao Xian)

Pei Songzhi's commentary to the biography of Guan Ning in chapter eleven of *Sanguo zhi* includes three biographical fragments which concern Jiao Xian.<sup>29</sup> The first is from the lost text *Weilüe*:<sup>30</sup>

Xian, courtesy name Xiaoran. At the end of the Zhongping reign period [189-190] there was an uprising in Baipo. At the time Xian was more than twenty and he kept company with Hou Wuyang of the same commandery. Wuyang was young and he [only] had his mother so Xian had supported them. To avoid the Baipo bandits they moved east to live in Yangzhou where he took a wife. In the Jian'an [196-220] period they returned to the west and Wuyang moved to Dayang where he established a household. Xian stayed on the Shan side of the border. In the sixteenth year [212] there were troubles in Guanzhong. Xian lost his family and fled, alone, to an island in the Yellow River where he ate grass and drank water and had no clothes or shoes. At the time Zhu Nan the chief of Dayang caught sight of him and called him a "scholar-fugitive". He was about to dispatch a boat to arrest him when Wuyang said to the [head of the] prefecture, "He is a madman!" He was subsequently allowed to record his name on his register and he was given a stipend of five *sheng* a day.

Later there was an epidemic and a large number of people died. The [head of the] prefecture regularly ordered Xian to perform the burials and even children treated him with disrespect. Despite this he never took illicit paths but followed the orthodox tracks. When he went gleaning he did not take the large ears. When he was hungry he never ate like a glutton and when cold he never clothed himself excessively. He wove grass into a cloak and went barefoot and bareheaded. Each time he went out he would hide if he saw a woman and only emerge a little later after she had gone. He built himself a snail shell hut [see below for Pei Songzhi's explication] and swept the inside clean. He made a bed out of wood and spread grass on top as a mattress. When the weather turned cold he lit a fire to warm himself. He used to hum or drone and talk to himself. When he was

<sup>29</sup> *Sanguo zhi*, 11:363-65.

<sup>30</sup> This text is discussed in Vervoorn, A., *Men of the Cliffs and Caves: The Development of the Chinese Eremitic Tradition to the End of the Han Dynasty* (Hong Kong, 1990), pp. 11-12.

hungry he took a job. He simply ate his fill and did not take what he had earned.

When he unexpectedly met anyone on the road he got down off it and hid. If someone asked him why he did this he always said, "Men of the grass and reeds associate with foxes and hares." He never spoke wildly.

Sometime during the Taihe [227-233] and Qinglong [233-237] reigns he once took his staff, went south and crossed the Yellow River where it was shallow. He often said to himself, "The time is not yet right." After that people rather suspected he was not mad.

When the Grand Administrator Jia Mu first took up office in the Jiaping reign period [249-254], he deliberately passed Xian's hut. Xian bowed repeatedly on seeing Mu. Mu spoke to him but he did not reply. He set out food for him but Xian did not eat. Mu said to him, "The state has sent me to come to be your master. I have set out food for you, sir, but you have refused to eat it. I have spoken with you, sir, but you will not reply. This being so, I am in no position to govern you. It is right I leave." Xian then replied, "For what reason do you say that?" and said no more.

The next year a great number of soldiers were sent to attack Wu. Someone posed the question, "What do you make of this suppression of Wu?" Xian would not reply but intoned

*Zhunü, zhunü,*<sup>31</sup>

Not meat, not fish.

One chases the other,

Intending to kill the ewe.

But the goat it was that died !

The people of the commandery did not know what he meant. After the armies were defeated in battle someone who was skilled in these things elucidated his meaning: the ewe was Wu, the goat was Wei. As a result all the people called him the hidden one.

The Gentleman Consultant Dong Jing of Hedong particularly admired exceptional behaviour. As he was not an old acquaintance of Xian he went to watch out for him in secret. When Jing arrived he tousled his white beard as if they went back a long way and said, "Ah Xian, it has been a long time. Do you remember the time we escaped from Baipo together?" Xian gave him a long look but did not speak. Jing obviously knew that he had received a kindness from Wuyang in the past because he said, "Do

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<sup>31</sup> The meaning of this first line is obscure. While *zhu* is not hard to construe, *nü* on the other hand can mean "the blood that comes from the nose", "a rout, defeat" and "to contract, shrink". Aat Vervoorn's translation "The sacrificial victim, the sacrificial victim!" makes sense in the context of Jiao's reply, but the precise derivation of it is not clear to me. While the option of *nü* as "a rout" is attractive, the second line would then be obscure. We should not, however, be too disheartened by these difficulties as the "people of the commandery did not know what he meant" either.



you remember Wuyang?" Xian said, "I have already repaid him." Jing again provoked Xian to get him to speak but he was unwilling to respond.

A little more than a year later, he caught a disease and died at the age of eighty nine.

It is clear that these two accounts concern the same person, yet they are very different. *Weilüe* is concerned with plotting Jiao Xian's life reign by reign and event by event: there is a sequence and a historical specificity. The only date in the *Shenxian zhuan* biography is the succession of the Wei, and although it may be possible to construct some sort of sequence of events, the emphasis in this account is rather on the quality or nature of the events described. Even the encounter with the character common to both accounts, Dong Jing, is presented in *Shenxian zhuan* as a typical rejection of involvement with temporal authority to which Dong Jing responds in the expected manner. Secondly, *Weilüe* sees Jiao Xian through administrative eyes. This record is about Jiao's movements, about with whom he had dealings and, most revealingly, about his encounters with the state. His meetings with Zhu Nan and Jia Mu are described as well as that with Dong Jing. In each case their titles are specified, and in one case the administrative result of the meeting is noted: his receipt of a stipend of five *sheng* a day. Furthermore, the prediction of Wei's defeat, a kind of indirect encounter with authority, is described. Finally, it should be noted that while *Shenxian zhuan* notes that Jiao Xian's age at the time the biography was recorded as one hundred and seventy - and "later he took leave of everybody and no-one knew where he went" - *Weilüe* has him dying at eighty nine after an illness.

The second biographical fragment in Pei Songzhi's commentary is from Huangfu Mi's lost *Gaoshi zhuan*:<sup>32</sup>

No-one of that time knew where Jiao Xian came from. Some said he was born at the end of the Han. He moved from Shan to live in Dayang and had no father, mother, brothers, wife or children. When he saw that the Han house was in decline he cut himself off from human contact and did not speak. When the Wei succeeded [the Han] he normally built a hut from grass on the banks of the Yellow River and lived in it alone. Winter and summer he never wore clothes. He did not set out a mat to sleep and also had no grass mattress. He lay directly on the ground and his body was filthy, as muddy as a swamp. The five forms were all revealed to him and he did not walk among men. Sometimes he only had one meal every few days and when he wanted to eat he went to work as a hired hand. Others gave him clothes to wear and employed him to do a limited amount of work. He did enough to receive one meal and then he left. People wanted to give him more but he simply would not take it. There were also times he would not eat at all for several days. He never took illicit paths and he never met the glance of a woman. No words came from his mouth. Even when startled he never spoke with anyone. When food was left out for

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<sup>32</sup> This fragment is also cited in *Yiwen leiju*, 2:22, 64:1154, *Chuxue ji*, 2:28 and *Beitang shuchao*, 152:12a.

him, he never took it. The Grand Administrator of Hedong Du Shu <sup>33</sup> once went to see him with some clothes but he did not speak to him. King Jing of Sima <sup>34</sup> heard about this and sent the Grand Administrator of Anding, Dong Jing, to go along and see him on some pretext. He would not speak and Jing considered him to be a great worthy.

After this a scrub fire set his hut alight so Xian then slept in the open. When heavy winter snows came, Xian lay naked in the snow and did not stir. People thought he was dead but when they saw that he was the same as before they did not consider him ill. Nobody was able to understand his intentions.

It is possible that when he died he was more than one hundred years old.

Somebody asked Huangfu Mi, "What kind of man was Jiao Xian?" He answered, "I am inadequate in my knowledge, but I can say a little from what anyone could see. What the world constantly hankers after is fame and gratification; what the human form cannot be stripped of is clothing; what the body can never be separated from is shelter; what the mouth can never be stopped from is talking; what the heart can never be cut off from is its affections. Now, Jiao Xian cast aside fame and gratification, stripped himself of clothes, left shelter, cut himself off from affections, shut his mouth and ceased speaking. Boundlessly he considered heaven and earth his house, in obscurity he merged with the forerunners of the utmost Dao. He emerged from the display of the crowd of forms and entered into the concealment of mysterious solitude. In all the world there was no man worthy to grasp his ideas; within the expanses of the four seas no-one could return his glance. He was as sublime as the ancestor of the Three Sovereigns. Since cords were knotted no-one has reached this apogee. How can the babel of voices describe him or the most constant mind attain his measure? He walked where no others could walk, suffered what no others could suffer. Laying himself open to cold and heat, he did not harm his essence; living in the wilds he had no fear for his human form. Being startled did not disturb his cogitations, being separated from fame and love did not burden his mind, by abjuring what there was to see and hear he did not defile his eyes or ears. He placed his feet on earth that was not destroyed, he situated his body in a place where he stood alone. He extended his years beyond one hundred and his life was longer than a centenarian's. Even the most intelligent could not equal this. Since Fu Xi he is unique!"

The first part of this account from *Gaoshi zhuan* resembles *Shenxian zhuan* closely. Not only are some of the same observations made about Jiao Xian's behaviour but the

<sup>33</sup> Du Shu receives a biography in *Weizhi*, 16:498-508, see 16:505 for his accession to this position.

<sup>34</sup> Regent of Wei between 251-57, Sima Shi received the title Jingwang (of the Jin) posthumously when his son came to the throne in 265 as Jin Wudi.

character of those observations as timeless commentary on his actions is similar. This should not surprise us as both *Shenxian zhuan* and *Gaoshi zhuan* ("Biographies of Lofty Men" in Aat Vervoorn's translation) are thematic collections of exemplary figures; that they are concerned with different categories of being - immortals and lofty men - does not affect their status as examples of the genre. It is the differences between these two classes of being that generate the differences in the presentation of the same figure. That in *Shenxian zhuan* Jiao Xian is not *explicitly* credited with attaining immortality, and in *Gaoshi zhuan* that "it is possible he died when he was more than one hundred years old" indicates that neither editor was quite sure into which category he fitted. This confusion of categories appears to have enabled Jiao Xian's adoption by both.

The third biographical fragment comes from *Weishi chungju* :

Thus, Geng Fu, the Inspector of Liangzhou, considered Xian to be a transcendent and Fu Xuan of Beidi said his nature was the same as a beast. They both told his story but were unable to fathom him.<sup>35</sup>

This confirms that Jiao Xian's status as an immortal was not secure. Geng Fu is not identifiable beyond this citation; Fu Xuan (217-278) was the author of the Confucian text known as *Fuzi*.<sup>36</sup> The surviving version of that text does not mention Jiao Xian.

There are two other sources that mention Jiao Xian. The first, *Xuefu* [The Fu on Snow] written by Li Yong of the Jin, clearly refers to Jiao Xian in one of the only two surviving fragments of this *fu* :<sup>37</sup>

Jiao [Xian] slept in it yet he was not harmed.

Su [Wu] ate it and so lengthened his days.<sup>38</sup>

The second is from *Bowu zhi* (item 183) which says:<sup>39</sup>

Recently in the time of Wei Mingdi (227-40) there was a Jiao Sheng in Hedong. He was naked and did not wear clothes. He sat in fire but was

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<sup>35</sup> Finally Pei Songzhi adds a philological note: "*Weilüe* says that Jiao Xian and Yang Pei both made snail shell huts and lived in them. I think that the character ( 𪚩 ) in the original should be written ( 𪚩 ). The snail is that horned creature that lives in a shell which is sometimes given the common name "yellow calf". Xian etc, built round houses which were shaped like a snail's shell, so they were called snail's shell huts. *Zhuangzi* says 'There is a state on the snail's left horn called Bash, and another on its right horn called Bully. From time to time they have territorial disputes and go to war. The corpses lie on the battlefield in tens of thousands, and when the victors harry the retreat they do not turn back for fifteen days.' That refers to these creatures."

The biography of Yang Pei can be found in Pei's commentary to *Sanguo zhi*, 15 extracted from *Weilüe* (486-7). He is said to have built a snail shell hut as well. See Graham, *Chuang-tzu: The Inner Chapters*, p. 154.

<sup>36</sup> On *Fuzi* see Paper, J.C., *The Fu-tzu: A Post-Han Confucian Text, Monographies du T'oung Pao*, v. XIII, 1987.

<sup>37</sup> These lines are cited at *Chuxue ji*, 2:28. *Quan shanggu sandai qinhan sanguo liuchao wen*, 53:1767 has a different fragment which it cites from *Yiwen leiju*, 2:29.

<sup>38</sup> Su Wu (140-60 BCE) was sent as an envoy to the Xiongnu who detained him. The incident in which he saves his own life by eating snow can be found in his biography in *Hanshu* 54:2462-3.

<sup>39</sup> *Bowu zhi*, 5:63.

not burned. He entered water but did not freeze. All this was true - it was witnessed by Grand Administrator Du Shu.

Here the story is pared back to the kind of essentials *Bowu zhi* finds interesting: a date, what was extraordinary and an authority. These different accounts, all of which date from the same period, appear to have drawn from the same body of information. It may indeed be the case that there existed, at one time, a single source for the story of Jiao Xian, a kind of ur-biography, but it should be stressed that this is no longer recoverable from these records. Each of the passages translated above is, in the end, defined by the category of text in which it is found - and they are, ultimately, not commensurable.

### Editorial Intervention

The possibility was raised in the last section that the various biographical records discussed may have derived at one stage from a common source of biographical data but it was suggested that any attempt to derive this original from these discursively restricted accounts would be misplaced. Attempts have nevertheless been made to do this, at least as far as the determination of reliable biographical information is concerned. The biography of Sun Deng was cited as another case (in addition to that of Jiao Xian) about whom there existed many alternative biographical accounts. Most of these have already been translated in previous studies as Sun Deng features in the stories of Ji Kang and Ruan Ji, two of the most famous literary figures of the period.<sup>40</sup> As in the case of Jiao Xian, Sun's *Shenxian zhuan* biography stresses his unusual nature and abilities - an encounter with Ji Kang is used to measure Sun's superiority over the most talented of normal folk. Apart from this, there are versions of Sun Deng's life in historical texts and literary biographical collections cited in commentaries to *Shishuo xinyu*, where he appears in relation to Ji Kang and Ruan Ji, in a separate biography and in *Shuijing zhu*. These alternate records display some of the same features as those discussed above of Jiao Xian do, differing in that there appears to have been rather more editorial mixing, more contamination (in the text historical sense) in the sources for Sun Deng. This means that the particularities of each type of source are diluted as information and judgements are borrowed from one source and find their way into another. This is particularly evident in the biography of Sun Deng in *Jinshu*, which Donald Holzman concluded is "a good digest of earlier fragmentary sources."<sup>41</sup> One of these alternate sources, from *Shuijing zhu*, however, shows a different attitude. It begins with a citation from Zang Rongxu's [415-488] lost

<sup>40</sup> See *Shuijing zhu*, 5:90, 9:181-2, 15:300, 16:335, *Jinshu*, 94:2426, *Shishuo xinyu*, 18, 2: 649-50, Wang Yin's *Jinshu*, *Weishi Chunqiu*, *Wenshi zhuan*, *Ji Kang jixu* (also partially cited in *Taiping yulan*, 999:5b) all in Liu Xiaobiao's commentary to *Shishuo xinyu*, 18, 2: 650, *Sun Deng biezhuàn* from *Yiwen leiju*, 44: 781 and *Yiwen leiju*, 19:353 and *Xi Kang ji mulu* in Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguo zhi*. See Mather, R.B., *A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis, 1976), pp. 332-33 and Henricks, R.G., *Hsi K'ang (223-262): His Life, Literature and Thought*, PhD thesis, University of Madison-Wisconsin, 1976, p. 56 for translations.

<sup>41</sup> Holzman, D., *Poetry and Politics: The Life and Works of Juan Chi A.D. 210-263* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 149.

*Jinshu* which relates a story about Sun Deng meeting with Ruan Ji (who did not at that time know Sun's name) on Yiyang shan. This citation concludes "[Ruan Ji] investigated for a long while and found out his family name and given name". The compiler of *Shuijing zhu* continues:

Now in Sun Chuo's [314-71] preface to *Gaoshi zhuan* it says Sun lived on Sumen shan; *Gaoshi zhuan* also has an individual biography of Deng. Su Sheng's *Wei chunqiu* also says he lived on Sumen shan but it also does not give his given name or family name. Ruan Sizong [Ruan Ji] was inspired by him and wrote the *Daren xiansheng lun* which says, "I do not comprehend this man - his spirit roams where it will but does not interact with things." Since Mr Ruan was also not able to budge him from his heroic restraint how would he know where he came from or be able to know his given name and family name? <sup>42</sup>

Here the compiler of *Shuijing zhu* seeks to determine the actual details of Sun Deng's life, and approaches the texts with a critical eye - even to the extent of effectively disproving Zang Rongxu's contention that Ruan Ji eventually found out Sun Deng's identity. This kind of text, where an editor identifies his sources, is comparatively rare - none of those texts dealing with Jiao Xian reveal their sources, for instance. Nor are the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies notable for revealing their sources: indeed most of them do not acknowledge the existence of any others. There are however three biographies that do refer to other texts. The biography of Yin Changsheng cites three other texts: *Zhushu jibian*, *Baopuzi* and *Yinjun zixu*, as well as three poems claimed to have been written by Yin. The biography of Liu An cites a text called *Zuo Wu ji*; Zuo Wu is one of the eight worthies and a character mentioned in the biography. These two biographies, however, do not discuss the information contained in these extra accounts, they are simply presented along with the story. The most notable case of extra material being included in a *Shenxian zhuan* biography is that of Laozi. This biography is made even more notable because the various records are actually discussed and the opinion of Ge Hong, himself, is recorded.

The *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Laozi begins in the standard fashion and continues by stating that Laozi was born of the Li family even though his conception was cosmically induced. It then records the first of seven alternative traditions concerning Laozi which are introduced by the formula "some say...". These comments are relatively brief. Their important points are summarized below:

1. Laozi came into being before heaven and earth.
2. Laozi is the essential soul (*jingpo*) of heaven and a spirit (*shenling*).
3. He is called Laozi because he was born with white hair, after seventy two years gestation.
4. His mother's family name was Laozi.
5. His mother gave birth to Laozi, who could speak, while leaning against a plum tree. He pointed to the tree and took his name from it (*li*).

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<sup>42</sup> *Shuijing zhu*, 15:300.

6. Laozi appeared in thirteen successive eras under different names beginning with the three earliest sovereigns of remote antiquity and ending with Wenwang.

7. He appeared in the states of Yue, Qi and Wu under different names.

The compiler continues:

All of this can be seen in the gathered writings; they do not come out of the true scriptures of the immortals (*shenxian zhengjing*), so they are not verifiable. Ge Zhichuan [Ge Hong] says, <sup>43</sup>"Hong considers that if Laozi were the essential spirit of heaven it would be right that there would never have been a generation in which he had not appeared. He would have had to descend from eminence and assume low rank, abandon comfort and take up toil, turn his back on purity and enter turbidity and cast aside heavenly office and assume a rank conferred by man. Now since there is heaven and earth, there are the techniques of the Dao. When have scholars of the techniques of the Dao been absent, even for a short time? Thus, from Fuxi until the three eras [ie the Xia, Shang and Zhou] every generation has had its illustrious practitioners of techniques of the Dao. Why must they all have been Laozi alone? In each case, those who followed the later scholars loved the marvellous and esteemed the unusual. As they wished to greatly honour Laozi, these traditions arose. To speak honestly, in all likelihood Laozi was the one who attained the Dao in its purest form; it is not the case that he was of a different kind.

Ge Hong then cites the *Shiji* record of Laozi's descendants <sup>44</sup> and continues:

Thus to the contention that Laozi was originally a spirit. Inexperienced Daoshi wanted to consider Laozi a spiritual anomaly (*shenyi*) and caused later generations of students to follow this opinion - yet they did not realize that this meant that [the proposition that] long life could be learned, was not believable. Why is this? If we say that Laozi attained the Dao, then people must strive to emulate him. If we say that he is a spirit of a different kind from us then it is not something we can study.

Ge Hong then cites "someone" as saying that when Yin Xi, the keeper of the western pass, asked Laozi about the Dao he was so amazed he poked his tongue out in an obscure manner described as *danran* - and from this it is claimed Laozi acquired the name Lao

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<sup>43</sup> Referring to an author by their *xing* and *zi*, as in this case, would usually indicate that another hand had included the comment. This implies that Ge Hong did not himself compile this biography. The comments that follow are clearly a response to the seven propositions put previously and the use of the *ming* would indicate that this passage represents Ge Hong's own words. Thus, the large portion of the biography between "Ge Zhichuan says" and the beginning of the section describing Laozi's conversation with Confucius is to be read as if it were in inverted commas. Furthermore, it seems likely that the last portion of the biography - the Confucius conversation, the Yangzi and Xu Jia incidents and the record of the veneration of the Dou family - are all later accretions.

<sup>44</sup> *Shiji*, 63:2142-2143.

Dan. Ge then takes issue with this. "It is also not true" he says, and cites two texts called *Jiubian* and *Yuansheng shi'erhua jing* as authorities to prove that Laozi had the name Dan before he arrived at the pass - and changed his name several times. Furthermore, he goes on, the three texts *Jiugong*, *Sanwu jing* and *Yuanchen jing* all relate that changing one's name can have beneficial effects related to the lengthening of life.<sup>45</sup> He summarizes:

If we truly wish to settle the details of Laozi's life we must regard the historical writings and true records as primary and compare what they say with the old immortal scriptures and secret texts. Other popular traditions are largely worthless.

At this point, the biography cites the texts *Xisheng*, *Zhongtai*, *Fuming bao*, *Zhutao* and *Yuji* describing Laozi's appearance, his official positions and the fact that he was seen by the common folk over a great length of time.<sup>46</sup> For this reason he was called Laozi. He then relates his opinion as to why Laozi attained this extraordinary position:

Now amongst the fates that men can receive there are naturally those that [give the ability to] communicate with the spirits and have extraordinary powers of vision; the *qi* with which they are bestowed is different from that of the common man. This corresponds with them being masters of the Dao, assisted by the heavenly spirits, and attended by the gathered immortals.

He then lists the various methods for "transcending the generations" which together comprise nine hundred and thirty chapters, and in addition there are seventy chapters of talismans. All these are recorded in *Laozi benqi zhongpian*. He continues:

Since there was a catalogue of these works, those not enumerated there were all added by later Daoshi: they are not true texts. Laozi was tranquil and without desires and solely strived for long life. Therefore although he remained for a long time in Zhou his reputation and position did not change. He desired to harmonize his brightness with the dust and actualize spontaneity within. When he had completed the Dao he left. He was an immortal.

The biography goes on to describe Laozi's conversations with Confucius and Yangzi, an incident concerning one Xu Jia and Yin Xi and finally Laozi's veneration by the Han empress Dou and those who came after her.

Clearly this biography is set apart from the others in *Shenxian zhuan* by the degree of editorial intervention that is evident in its compilation. This should come as no surprise, as even by Sima Qian's time there was uncertainty about Laozi's identity<sup>47</sup> and before Ge

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<sup>45</sup> Texts called *Jiubian jing*, *Shi'erhua jing*, *Jiugong* and *Sanwu zhongjing* are all found in *Baopuzi* 19:333-4.

<sup>46</sup> *Xisheng jing* can be found in the *Daozang* (346-7, HY 449-50); *Fuming bao* may be related to *Chunqiu yuanmingbao* a *weishu* or apocryphal text; *Yuji* may be *Yuce ji* which is found in *Baopuzi* 19:333.

<sup>47</sup> The possibility of his being Laolaizi is raised in *Shiji*, 63:2141. Zhang Shoujie responds in his *Zhengyi* commentary "Taishigong [ie Sima Qian] suspected Laozi was possibly Laolaizi. That is why he

Hong's time the process of divinization had been well and truly established.<sup>48</sup> It is also clear that Ge Hong wished to argue the possibly contentious position that Laozi was indeed originally a man. Thus it would have been naive to produce the unproblematic kind of life that is seen in the other biographies for Laozi. Ge Hong's reasons for maintaining Laozi's original humanity have been translated above: if he were at base different from us he would be impossible to emulate. Ge Hong's argument proceeds backwards from this proposition - one that he found unacceptable - to determine that Laozi was in fact like us, and we could with effort emulate him. True, he had special *qi* but he was not an anomaly. Ge Hong's sometimes scathing judgements of sources derive from this stance. While we may not be inclined to accept all the premises of Ge Hong's argument, his discussion of sources reveals a critical standpoint.

Another example of editorial intervention in *Shenxian zhuan* - but which lies below its surface - is the biography of Mr White Stone:

Mr White Stone was a disciple of Zhonghuang Zhangren. By Peng Zu's time he was already more than two thousand years old. He was unwilling to practise the Dao of ascension to Heaven but simply opted for not dying. He did not want to lose the pleasure of human company.

What he based his practice on was truly by regarding the Dao of sex as the main thing and the medicine of gold sap as superior. At first, due to his poverty, he could not afford medicine. By tending goats and keeping pigs and by being frugal in clothing and thrifty in consumption he accumulated ten thousand cash. Then he bought a large amount of medicine and took it. As a rule he would boil up white stones to eat so he lived on White Stone Mountain. People at that time called him Mr White Stone. He also ate dried meat, drank wine and ate grain. In a day he could walk three to four hundred *li* and he looked like a forty-year-old. He loved to pay obeisance to the common spirits and to read the Mysterious Scripture and the Record of Great Plainness.

Pengzu asked him "Why don't you take the medicine that enables you to rise to heaven?" He replied "Can heaven give more pleasure than humanity? Isn't it just that you do not grow old and die? It would be so bitter to have to serve all the many great eminents in heaven." So all the people referred to Mr White Stone as a hidden immortal as he had no anxiety to ascend to heaven and become an immortal official; also, he did not seek fame.

The existence of earthly immortals is attested in contemporary sources<sup>49</sup> but they are presented as those who were unable to attain any higher status rather than those who

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wrote this" and then cites the *Liexian zhuan* biography of Laolaizi (*Shiji*, 63:2142). On the question of the identity of the historical Laozi, see appendix one of D.C.Lau's translation, *Tao Te Ching* (Harmondsworth, 1985), pp. 147-162.

<sup>48</sup> See Seidel, A., *La Divinization de Lao-tseu dans le Taoisme des Han* (Paris, 1969).

<sup>49</sup> See chapter three.



elected to remain on earth.<sup>50</sup> In this sense Baishi Xiansheng is special. The comment in the opening paragraph that he "was unwilling to practise the Dao of ascension to Heaven but simply opted for not dying" makes absolutely clear that he chose his course of action and the reason given, that "he did not want to lose the pleasure of human company", could be accepted at face value were it not for the comments of the final paragraphs. When Baishi xiansheng answers Pengzu by saying that "it would be so bitter to have to serve all the many great eminents in heaven" and the narrator adds that he was known as "a hidden immortal (*yindun xianren*) as he had no anxiety to ascend to heaven and become an immortal official", the secondary reading of this biography becomes apparent. The reasons that Baishi Xiansheng gives correspond very closely to the model of earthly eremitism where the refusal to serve at court was taken to be a sign of purity of purpose.<sup>51</sup> This preference for seclusion over involvement was particularly pronounced from the middle of the later Han into the Sanguo period, a period from which many of the biographies in *Shenxian zhuan* derive. That this biography is set at an implausibly early date - "By Peng Zu's time he was already more than two thousand years old" - earlier even than the invention of bureaucracy - makes it more likely that it was intended as veiled critique of the current political scene.

### Alternate Lives as Critique

It was argued that the biography of Mr White Stone is a veiled criticism of the situation at court. We cannot, however, make comparisons with any other biography of him in which the criticism does not occur. When it is possible to compare *Shenxian zhuan* biographies with alternative biographies of the same figures one can see in some versions the power of the discursive restrictions of the standard histories and in others the rewriting of the life to meet the needs of other genres. The figures in the *fangshi* biographies in the standard histories are defined as *fangshi* by their appearing under that title - the reality of their powers is not questioned. The different versions of the lives of Jiao Xian and Sun Deng do not fundamentally disagree about the received facts of their lives - they are simply reinterpreted for each kind of text. The last section of this chapter will consider three figures who appear in the standard histories and in *Shenxian zhuan* but where the records are radically dissimilar: Liu An, Li Shaojun and Luan Ba.

Liu An is one of the most famous figures to receive a biography in *Shenxian zhuan*. Well-known as the compiler of *Huainanzi*, his biography features in *Shiji* and *Hanshu* and details of his political life are scattered throughout both texts.<sup>52</sup> The details of his life that are relevant to the present purpose can be summarized briefly. Liu An (179-122 B.C.E.) was grandson of Han Gaozu and received in 164, on the death of his father Liu

<sup>50</sup> The biography of Ma Mingsheng attributed to *Shenxian zhuan* also says that he "did not want to ascend to Heaven". This biography is not cited before *Xianyuan bianzhu* so is not regarded as reliably early for the purpose of this dissertation.

<sup>51</sup> See Vervoorn, A., *Men of the Cliffs and Caves*.

<sup>52</sup> Wallacker, B.E., "Liu An, Second King of Huai-nan (180?-122 B.C.)", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 92 (1972), 36-51.

Chang, one part of the original fief of Huainan and the title Huainanwang. In 124 B.C.E. Liu An's son Qian challenged one of An's advisors Lei Bei to a sword fight. Lei Bei struck Qian and, as a result, asked An for permission to leave Huainan to serve in the national army in the campaign against the Xiongnu. When An refused permission Lei Bei escaped and reported what had happened to the emperor. The offences An committed in the course of this incident were dealt with in a relatively minor way by the removal of some of his land. After this episode it appears that in Benjamin Wallacker's words "Liu An was irrevocably, if not realistically, bent upon rebellion."<sup>53</sup> He sought assistance from another adviser Wu Bei who though remaining loyal to the Han throne and always advising An not to rebel for practical military reasons was forced to offer advice. An had a son named Buhai who was older than Qian and who had a different mother. Buhai's son Jian had planned to replace Qian as An's heir but Qian found out and beat him up. As a result, Jian wrote to the emperor denouncing Qian. Summoned to the capital Jian told all he knew about the rebellious intentions of the Huainan court. Later Wu Bei, too, implicated the members of the Huainan royal family. According to the official history Liu An committed suicide in 122 B.C.E. when officials from the court were dispatched to arrest him.

The *Shenxian zhuan* version is rather different. It summarizes Liu An's early life in a few lines and largely concerns the arrival and abilities of the eight worthies who enlighten Liu An on the Daoist mysteries. The biography relates the story of Lei Bei and Liu Qian with the difference that Lei does not go to the capital but writes to the emperor. The emperor takes the same amount of land away as he did in the orthodox account and Lei Bei, fearing that he will be killed, joins with Wu Bei who, the *Shenxian zhuan* version says, was also not popular with Liu An. These two then *falsely* denounce an *innocent* Liu An to the emperor, accusing him of plotting rebellion. As the officials of the court are on their way the eight worthies warn Liu An he must leave and aid him in ascending to heaven in broad daylight. Wu and Lei are subsequently executed themselves. The narrator then states:

The Han historians kept this secret and did not say that An had attained the Dao of immortality. They feared that rulers of men in later generations would find it appropriate to eschew their governmental responsibilities and also seek An's Dao. So they said that An committed a crime and later killed himself and that he did not attain immortality.

The biography continues with a citation from *Zuo Wu ji*, a text purporting to derive from the hand of Zuo Wu, one of five people allowed to accompany Liu An when he ascended to heaven. This citation tells the story of Liu An's inappropriate behaviour before a high immortal official. After the intercession of the eight worthies An's punishment of banishment is reduced to his being demoted to a "scattered immortal" (*san xianren*) with no official position. In addition, he had to serve three years in charge of the

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<sup>53</sup> Wallacker, B.E., "Liu An, Second King of Huai-nan (180?-122 B.C.)", p. 42.

toilets of the heavenly capital.<sup>54</sup> On Zuo Wu's return to the earthly court he told Han Wudi about Liu An's ascension and, we are told, "the emperor then knew that there truly were immortals in the world." The biography concludes by relating that "people of the time" told the story of dogs and chickens rising to heaven after they lapped up the dregs from the bottom of the cauldron used to prepare the medicine.<sup>55</sup>

The differences in the two traditions of Liu An's biography were recorded early. In Eastern Han texts, Wang Chong treated the story of Liu An's ascension as without foundation<sup>56</sup> and in *Fengsu tongyi* Ying Shao noted the different traditions.<sup>57</sup> Clearly the important points of the *Shenxian zhuan* record were not invented in Ge Hong's time. The presence of records in *Shuijing zhu* which are related to the *Shenxian zhuan* story of Liu An as well as records of shrines dedicated to him<sup>58</sup> and biographical records in *Soushen ji*,<sup>59</sup> also indicate that non-official biographical records were in circulation in the early centuries C.E. While we cannot assert that the *Shenxian zhuan* record of Liu An is a compilation of these records or even that it is representative of them - although both may be the case - it is clear from their prevalence that there were alternative lines of transmission besides those of the court and that these are likely to have been locally based. Kominami Ichirō makes the important observation that the last part of the biography in *Shenxian zhuan*, and certain of the *Shuijing zhu* material, is firmly centred on the village: dogs barking and chickens cackling as they rise to heaven are images of rural not court life.<sup>60</sup> Thus it is possible to make a tentative characterization of the standard historical sources as criticism (suicide) and the locally transmitted sources as eulogy (ascension). Before continuing with the argument the different biographical traditions about Li Shaojun will be considered.

One tradition concerning Li Shaojun is set out in *Shiji's Fengshan shu*.<sup>61</sup> Arriving at the court of Han Wudi in 133 B.C.E., Li had been in the employ of the Marquis of Shenze in the Jizhou Inspectorate, some 50 kilometres east of modern Shijiazhuang, within the bounds of the ancient state of Qi. He presented himself as an expert on

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<sup>54</sup> A similar record can be found in *Baopuzi*, 20:350 where one Xiang Wandu relates Liu An's fate in relation to his own experience of ascending to heaven and being denounced for his accidental misbehaviour.

<sup>55</sup> Kominami Ichirō discusses the different parts of the *Shenxian zhuan* biography in some detail in "Gishin jidai no shinsen shisō: Shinsenden o chūshin toshite", pp. 575-82, where he tries to account for the different emphases in the main part of the story and in the *Zuo Wu ji* citation by pointing to the possibility of transmission through popular and *fangshi* channels respectively.

<sup>56</sup> *Lunheng*, 7:317-20.

<sup>57</sup> *Fengsu tongyi*, 2:17.

<sup>58</sup> *Shuijing zhu*, 30:11b, 32 9b-10a. His shrine is referred to at 32:9b.

<sup>59</sup> *Soushen ji* 1:6.

<sup>60</sup> Kominami Ichirō, "Gishin jidai no shinsen shisō: Shinsenden o chūshin toshite", (p. 576) He also rightly points out the presence of these images in Laozi 80 and in the prose introduction to Tao Yuanming's "Peach Blossom Source". See Davis, A.R. *Tao Yuan-ming: His Works and Their Meaning*, (Cambridge, 1983) I, p. 195. Davis points out that these images are "indicative of a state of prosperity and populousness" and also found in Tao's "Returning to Live in the Country", I, translated in *Tao Yuan-ming: His Works and Their Meaning*: I, p. 46.

<sup>61</sup> *Shiji*, 28:1385-1386.

immortality who advocated worship of the Kitchen god and concealed his age and his native place. He acquired a degree of affluence by being showered with goods and money by the credulous. Two incidents are cited which made people think he was of a great age. In the first he claimed to have practised archery with the grandfather of a ninety-year-old; in the other Li implied that he saw a bronze being presented to Duke Huan of Qi in the 7th century B.C.E. Li advised the emperor to seek long life through a procedure that culminated in seeking Master Anqi on Penglai. These procedures led to nought and none of the parties sent out to find Penglai succeeded. Li Shaojun died but the emperor believed he had departed through transformation.

The *Shenxian zhuan* account says that Li was from Qi and had acquired the method of smelting the spirit elixir<sup>62</sup> from Master Anqi. He had at least one disciple whom he tells that he requires money to do those things he wishes to do but cannot afford. (Compounding the elixir is noted elsewhere as a most expensive procedure.) He goes to Wudi, and tells him that immortality is attainable and is greatly honoured. At this point the two episodes that are also found in the *Shiji* account implying Li's great age are related. The narrator concludes that "thus we know that Shaojun was several hundred years old" and goes on to describe him as looking fifty. With the funds the emperor has provided Li Shaojun secretly makes the spirit elixir but Li warns him that unless he stops violent behaviour in the empire the emperor would be unable to make the elixir himself. Li falls ill and the emperor dreams that while he and Li are ascending Songgao shan together an envoy of the god Taiyi appears who summons Li away. The emperor then sends someone to Li to receive his instructions but Li dies before he has a chance. When put in a coffin Li undergoes corpse-liberation. The account finishes with the emperor "vexed that he had not been more vehement in imploring Shaojun".<sup>63</sup>

Li Shaojun, like Liu An, is discussed in *Lunheng* and, not surprisingly, Wang Chong takes a similar attitude to him although he does allow that Li's fated lifespan may have been long.<sup>64</sup> But as with the case of Liu An this discussion indicates that Li Shaojun's story was known in the early Eastern Han. Two citations in *Baopuzi* - from lost texts called *Li Shaojun jialu* ascribed to Dong Zhongshu and *Han Jinzhong qiju zhu*<sup>65</sup> - which echo episodes in the *Shenxian zhuan* life add weight to this conclusion.

The two records of Li Shaojun diverge but it is not as clear as in the case of Liu An that the *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Li Shaojun is locally transmitted: the touches of rural life are absent but there are indicators in the general tone of the narrative to indicate a local provenance. The significant detail that sets the two records apart for the purposes of this argument is Li's place of origin. The *Shenxian zhuan* record is uncomplicatedly straightforward: he was a native of Qi. *Shiji*, and incidentally *Lunheng*, on the other hand insist that he kept his native place as secret as he did his age. The significance of this can be seen in the comment that follows immediately after the *Shiji* record of Li Shaojun relating that great numbers of *fangshi* came from Yan and Qi on the sea coast to discourse

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<sup>62</sup> See chapter three.

<sup>63</sup> The remainder of the *Taiping guangji* version is clearly an accretion to this basic story.

<sup>64</sup> *Lunheng*, 7:329-332.

<sup>65</sup> *Baopuzi*, 2:19.

on matters spiritual.<sup>66</sup> In fact, there was never any secret of Li Shaojun's origin; the point of recording Li's concealment of his native place was simply that - to note its concealment. Li Shaojun can be seen as the Yan or Qi *fangshi par excellence* in both records. In the *Shiji* account the characteristic attribute of Li Shaojun - and of all *fangshi* - is his duplicity; in *Shenxian zhuan* it is that he really possessed the immortal arts. The images of Wudi follow a similar pattern. In *Shiji* he is credulous right to the end when he still believes that Li Shaojun has departed through transformation; in *Shenxian zhuan* he is not conscientious enough to follow Li's instructions properly. Li Shaojun's *Shenxian zhuan* biography defends and advocates *fangshi* activity. In that Yan and Qi were the places of origin of most of the *fangshi*, Li Shaojun's *Shenxian zhuan* biography can be seen, like Liu An's, as a local product. Thus the alignment of the orthodox historical sources with criticism and the locally produced account with eulogy holds in the case of Li Shaojun.<sup>67</sup>

It is possible to go a stage further in this analysis. The alignments that have been observed between the types of sources - official and unofficial - their judgements - criticism and eulogy - and the site of their transmission - court and local - are not unmotivated. The relationships between the central figures in the biographies and the court are characterized by relations of power, moreover the power relations are based on broadly centre / local concerns. The *Shenxian zhuan* records can therefore be seen as local voices insisting on narratives that deny the values emanating from the centre. This process is, of course, reciprocal with the orthodox historical accounts standing in an inverse relationship to the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies. This is not to maintain that the *Shenxian zhuan* biographies are conscious responses to the orthodox sources or vice versa; rather they are generated, like the orthodox records are, by the relationships to the structures of power in which their tellers find themselves.

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<sup>66</sup> *Shiji*, 28:1386.

<sup>67</sup> Another possibly comparable case to Liu An and Li Shaojun is Luan Ba. Like Liu and Li, Luan is said to have attained immortality in the *Shenxian zhuan* account of his life but in the standard histories, in this case *Houhan shu*, 57:1841-1842, he dies - by committing suicide. Like Liu and Li his *Shenxian zhuan* record can be seen as locally transmitted, concerned as it is in part with the shrine erected to him by his followers in Shu, his native place. Unfortunately the two records of his life diverge to such an extent - there is barely an incident in common and even details of his native place are different - that they are not comparable in the same way as those of Liu and Li.

## Postscript: Daoist Biography after *Shenxian zhuan*

*Shenxian zhuan* was not the first collection of biographies of immortals but it was also not the last. It stands, perhaps with more justification than *Liexian zhuan*, at the head of a tradition of Daoist biography that continued throughout pre-modern China. This is because later collections emulated the more expansive narratives employed by *Shenxian zhuan* rather than the short notices of *Liexian zhuan*. This is clear from the two collections of Daoist biographies from the Six Dynasties that survive in fragmentary form, *Dongxian zhuan*,<sup>1</sup> attributed to a Jiansuzi in some bibliographies and *Daoxue zhuan*, by Ma Shu of the Chen.<sup>2</sup> In the Tang, Shen Fen's *Xuxian zhuan*<sup>3</sup> continued the tradition of extended biographies and during this period the encyclopaedia, *Sandong zhunang*, which gathered much of its material from biographical collections also appeared.

During the Six Dynasties another type of Daoist biography was developed that stood apart from the kind of record represented by *Shenxian zhuan*. Examples of this new form which uses the distinctive title *neizhuan* or "esoteric biography", no longer focus, in Seidel's words, "on the miracles performed by the immortals but deal with the long quest and the gradual initiation of the 'Perfected' and retrace the divine lineage of the revelations they receive. Often this revelatory lineage served to integrate the methods and famous saints of previous traditions into the Shang-ch'ing order."<sup>4</sup> The two biographies she mentions focus on Zhou Yishan, *Ziyang zhenren neizhuan*<sup>5</sup> and on Han Wudi, *Han Wudi neizhuan*.<sup>6</sup> There is also another kind of biographical record associated with the Shangqing tradition of which *Qingling zhenren Peijun zhuan* is the sole surviving complete example. The record of the Perfected Lord Pei is set apart from the kind of biographies that are found in *Shenxian zhuan*, as well as these *neizhuan*, by virtue of its interest in describing methods and practices.<sup>7</sup>

At the end of the Tang the figure of Du Guangting (850-933) stands out in the history of Daoism.<sup>8</sup> His fame rests partly on the vast array of texts he produced and among them

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<sup>1</sup> Chapters one hundred and ten and one hundred and eleven of *Yunji qiqian* are made up of selections from *Dongxian zhuan*. There would appear to have been another Jiansuzi, whose name was Hu Yin and who was a Daoist nun, active in the mid-ninth century. See Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, pp. 239-40.

<sup>2</sup> See Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, pp. 239.

<sup>3</sup> DZ 138, HY 295.

<sup>4</sup> Seidel, A., "Chronicle of Taoist Studies in the West 1950-1990", *Cahiers d'Extreme-Asie*, 5 (1989-90), 223-347 (p.247).

<sup>5</sup> DZ 152, HY 303.

<sup>6</sup> DZ 137, HY 292.

<sup>7</sup> *Yunji qiqian*, 105. See Robinet, *La Révélation du Shangqing dans l'Histoire du Taoïsme*, 2, pp. 375-83, Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, pp. 522-523 and Strickmann, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching", pp. 133-4.

<sup>8</sup> See Verellen, F., *Du Guangting (830-933): Taoïste de Cour à la Fin de la Chine Médiévale* (Paris, 1989).

were several collections of biographies of immortals, *Wangshi shenxian zhuan*,<sup>9</sup> *Yongchen jixian lu*<sup>10</sup> and *Shenxian ganyu zhuan*.<sup>11</sup> About the time of Du's death the anthology of extracts from biographies of immortals, *Xianyuan bianzhu* was produced by one Wang Songnian. Notable among later collections were the late tenth-century *Jiang Huai yiren lu*,<sup>12</sup> a collection of biographies brought together on the basis of their locality and the extensive twelfth-century anthology *Sandong qunxian lu*. The most ambitious of Daoist biographical collections was undoubtedly the Yuan compendium *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian*.<sup>13</sup> This fifty-three chapter work was compiled by Zhao Daoyi who was active in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries and was intended to be a complete record of Daoist notables from earliest antiquity to Zhao's own time. It is supplemented by a five chapter *xubian* and a six chapter *houji*, the latter devoted to the female subjects. Finally, in one notable case a figure from *Shenxian zhuan*, Ge Xuan, is the subject of an entire biographical treatise, *Taiji Ge xiangong zhuan*.<sup>14</sup>

The biographies of immortals do not only appear in collections devoted to them. Another source is mountain treatises. These texts are particularly useful in tracing the later development of cults devoted to particular figures as they include not only the biographies of the earliest figures but records of later figures associated with the same place, and sometimes versions of the records that differ from those appearing in standard biographical collections. Among those figures celebrated in *Shenxian zhuan* who appear in mountain treatises are Maojun in *Maoshan zhi*,<sup>15</sup> Madame Fan and Liu Gang in *Siming dongtian Danshan tuyong ji*<sup>16</sup> and Huang Chuping and Huang Chuqi in *Jinhua Chisong shan zhi*.<sup>17</sup>

*Jinhua Chisong shan zhi* illustrates the way such records can be used. In it we find details of the birthdates of the brothers: Huang Chuping was born on the thirteenth day of the eighth month of the third year of the reign period Xianhe of the emperor Chengdi of the Jin (3rd October, 328) and Huang Chuqi was born on the eighth day of the fourth month of the third year of the Taining reign period of the emperor Mingdi (6th May, 325). In the *Shenxian zhuan* biography, the reunion of the brothers takes place in the story after a forty-year gap. No source earlier than this mountain treatise mentions the birthdates of the two Lords Huang. As the biography is cited extensively in Tang and pre-Tang sources - including its first few sentences where we could expect these details - the birthdates must be regarded as late additions. Moreover, they are implausibly specific.

<sup>9</sup> This collection exists only in fragments. See Verellen, *Du Guangting (830-933): Taoiste de cour à la fin de la Chine médiévale*, pp. 179-80.

<sup>10</sup> DZ 560-61, HY 782.

<sup>11</sup> DZ 328, HY 592.

<sup>12</sup> DZ 329, HY 595.

<sup>13</sup> See Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature*, pp. 56-59.

<sup>14</sup> DZ 201, HY 450. The fact that he is the subject of an entire treatise is due to his being regarded as the recipient of the Lingbao scriptures. See Bokenkamp, S., "The Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures", *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein*, 2 (1983), 434-486.

<sup>15</sup> DZ 153-58, HY 304.

<sup>16</sup> DZ 332, HY 605.

<sup>17</sup> DZ 331, HY 601.

This might itself indicate an appeal to (spurious) historical accuracy, especially during a period when the followers of the cult were likely to have been lobbying for official recognition.

The probable period of composition of the mountain treatise corresponds to a high point in official recognition of the cult of the two Lords Huang as they became known. Interestingly, by this time, the original precedence of Chuping over Chuqi had been reversed: Chuqi is referred to as *dajun* while Chuping is *xiaojun*. The year 1189 (Chunxi, 16) saw Chuqi honoured with the title *Chongying zhenren* and Chuping honoured as *Yangsu zhenren*. In 1262 (Jingding, 3) they were additionally honoured as *Zhongying jinggan zhenren* and *Yangsu jingzheng zhenren*, respectively. These records always name Chuqi first - he was, of course, the elder brother.<sup>18</sup>

An example of a cult based on an immortal celebrated in *Shenxian zhuan* that was widespread in the Tang and continued beyond the Song is that of Magu. Her independent fame in the Tang is attested by the "Fuzhou Nanchengxian Magu shan xiantan ji" that has been used in this thesis, as well as the poetry of Cao Tang, studied by Schafer.<sup>19</sup> After the Song she was the subject of two *baojuan*: *Magu baojuan* and *Magu pusa baojuan*, the title of the latter indicating that the story had undergone some changes.<sup>20</sup> Her cult still survived at a popular level into the twentieth century where she is recorded as a deity who can cure sick children and as the subject of effigies presented to married couples on their twenty-fifth and fiftieth wedding anniversaries.<sup>21</sup> Finally, at a less popular level, Magu finds her way into one of Chen Yingning's poems concerning immortals, that on Wang Yuan.<sup>22</sup> Chen, who died in 1969 and was in his time the head of the Chinese Daoist Association (*Zhongguo daojiao xiehui*), also celebrated two other figures who appear in *Shenxian zhuan* in his poems, Jie Xiang<sup>23</sup> and Zhang Daoling.<sup>24</sup>

It seems appropriate for the stories of immortals to have a life in the culture that extends through the centuries - and it is also fitting that those stories should undergo transformations.

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<sup>18</sup> On the enfeoffment of the objects of popular cults see Hansen, V., *Changing Gods in Medieval China* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 79-104.

<sup>19</sup> Schafer, E., *Mirages on the Sea of Time* (Berkeley, 1985).

<sup>20</sup> See Sawada Mizuho, *Hōkan no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1976), pp. 90, 133.

<sup>21</sup> See Dore, H., *Researches into Chinese Superstitions*, XII (trans. M. Kennelly, Shanghai, 1926), pp. 1118-24, Burkhardt, V.R., *Chinese Creeds and Customs*, II (Hong Kong, 1955), p. 152 and Werner, E.T.C., *Dictionary of Chinese Mythology* ((New York, 1961), pp. 299-300.

<sup>22</sup> Chen Yingning, *Daojiao yu yangsheng* (Beijing, 1989), pp. 399.

<sup>23</sup> Chen Yingning, *Daojiao yu yangsheng*, pp. 401.

<sup>24</sup> Chen Yingning, *Daojiao yu yangsheng*, pp. 397-98.



Early Daoist Biography:  
A Study of *Shenxian zhuan*

Benjamin David Cooper Penny

Volume Two

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
of the Australian National University  
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## Appendix One

### A Table of the Places of Origin, Periods of Activity and Mountains of the Immortals, with an Accompanying Map

The *Shenxian zhuan* biographies are the source for the information in this table. Relevant information from other sources can be found in the footnotes.

Places designated with an asterisk (\*) are where the subject was active, if this can be determined, when a native place is not stated.

People designated with the symbol (@) are those with whom the subject was involved in some way in the biography.

Name	Native Place	Mountain	Era
Baishi Xiansheng	Not Stated	None	2000 years old in the time of Pengzu
Ban Meng	No-one knew	Daye shan <sup>1</sup>	Not Stated
Bo He	Liaodong	Wuzhong shan	Active early 3rd century, @ Dong Feng
Chen Anshi	Jingzhao <sup>2</sup>	None	Not Stated
Chen Chang	*Zhuyu <sup>3</sup>	Zhuyu	At least 600 years old <sup>4</sup>
Chen Zihuang	Not Stated	Huoshan	Attained immortality at least 370 years ago <sup>5</sup>
Cheng Weiqi	*Changan	None	Active between 138 B.C.E. and 1 C.E. <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Xianyuan bianzhu* has Tiantai shan. A Daye county was established under the Southern Tang in modern day Hubei south-east of Wuhan. I can find no record of a Daye shan.

<sup>2</sup> Jingzhao was part of Changan.

<sup>3</sup>The *Sandong zhunang Shenxian zhuan* text says that Zhiyu is in the eastern sea and its people have the same customs as the people of Wu. The *Siku quanshu* version, as well as the other citations, have Zhuyu shan. *Baopuzi* 4:85 says that Zhuyu is in Guiji. The biography of Gong Chong included in the *Hanwei Congshu* edition of *Shenxian zhuan*, which derives from *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 20:5a, says that Gong entered Zhiyu shan where he went off as an immortal.

<sup>4</sup> "Chen Chang has lived on Zhiyu for more than 600 years."

<sup>5</sup> "Chen Zihuang .. attained immortality and departed, entering Huo shan.... After 370 years [his wife] climbed the mountain ..." *Xianyuan bianzhu zhong*:16b adds that Chen was 230 when he attained immortality.

<sup>6</sup> Cheng Wei is named as an Attendant at the Gates - an imperial bodyguard. The position was established in 138 B.C.E. and its name was changed in 1 C.E. to the Gentlemen Rapid as Tigers.

Dong Feng	Houguan	Lushan	Active early 3rd century, @ Sun Quan
Dong Weinian	No-one knew	None	Active mid-late 3rd century, @ Jin Wudi
Dongling Shenmu	Hailing in Guangling	None	Not stated <sup>7</sup>
Dongguo Yannian	Shanyang <sup>8</sup>	None	Active early 3rd century, @ Cao Cao
Fan Furen	*Shangyu	None	Not Stated <sup>9</sup>
Fei Changfang	Runan	None	Not Stated <sup>10</sup>
Feng Gang	Yuyang	Difei shan	Not Stated
Feng Heng	Longxi	Xuanqiu shan <sup>11</sup>	At least 350 years old <sup>12</sup>
Ganjun	Donghai <sup>13</sup>	None	Not Stated <sup>14</sup>
Gan Shi	Taiyuan	Wangwu shan	Active early 3rd century, @ Cao Cao
Gaoqiugong	Not Stated	None	Not Stated
Ge Xuan	Danyang	None	Active early 3rd century, @ Sun Quan
Guangchengzi	Not Stated	Kongtong shan	Ancient, @ Huangdi
Guijun	*Xuzhou	None	Active between 106 B.C.E and 188 C.E. <sup>15</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Dongling Shenmu studied the Dao under Liu Gang, the husband of Fan Furen. Possible dates for her can be derived from his possible dates, see below note 9.

<sup>8</sup>There are two towns called Shanyang in this period. The one marked on the map was in Wei - the other was in Wu. There was also a Shanyangjun in Wei, about 170 kilometres east of the Shanyang marked on the map.

<sup>9</sup>Fan Furen's husband Liu Gang was prefect in Shangyu. *Siming dongtian Danshan tuyingji*, the mountain treatise of Siming shan, includes an unsigned and undated biography of Liu Gang which says he was a native of Xiapei and lived on Siming shan before becoming prefect (6b). He Zhizhang's (659-744) commentary to some poems by one Mu Xuanxu of the Tang in the same treatise says he lived during the Eastern Han (6b). *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* agrees with all these details except it says he was from the Jin (31:5b). On these and other matters related to *Siming dongtian Danshan tuyingji* see Boltz, J.M., *A Survey of Taoist Literature, Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries*, pp. 112-13, 299.

<sup>10</sup>Fei Changfang receives a biography in *Houhan shu*.

<sup>11</sup>This mountain is mythical.

<sup>12</sup>Feng took various drugs for one hundred and fifty years and attained immortality two hundred years later. *Han Wudi waizhuan* says that he was among men for a total of 200 years before he attained immortality. *Houhan shu* 82 xia:2750 groups him together with Gan Shi, Dongguo Yannian and Zuo Ci who were all involved with Cao Cao.

<sup>13</sup>*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 20:1a gives his native place as Langya.

<sup>14</sup>A detailed study of the various complications of the Gan Ji story can be found in Maeda Shigeki, "Rikuchō jidai ni okeru Kan Kichi den no henshen", *Tōhō Shūkyō* 65 (May, 1985), 44-62.

<sup>15</sup>Guijun was Inspector of Xuzhou. This position was created in 106 B.C.E. Its name was changed to Shepherd in 7 B.C.E but reverted to Inspector in 5 B.C.E. It changed again to Inspector in 42 C.E. but finally became Shepherd in 188 C.E.

Heshanggong	He River	None	Active 179 - 156 B.C.E. @ Han Wendi
Hugong (see Fei Changfang) <sup>16</sup>			
Huang Chuping	Lanxi <sup>17</sup>	Jinhua shan	Not Stated
Huangluzi	Not Stated <sup>18</sup>	None	Not Stated
Huangshijun	Not Stated	None	Not Stated
Ji Zixun	Qi	None	At least three hundred years ago <sup>19</sup>
Jiao Xian	Dayang in Hedong	None	Late Han - Wei
Jie Xiang	Guiji	Dongshan <sup>20</sup>	Active early 3rd Century @ Sun Quan
Kangfengzi	Not Stated	None	Not Stated
Kong Yuanfang	Xuchang	Huashan <sup>21</sup>	Active early 3rd Century @ Zuo Ci
Laozi	Quren	None	Ancient, but periodically incarnate
Li A	Shu *Chengdu	Qingcheng shan	Not Stated <sup>22</sup>
Li Babai	Shu	Yuntai shan	Not Stated
Li Changzai	Shujun	Difei shan	Not Stated
Li Gen	Xuchang	None	Active mid 3rd century @ Wang Ling
Li Shaojun	Qi	Songgao shan <sup>23</sup>	Active 140-86 B.C.E. @ Han Wudi
Li Yiqi	Shu	Langye shan	Active from 179 - 156 B.C.E. @ Han Wendi until early third century @ Liu Bei

<sup>16</sup> Hugong is beyond time and space. Fei Changfang is, in the sense of this table, the real subject of the biography.

<sup>17</sup> Most versions of this story have Danxi which is known only as a creek in a gully in Taihang guan in modern Shanxi. *Lishi zhenxian didao tongjian* 5:1a also has Danxi but an editorial note reads "one [version] says Lanxi". Lanxi is located very close to Jinhua shan. I accept this version.

<sup>18</sup> *Baopuzi* reports that a Huangluzi fungus is found on Taishan, 11:200.

<sup>19</sup> "It was like this for more than three hundred years." Ji's *Houhan shu* biography says he was active in the Jianan reign period (196-220 C.E., 82 *xia*: 2745).

<sup>20</sup> This may of course be "the eastern mountains" in general. There are several mountains called Dongshan listed in *Taiping huanyu ji*. The most likely candidate was near present-day Wenzhou.

<sup>21</sup> Designated as the Western Marchmount.

<sup>22</sup> *Baopuzi* says that there was a Li A in Shu during the reign of Wu Dadi (222-252).

<sup>23</sup> Wudi dreams that he and Li Shaojun ascended Songgao shan together.

Li Zhongfu	Yi in Fengyi	Huashan	At least 300 years old <sup>24</sup>
Lilougong	Not Staed	None	Not Stated
Liu An	Huainan	None	179-122 B.C.E.
Liu Gen	Jingzhao in Changan <sup>25</sup>	Songgao shan	Recommended for office in 7 B.C.E.
Lu Ao	Yan	Menggu zhi shan <sup>27</sup>	Qin <sup>26</sup>
Lu Nüsheng	Changle	Songgao shan, Huashan	Not Stated <sup>28</sup>
Lu Wenjing	Not Stated	Taihang shan	Attained immortality at least 400 years ago <sup>29</sup>
Luan Ba	Chengdu	None	Not Stated <sup>30</sup>
Maojun	Youzhou	Maoshan	Not Stated
Nanjizi	Not Stated	None	Not Stated
Pengzu	Not Stated	None	More than 700 at the end of the Yin dynasty <sup>31</sup>
Rongchenggong	Not Stated	None	Not Stated
Ruoshi (see Lu Ao)			
Shen Jian	Danyang	None	Not Stated
Shen Xi	Wujun	None	At least 400 years ago <sup>32</sup>
Sun Bo	Hedong	Linlu shan	Not Stated

<sup>24</sup> "He lived among men for more than 300 years."

<sup>25</sup> The *Houhan shu* biography as well as *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* gives Yingchuan as his native place.

<sup>26</sup> Ruoshi, who gives this biography its title, is described simply as "an ancient immortal".

<sup>27</sup> Menggu zhi shan is mythical.

<sup>28</sup> *Houhan shu* 82 *xia*:2741 says that she was a contemporary of Hua Tuo. Several times she related events of the reign of Xianzong, that is Mingdi, (r.58-75 C.E.) with great clarity, so *Houhan shu* suspects that she came from this time.

<sup>29</sup> He visits his descendant Xi 200 years after he attained immortality. Xi, in turn, attained immortality "200 years ago".

<sup>30</sup> Luan Ba's *Houhan shu* biography has him active during the reigns of Huandi and Lingdi (147-189).

<sup>31</sup> Traditionally dated to 1122 B.C.E. He is also said to be the great great grandson Zhuan Xu, one of the Five Emperors, who was himself (in the *Shiji* record, 1:11) grandson of Huangdi.

<sup>32</sup> Shen Xi returned to his descendant Huai four hundred years after he attained immortality. In addition, Wujun was created in the Eastern Han.

Sun Deng	No-one knew <sup>33</sup>	None	Active 3rd century @ Ji Kang, Yang Jun <sup>34</sup>
Taishan Laofu	Not Stated	Taishan	Active 140-86 B.C.E. @ Han Wudi <sup>35</sup>
Taiyangnü	Not Stated	None Stated	At least two hundred and eighty years old <sup>36</sup>
Taiyangzi	Not Stated	None Stated	At least five hundred years ago <sup>37</sup>
Taiyinnü	Not Stated	None Stated	At least two hundred years old <sup>38</sup>
Wang Lie	Handan	Taihang shan	Active mid-3rd century @ Ji Kang
Wang Yuan	Donghai	Guancang shan	Active late 2nd century @ Chen Dan
Wang Yao	Boyang	Mati shan	Not Stated
Wei Shuqing	Zhongshan	Huashan	Met Han Wudi 109 B.C.E. <sup>39</sup>
Wu Yan	Beihai	None	Active 140-86 B.C.E. @ Han Wudi
Yin Changsheng	Xinye	Qingcheng shan, Pingdu shan	Received the <i>Xianjun shendan yaojue</i> in 121 C.E.
Zhang Ling	Feng in Peiguo	Huming shan	Not Stated <sup>40</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Sun Deng's *Jinshu* biography (94:2426) gives Gong in Jijun. It also says he lived on Beishan and Yiyang shan.

<sup>34</sup> Ji Kang lived between 223 and 262. The *Shenxian zhuan* biography refers to Yang Jun being Grand Tutor. In his biography in *Jinshu* (40:1177-80) he attained this office on the accession of Jin Huidi (290) and that he was executed in 291. These two dates are clearly inconsistent. I would guess that the *Shenxian zhuan* text is anachronistically referring to Yang Jun by the highest office he attained in his life while describing an incident that happened during Ji Kang's life.

<sup>35</sup> The biography must have been composed no less than 300 years later as he attained immortality that long after his meeting with Wudi.

<sup>36</sup> "When she was two hundred and eighty, her complexion was like peach blossom."

<sup>37</sup> "For a period of five hundred years, his face had the look of a youth."

<sup>38</sup> "When she attained immortality she was already over two hundred."

<sup>39</sup> The *Taiping guangji* text says this meeting took place on a renzhen day in the 8th month of the 2nd year of the Yifeng reign period. This reign period is, in fact, from the Tang. The *Longwei mishu* version replaces Yifeng with Yuanfeng, *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* has Tianhan. Now, renzhen is the 29th combination in the cycle of 60. The eighth month of Yuanfeng started on an yimao day (the 16th in the cycle), the eighth month of Tianhan began on a gengshen day (the 57th in the cycle). Thus, there was no renzhen day in the eighth month of Tianhan, 2 but there was in the eighth month of Yuanfeng, 2. Yuanfeng, 2 corresponds to 109 B.C.E.

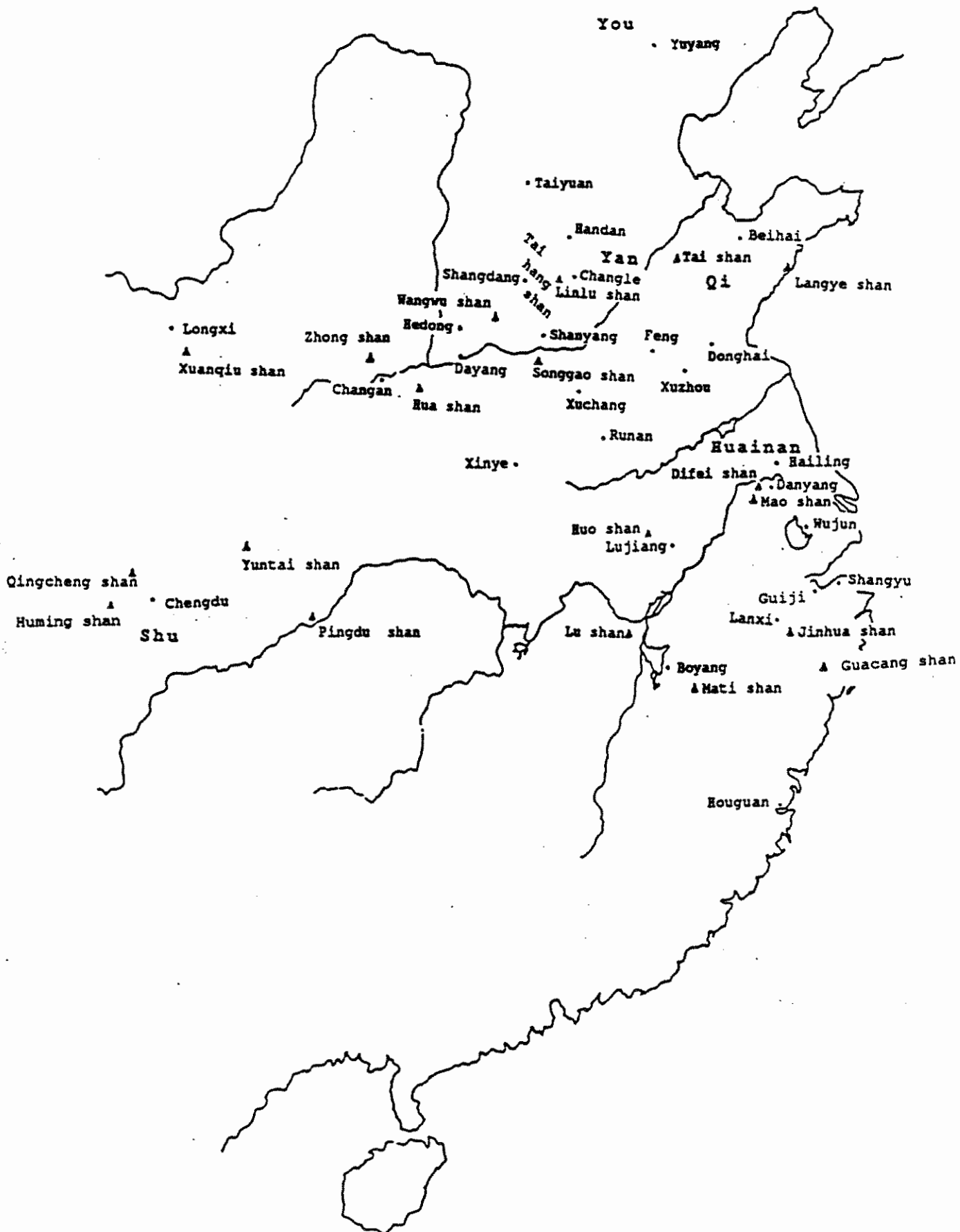
<sup>40</sup> *Houhan shu* (75:2435) says that his stay in Shu was during the reign of Shundi (126-145 C.E.).

Zhao Qu	Shangdang	None <sup>41</sup>	At least 300 years ago. <sup>42</sup>
Zuo Ci	Lujiang	Huoshan	Active early 3rd Century @ Cao Cao, Liu Bei, Sun Quan

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<sup>41</sup> *Baopuzi* 11:207 names the mountain as Baodu shan.

<sup>42</sup> "He stayed among men for 300 years and always looked like a boy."





## Appendix Two

### A Comparison of the Texts and Citations of the Biography of Wang Yuan

The following pages present the various versions of, and citations from, the *Shenxian zhuan* biography of Wang Yuan. The pages are numbered 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2E, 2E, etc. The versions of the biography and the citations are arranged so that different texts' accounts of the same material are found on the same set of numerically numbered pages. Thus parallel passages are found on pages 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E. Furthermore, the same version or citation always appears on the page with the same alphabetical designation. Thus, the basic text, *Yunji qiqian* 109:10a-15a is found on pages 1A, 2A, 3A...11A whereas, for example, the citation from *Sandong zhunang* 8:4b occurs on pages 1C, 2C, 3C, 4C and 6C. This latter citation does not appear on page 5C, 7C, 8C... because it contains no material parallel to those parts of the basic text found on pages 5A, 7A, 8A .... This also accounts for the fact that there is no page 9E, 10E, 11C and 11E. None of the texts that were found on the C and E pages of smaller numbers have material parallel to that of the basic text on the equivalent page.

The following abbreviations are used in this appendix:

Beitang shuchao	BTSC
Chuxue ji	CXJ
Ganzhu ji	GZJ
Leishuo	LS
Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian	TDTJ
Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian houji	TDTJHJ
Quan Tangwen	QTW
Sandong qunxian lu	SDQXL
Sandong zhunang	SDZN
Siku quanshu	SKQS
Taiping guangji	TPGJ
Taiping yulan	TPYL
Xianyuan bianzhu	XYBZ
Xiaoyao xujing	XYXJ
Xuanpin lu	XPL
Yiwen leiju	YWLJ
Yongcheng jixian lu	YCJXL
Yunji qiqian	YJQQ

### 王遠

YJQQ 109.10a

王遠者字方平東海人也舉孝廉除郎中稍  
 加至中散大夫博學五經兼明天文圖讖河  
 洛之要遙知天下盛衰之期九州吉凶之事  
 漢孝桓帝聞之連徵不出使郡國逼載以詣  
 京師低頭閉口不肯答詔乃題宮門扇四百  
 餘字皆紀方來帝惡之使人削之外字適去  
 內字復見墨皆徹入木裏方平無復子孫鄉

### 王方平

YJQQ 85:10a-b

王遠者字方平東海人也舉孝廉除郎中稍  
 加至中散大夫博學五經兼明天文圖讖河  
 洛之要遙知天下盛衰之期九州吉凶如握  
 已成漢孝桓帝聞之連徵不出使郡國逼載  
 以詣京師低頭閉口不肯答詔乃題宮門扇  
 四百餘字皆記方來帝惡之使人削之外字  
 適去內字復見墨皆徹入木裏方平無復子  
 孫鄉

TPGJ 60:369

### 麻姑

漢孝桓帝時。神仙王遠。字方平。

### 王遠

TPGJ 7:45

王遠。字方平。東海人也。舉孝廉。除郎中。稍加中散大夫。學通五經。尤明天文圖讖河洛之要。遙  
 知天下盛衰之期。九州吉凶。如觀之掌握。後棄官。入山修道。道成。漢孝桓帝聞之。連徵不出。使  
 郡國逼載。以詣京師。遠低頭閉口。不答詔。乃題宮門扇板四百餘字。皆記方來之事。帝惡之。使削  
 去。外字適去。內字復見。墨皆徹板裏。削之益分明。遠無子孫。鄉

### 王遠

王遠者字方平東海人也舉孝廉除郎中稍  
 加至中散大夫博學五經兼明天文圖讖河  
 洛之要逆知天下盛衰之期九州吉凶之事  
 漢孝桓帝聞之連徵不出使郡國遍載以詣  
 京師低頭閉口不肯答詔乃題宮門扇四百  
 餘字皆紀方來帝惡之使人削之外字遁去  
 內字復見墨皆徹入木裏方平無復子孫  
 鄉

TDTJ S: 3a-3b

### 王遠

王遠字方平東海人也舉孝廉除郎中稍加至中散大  
 夫博學五經尤明天文圖讖河洛之要逆知天下盛衰

SKQS 3: 6b-7a

之期九州吉凶觀諸掌握後葉官入山修道道成漢孝  
 桓帝聞之連徵不出使郡收遍載以詣京師遠低頭閉  
 口不肯答詔乃題宮門扇板四百餘字皆說方來之事  
 帝惡之使人削之外字始去內字復見字墨皆徹入板  
 裏方平無復子孫鄉

應 姑 著 葛 惟 川 神 仙 傳 云 王 遠 字 方 平  
Q1W 338:5a

神 仙 傳 第 三 云 王 遠 字 方 平 SDZN 8:4b

方 平 道 蔡 二 玄 師 涓 49a-9b

神 仙 傳 王 遠 字 方 平 XYBZ

東 海 麻 姑 餘 抗 阿 妹 412b

事 具 王 遠 蔡 經 篇 中 XYBZ

神 仙 傳 曰 漢 桓 帝 徵 仙 人 王 遠 遠 乃 題 宮 門 四 百 餘 字 曰  
論 方 來 帝 惡 之 削 之 外 字 去 內 字 復 見 墨 入 板 裏  
TPYL 605:4b

又 曰 王 遠 字 方 平 東 海 人 也 博 學 尤 明 天 文 識 緯 河 洛 之  
要 逆 知 天 下 盛 衰 之 期 漢 桓 帝 聞 之 連 徵 不 出 使 郡 國 逼  
載 詣 京 師 低 頭 閉 口 不 肯 答 乃 題 宮 門 扇 四 百 餘 字 皆 說  
方 來 帝 甚 恐 之 使 削 去 外 字 復 見 墨 皆 微 入 版 裏  
TPYL 747:7a

葛 洪 神 仙 傳 曰 王 遠 字 方 平 東 海 人 也 博 學 六 經 尤 明 天  
文 圖 識 河 洛 之 要 逆 知 天 人 盛 衰 之 期 九 州 古 為 漢 桓 帝  
聞 之 連 徵 不 出 使 郡 國 逼 載 以 詣 京 師 低 頭 閉 口 不 肯 答  
乃 題 宮 門 扇 板 四 百 餘 字 皆 說 方 來 帝 甚 恐 之 使 人 削 之  
外 字 去 內 字 復 見 墨 皆 微 入 板 裏  
TPYL 767:1a

麻姑  
麻姑仙人王方平之妹漢桓帝時

X7XJ  
1:286

王遠字方平東海人也舉孝廉除郎中稍加  
至中散大夫博學五經尤明天文圖讖河洛  
之術遂知天下盛衰之期九州吉凶觀諸掌  
握後棄官入山修道道成孝桓帝連徵不出  
使郡牧逼載以詣京師遠低頭閉口不肯答  
詔乃題宮門扇版四百餘字皆說方來之事  
帝惡之使人削之外字始去內字復見墨昏  
徹版裏方平無復子孫

XPL 2:13a-13b

麻姑

麻姑者乃上真元君之亞也孝桓帝時神仙  
王遠字方平

4C3XL 4:10a

玉壺十二

2:17a

王遠字方平

GZJ

十二玉壺  
王遠字方平

L.S.366

總真真人

LS 3:20a

王遠字方平明天文圖讖逆知吉凶漢桓帝  
問灾祥不答乃題宮門四百餘字預說方來  
帝惡之令人削除外字雖滅内字復見墨跡  
徹入板裏

SDQXL 14:19b

麻姑鳥爪羲皇蛇身

集仙錄云麻姑孝明帝時

SDQXL 16:20a

蔡經狗竇宋卿雞窠

王氏神仙傳總真王君名遠字方平

SDQXL 18:5a-5b

列仙傳道士王遠知字方平舉賢良方正  
累遷中散明天文隱居山林至漢帝累召  
不出令郡守辟詣京師而方平閉口不言

SDQXL 20:2b

王遠題門隱容濬井

王氏神仙傳王遠字方平明天文圖讖  
逆知吉凶漢武帝問灾祥不答乃題宮門四  
百餘字預說方來帝惡之令人削除外字  
雖滅内字復見墨迹徹入板裏

里人累世傳事之同郡故太尉公陳耽為方  
 平架道室旦夕朝拜之但乞福願從學道也  
 方平在耽家三十餘年耽家無疾病死喪奴  
 婢皆安然六畜繁息田蠶萬倍仕宦高遷後  
 語耽云吾期運當去不得復停明日日中當  
 發至時方平死耽知其化去不敢下著地但  
 悲啼歎息曰先生捨我去我將何怙具棺器  
 燒香就牀上衣裝至三日三夜忽然失其所  
 在衣帶不解如蛇蛻也方平去後百餘日耽  
 夢或謂耽得方平之道化去或謂方平知耽

YJQQ 109:106

里人累世傳事之同郡故太尉公陳耽  
 為方平架道室旦夕朝拜之但乞福願不從  
 學道也方平在耽家三十餘年耽家無疾病  
 死喪奴婢皆安然六畜繁息田蠶萬倍仕宦  
 高遷後語耽云吾期運當去不得復停明日  
 日中當發至時方平死耽知其化去不敢下  
 著地但悲啼歎息曰先生捨我去我將何怙  
 具棺器燒香就牀著衣至三日三夜忽然失  
 其所在衣帶不解如蛇蛻也方平去後百餘  
 日耽或謂耽得方平之道他去或謂方平  
 知耽

YJQR 85:106-11a

里人累世相傳供養之。同郡太尉

PGJ 7:45-46

陳耽。為道卷道室。旦夕朝拜之。但乞福。未嘗學道也。處在陳家四十餘年。陳家曾無疾病死喪。奴  
 婢皆然。六畜繁息。田桑倍獲。遠忽語陳耽曰。吾期運當去。不得久停。明日日中當發。至時遠死。  
 耽知其仙去。不敢下著地。但悲啼嘆息曰。先生捨我。我將何怙。具棺器燒香。就牀衣裝之。至三日  
 夜。忽失其屍。衣冠不解。如蛇蛻耳。遠卒後百餘日。耽亦卒。或謂耽得遠之遺化去。或曰。知耽

里人累世傳事之同郡太尉公陳耽為方  
 平架道室旦夕朝拜之但乞福願從學道也  
 方平在耽家三十餘年耽家無疾病死喪奴  
 婢皆安然六畜繁息田蠶數倍仕宦高遷後  
 語耽云吾期運當去不復停明日日中當發  
 至時方平死耽知其化去不敢下著地但悲  
 啼而歎息曰先生捨我去我將何怙具棺器  
 燒香就牀衣裝至三日三夜忽然失其所在  
 衣帶不解如蛇蛻也方平去後百餘日耽薨  
 或謂耽得方平之道化去或謂方平知耽

TDTJ 5:3b-4a

里人累世相傳共事之同郡故太

尉公陳耽為方平架道室旦夕朝拜之但乞福消災不  
 從學道方平在耽家四十餘年耽家無疾病死喪奴婢  
 皆然六畜繁息田蠶萬倍仕宦高遷後語耽云吾期運  
 將盡當去不得復停明日日中當發也至時方平死耽  
 知其化去不敢下著地但悲涕歎息曰先生捨我去耶  
 我將何如具棺器燒香就床上衣裝之至三日三夜忽  
 失其尸衣帶不解如蛇蛻耳方平去後百餘日耽亦死  
 或謂耽得方平之道化去或謂方平知耽

SKQS 3:7a-7b

欽定四庫全書

神仙傳

七



得道在太尉陳寔家

三十餘年一旦託形蟬蛻

XYBZ 496

里人累世相傳共事

之同郡故太尉公陳耽為方平駕道室朝夕  
 朝拜之但乞福消災不從學道方平住耽家  
 四十餘年後與耽云吾期運將盡當去不得  
 復停明日日中當發也至時方平死耽知其  
 化去不敢下著地但悲涕嘆息曰先生捨我  
 去耶我將何如具棺器燒香就床上衣裝之  
 至三日三夜忽失其尸衣帶不解如蛇蛻耳  
 方平去後百餘日耽亦死或謂耽得方平之  
 道化去或謂方平知耽

XPL 2: 136 - 14a

LS 3:20a-20b

在太尉陳耽家四十餘日一日日
期運當去不得復停三日忽失其尸大上老
君賜方平七轉靈符為總真人領仙士萬
五千人

SDQXL 18:56

謂弟子曰吾數將盡明日當行及期解化  
無尸如蟬蛻耳

將終故委耽去也方平東入括蒼山過吳住  
胥門蔡經家

蔡經

蔡經者小民耳而骨相當得仙方平知之故  
往其家謂經曰汝生命應得度世故來取汝  
補官僚然汝少不知道今氣少肉多不得上  
天去當作尸解須更如從狗竇中過耳告以  
要言乃委經去經後忽身體發熱如火欲得  
水灌舉家汲水灌之如沃焦狀如此三日中  
消耗骨盡乃入室以被自覆忽然失其所在

YJQQ 109:11a

YJQQ 85:11a

將終故委耽去也方平東入括蒼山過  
吳住胥門蔡經家

TCJ 7:46

終。故委之而去也。初遠欲東入括蒼山。過吳。住胥門蔡經家。蔡經者。小民耳。而骨相當仙。遠知之。故住其家。遠語經曰。汝生命應得度世。欲取汝以補官僚耳。然少不知道。今氣少肉多。不得上去。當為屍解。如從狗竇中過耳。於是告以要言。乃委經而去。經後忽身體發熱如火。欲得冷水灌之。舉家汲水灌之。如沃焦石。如此三日。消耗骨立。乃入室。以被自覆。忽然失之。

將

終故委耽去也方平東入括蒼山遇吳往晉  
門蔡經家方平得道位西極西城真人領仙

士萬五千人鎮青城山九仙寶室之天

志州圖經云禹廟景德觀前漢王方平得道之山昔名  
仙都宮宋真宗咸平元年賜太宗皇帝御書  
一百二十卷景德元年賜今類

蔡經

蔡經者小民爾而骨相當得仙方平知之故  
往其家平江府有謂經曰汝生命應得度世  
蔡經宅故來取汝補官僚然汝少不知道今氣少肉  
多不得上天去當作尸解須更如從狗竇中  
過爾告以要言乃委經去經後忽身體發熱  
如火欲得水灌之如沃焦狀如此三日中消  
耗骨盡乃入室以被自覆忽然失其所在

5:4a-4b

TDTJ

將終委之而

去也其後方平欲東之括蒼山遇吳往晉門蔡經家經  
者小民也骨相當仙方平知之故往其家遂語經曰汝  
生命應得度世故欲取汝以補仙官然汝少不知道今  
氣少肉多不得上昇當為尸解耳尸解一劇須更如從  
狗竇中過耳告以要言乃委經去後經忽身體發熱如  
火欲得水灌舉家汲水以灌之如沃焦石似此三日中  
消耗骨立乃入室以被自覆忽然失其所在

SKQS 3:7b-8a

後東入接蒼過  
天恭經家教其尸解 QTW 338:5b

胥門慕經家知經有仙分遂告以要言而去經

XYBZ 中9b

# 方平降蔡

經之家曰汝當得度世故來教汝但汝氣少  
 肉多未能即上天當作尸解乃告以要言而  
 去經後身熱如火三日肉消骨直全  
 以被自覆忽然失其所在

XYXJ 1:286

將終委之而去也其

後方平欲東之栢蒼山過吳住胥門蔡經家  
 經者小民也骨相當仙方平故往其家因語  
 經曰汝生命應得度世然汝少不聞道本氣  
 少肉多當從尸解耳尸解一劇須臾如狗齧  
 中過耳告以要言乃委經去後經果蟬蛻失  
 所在去

XPL 2:14a

降於蔡經家  
 YCJXL 4:10a

往蔡經家後  
 GZJ 2:17a

嘗在蔡經家  
 AS 3:66

東遊括蒼過道民蔡經家知其骨相

合道曰汝應得度世補仙官但少不知道氣

少肉多唯可尸解此法須更如過狗竇中耳

經忽身熱欲水灌之如沃焦狀因失其尸

LS 3. 206

遊括

蒼山過道民蔡經家君知其骨相合道往

而度之謂經曰汝應得度世以補仙官但

汝少不知道氣少肉多唯可尸解此法須

更如過狗竇中耳言訖而去經忽身熱如

火欲得水灌之舉家撻水如沃焦狀三日

之中消瘦骨立乃入室以被自覆因失其

尸

SDQXL 16:20a-20c



視其被中有皮頭足俱存如蟬蛻也去後十  
餘年忽還家去時已老還更少壯頭髮皆黑  
語家云七月七日王君當來過到其日可作  
數百斛飲以供從官乃去到其日家假借甕  
器作飲數百斛羅列覆置庭中至其日方平

YJQQ 109:116

果來未至經家一時間但聞金鼓蕭管人馬  
之聲比近皆驚不知何等及至經舉家皆見  
之方平著遠遊之冠朱衣虎頭髻蒙五色之  
綬帶劍黃色少髮長短中人也乘羽蓋之車  
駕五龍龍各異色前後麾節旌旗導從威儀

TRCJ 60.369

降於經家。將至一頃。聞金鼓蕭管人馬之聲。及舉家皆見。王  
方平戴遠遊冠。着朱衣。虎頭髻。五色之綬。帶劍。少髮。黃色。中形人也。乘羽車。駕五龍。龍  
各異色。麾節幡旗。前後導從。威儀

TPGJ 7:46

視其被內。唯存  
皮。頭足具如蟬蛻也。去十餘年。忽還家。容色少壯。髮皆黑。語家人曰。七月七日。王君當來。其  
日可多作飲食。以供從官。至其日。經家乃借甕器。作飲食百餘斛。羅列布設庭下。是日。王君果來。  
未至。先聞金鼓蕭管人馬之聲。比近皆驚。莫知所在。及至經舍。舉家皆見。冠遠遊冠。朱衣。虎  
頭髻。五色綬。帶劍。黃色少髮。長短中形人也。乘羽車。駕五龍。龍各異色。前後麾節。幡旗導  
從。威儀奕奕。

視

其被中有皮頭足具存如蟬蛻也去後十餘  
 年忽還家去時已老還更少壯頭髮皆黑語  
 家人曰七月七日王君當來過到其日可作  
 數百斛飲以供從官乃去其家依其言假借  
 甕器作酒數百斛羅列覆置庭間以候之其  
 日方平果來未至經家一時但聞金鼓蕭管  
 之聲比近皆驚不知何等及至經舉家皆見  
 之方平著遠遊之冠朱衣虎頭鞞囊五色之  
 綬帶劍黃色少鬚長短中人也乘五蓋之車  
 駕五龍龍各異色前後麾節<sup>四</sup>揮旗導從威儀

TDIJ 5: 46-5a

視其被中

惟有皮頭足具如今蟬蛻也去十餘年忽然還家去時  
 已老還更少壯頭髮還黑語其家云七月七日王君當  
 來過到其日可多作數百斛飲食以供從官乃去到期  
 日其家假借甕窺作飲食數百斛羅列覆置庭中其日  
 方平果來未至經家則聞金鼓蕭管人馬之聲比近皆  
 驚不知何所在及至經家舉家皆見方平著遠遊冠朱  
 服虎頭鞞囊五色綬帶劍少鬚黃色長短中形人也乘  
 羽車駕五龍龍各異色麾節<sup>四</sup>麾旗前接導從威儀奕奕

SKQS 3: 8a-b

欽定四庫全書



世說新語

卷三

八

如蛇蟠也說去十餘年忽還舊家  
 言七月七日王君雲來週到期日方平乘有車駕五龍各  
 異色旌旗導從威儀赫奕

Q TW 338:5b-6a

黃色少鬚長短中人也 S02N 8:4b

神仙傳云  
 王遠至其祭經家 BTSC 145:5b

神仙傳云  
 王方平至其祭經家 BTSC 148:4a

神仙傳曰吳蔡經去家時已老還更  
 少壯頭髮皆黑語家中言七月七日  
 王君雲來至期日王方平果乘乘羽車駕五龍 CXJ 4:77

葛洪神仙傳曰王方平至蔡經家 CXJ 26:6A2

神仙傳曰王遠至蔡經家 YWUJ 72:124Z

亦蟬蛻後十年却還家以七月七日  
 王君後來神仙音樂儀仗羽蓋雲車排空  
 而至 XYBZ 中96

視其被中但有形

如蛇蛻後十餘年忽還家語家人曰七月十

XYXJ 1:28b-29a

日王君復來當作酒數百斛以待其日方平

果著遠游冠乘五龍車前後麾節旌道衛

十餘年忽然還家語其家云七月七

日王君當來過到其日可作數百斛飲食以

供從官乃去到期日方平果來麾節導從威

儀奕奕

XPL 2:14a-14b

將至一時頃聞鼓

蕭人馬之聲及至舉家皆見之方平載遠遊

冠朱衣虎頭鞞囊五色之綬帶劍小鬚黃白

色中形人也乘羽蓋車駕五龍龍各異色麾

節旌旗前後導從威儀奕奕

YCJXL 4:10a-10b

去十餘年七月七日威儀

QZJ 2:17a

去十餘年七月七日來威儀

LS 66-7a

LS 3: 206

十餘年忽還家云七月七日王君當來可作

一百石飲以供從官其日果至

SDQXL 14: 196

與神仙王遠降於蔡經家

將至一時頃聞蕭鼓人馬之聲

SDQXL 16: 206

視被中之身頭足具全如蟬蛻耳

YJQQ 109:12a

如大將軍出也有十二隊五百士皆以蠟密  
 封其口鼓吹皆乘麟從天上來下懸集不從  
 人道行也既至從官皆不復知所在唯尚見  
 方平身坐須臾引見經父兄因遣人與麻姑  
 相問亦莫知麻姑是何神也言王方平敬報  
 久不行民間今來在此想姑能暫來語否有  
 頃信還但聞其語不見所使人也答言麻姑  
 再拜但不相見忽已五百餘年尊卑有序修  
 敬無階思念久煩承來在彼故當躬到而先  
 彼詔當按行蓬萊今便暫往如是當還便觀

TRCJ 60:369

奕奕。如大將軍。鼓吹皆乘麟。從天而下。懸集於庭。從官皆長  
 丈餘。不從道行。既至。從官皆隱。不知所在。唯見方平。與經父母兄弟相見。獨坐久之。即令人相  
 訪。明鈔本助下有麻姑三字。經家亦不知麻姑何人也。言曰。王方平敬報姑。余久不在人間。今集在此。  
 想姑能暫來語乎。有頃。使者還。不見其使。但聞其語云。麻姑再拜。不見忽已五百餘年。尊卑有  
 叙。修敬無階。頃信來。承在彼。登山顛倒。按本卷七王遠條。蓬山顛倒應作食頃即到。而先受命。當按行  
 蓬萊。今便暫往。如是當還。還便觀。

TRCJ 7:46

如大將軍也。有十二伍伯。皆以臘封其口。鼓吹皆乘龍。從天而下。懸集於庭。從官  
 皆長丈餘。不從道行。既至。從官皆隱。不知所在。唯獨見遠坐耳。須臾。引見經父母兄弟。因遣人  
 召麻姑。亦莫知麻姑是何人也。言曰。王方平敬報。久不到民間。今來在此。想姑能暫來語否。須臾  
 信還。不見其使。但聞信語曰。麻姑再拜。不相見忽已五百餘年。尊卑有序。拜敬無階。頃信承來在  
 彼。食頃即到。先受命當按行蓬萊。今便暫往。如是當還。還便觀。

TDIJ 5:5a - 5b

如大將軍出也有十二隊五百士皆以蠶蠟  
 封其口鼓吹皆乘麟從天上來下懸集不從  
 人通行也既至從官皆不復知所在惟見方  
 平身坐須臾引見經父兄因遣人與麻姑相  
 問亦莫知麻姑是何神也言王方平敬報久  
 不行民間今來在此想姑能暫來語否有頃  
 信還但聞其語不見其所使人也答言麻姑  
 再拜但不相見忽以五百餘年尊卑有序修  
 敬無階思念久煩承來在彼故當躬到而先  
 被詔當按行蓬萊今便暫往如是當還便宜  
 親

SKQS 3: 8b-9a

如大將軍也有十二玉壺皆以臘蜜封其口鼓吹皆乘  
 麟從天上下懸集不從道行也既至從官皆隱不知所  
 在惟見方平坐耳須臾引見經父母兄弟因遣人召麻  
 姑相問亦莫知麻姑是何神也言王方平敬報久不在  
 民間今集在此想姑能暫來語否有頃信還但聞其語  
 不見所使人也答言麻姑再拜比不相見忽已五百餘  
 年尊卑有序修敬無階思念煩信承來在彼登當傾倒  
 而先被記當業行蓬萊今便暫往如是當還還便親

如大翁也似不空須臾引見

父兄因覓人與麻姑相問亦其知麻姑見何神也言王方  
平欲報久不行民間今來在此想麻姑往來有頃信還  
似聞其語不見所使人曰麻姑再拜不見忽已五百餘年  
身享有序修報無階思念久煩信承在彼登山顯側而先  
誠記當候行蓬萊今便暫往如是便還即親

Q.TW 338:6a

# 王君既坐遣人召麻姑

X.Y.BZ  
中96



如大將軍侍從既至從官皆隱經父兄弟畢  
方平乃遣人迎麻姑

XHAT 1:29a

如大將軍也要麻姑會於經家

XPL 2:14b

如大將軍也有

十二隊五百士皆以蠟密封其口鼓吹皆乘  
麟從天而下懸集於庭從官皆長丈餘不從  
道行既至從官皆隱不知所在唯見方平與  
經父兄弟及母相見獨坐良久即令人與麻  
姑相訪經家經亦不知麻姑何人也言曰王  
方平敬報姑余久不行人間今來在此想姑  
能暫來語乎有頃使者還不見其形但聞其  
語云麻姑再拜但不相見忽已五百餘年尊  
卑有序修敬無階煩信承來在彼登頃即到  
而先受帝命當按行蓬萊今便暫往如是當  
還還便親

YCJXL 4:10b-11a

如大將軍持玉壺十二皆以蠟封其壺口

GZJ 2:17a

如大將軍持玉壺十二皆以蠟封其口

LS 7a

LS 3:206

姑因遣人召麻

觀願未即去耳如此兩時間麻姑來也來時  
 亦先聞人馬之聲既至從官當半於方平也  
 麻姑至蔡經亦舉家見之是好女子年可十  
 八許於頂中作髻餘髮散垂之至腰其衣有  
 文章而非錦綺光綵耀目不可得名字皆世  
 所無有也入拜方平方平為起立坐定各進  
 行廚皆金盤玉杯餽膳多是諸華而香氣達  
 於內外擘脯而行之如行栢炙云是麟脯也  
 麻姑自說接待以來見東海三為桑田向到  
 蓬萊水乃淺於往者會時略半也豈時復為

YJQQ 109:12b

TPGJ 60: 369-70

觀。願來明動本來作來。即去。如此兩時間。麻姑至矣。來時亦先  
 聞人馬簫鼓聲。既至。從官半於方平。麻姑至。蔡經亦舉家見之。是好女子。年十八九許。於頂中作  
 髻。餘髮垂至腰。其衣有文章。而非錦綺。光綵耀目。不可名狀。入拜方平。方平為之起立。坐定。  
 召進行廚。皆金盤玉杯。餽膳多是諸花果。而香氣達於內外。擘脯行之。如栢炙。果如餅四種作炙。性  
 極潔作餅。所炙。男子竄獲神記。云是麟脯也。麻姑自說云。接待以來。已見東海三為桑田。向到蓬萊。  
 水又淺于往者會時略半也。豈將復還為

TPGJ 7: 46-7

觀。願未即去。如此兩時。聞麻  
 姑來。來時亦先聞人馬聲。既至。從官半於方平也。麻姑至。蔡經亦舉家見之。是好女子。年可十八九  
 許。於頂上作髻。餘髮散垂至腰。衣有文章。又非錦綺。光彩耀目。不可名狀。皆世之所無也。入拜  
 之。云。麟脯。麻姑自說云。接待以來。已見東海三為桑田。向到蓬萊。又水淺於往日會時略半耳。豈  
 將復為

TOTJ 5:56-6a

觀願未即去爾如此兩時間麻姑來也來  
 時亦先聞人馬之聲既至從官半於方平也  
 麻姑至蔡經亦舉家見之是好女子年可十  
 八許於頂中作髻餘髮散垂之至腰其衣有  
 文章而非錦綺光彩耀日不可得名字皆世  
 所無有也入拜方平方平為起立坐定各進  
 行厨皆金盤玉杯餽膳多是諸花而香氣達  
 於內外擘脯而行之如有栢炙云是鱗脯也  
 麻姑自說接待以來已見東海三為桑田向  
 到蓬萊水乃淺於往者會將減半也豈將復  
 為

觀

願未即去如此兩時間麻姑來來時亦先聞人馬之聲  
 既至從官當半於方平也麻姑至蔡經亦舉家見之是  
 好女子年十八九許於頂中作髻餘髮散垂至腰其衣  
 有文章而非錦綺光彩耀日不可名字皆世所無有也  
 欽定四庫全書  
 入拜方平方平為之起立坐定各進行厨皆金玉五盤  
 無限也餽膳多是諸花菜而香氣達於內外擘脯而行  
 之如松栢炙云是鱗脯也麻姑自說接待以來已見東  
 海三為桑田向到蓬萊水又淺於往昔會時略半也豈  
 將復還為

SKQS 3:90-96

觀願不即

去如此兩時同題姑來時不先聞人馬聲既至從官寓  
 半於方平也麻姑至蔡經亦舉家見之是好女子年十八  
 九許頂中作髻餘髮垂之至腰其衣有文章而非錦綺光  
 彩耀目不可名者皆世所無有也得見方平方平為是立  
 坐定各進行酌金盃玉杯無限差應多是瓊華而香氣凌  
 於內外擘脯行之麻姑自言接待以來見東海三為桑  
 田向蓬萊水乃淺於往者略半也豈復將為

QTW 338 : 6a-6b

又仙人麻姑侍從女子可年十八九  
 於頭中作髻餘髮散垂之可至腰也

SDZN 8:4b

與麻姑共設肴膳  
 擘脯而行指炙云  
 是鱗脯者也

BTSC 145:5b

葛洪神仙傳曰麻姑謂王方平曰自接待以來  
 見東海三為桑田向到蓬萊水乃淺於往者略半也豈復將為

CXJ 6:17

與麻姑共設肴膳擘脯而行如巧頂炙云是鱗脯也

CXJ 26:6A2

神仙傳曰麻姑謂王方平曰自接  
 待以來見東海三為桑田向到蓬萊  
 水乃淺於往者略半也豈復為

YWLJ 9:151

= TPYL 60:3b

與麻姑共設肴膳擘  
 脯而行云是鱗脯

YWLJ 72:12:42

姑既至各進  
 行酌金盃玉盃銷饌多是諸花香氣間於  
 內外擘脯而行之云是鱗脯也麻姑自敘  
 接待已來見東海三為桑田適來蓬萊水  
 乃淺於往者略半也豈復為

KYBZ 中96

神仙傳麻姑謂王方平曰自接待已來三見海水變為桑  
 田蓬萊之清淺也

TPYL 38:8b

神仙傳曰麻姑至蔡經家是好女子年十八許作長髮  
 散垂之至腰

TPYL 373:9a

葛洪神仙傳曰王遠至蔡經家與麻姑共設肴膳擘脯而  
 行云是鱗脯

TPYL 867:64

神仙傳曰麻姑謂王方平去吾見東海三為桑田

YL 5:7b

少頃麻姑至經舉家見

之年可十八許頂中作髻餘髮散垂至腰錦

水綉裳光彩耀目坐定自進行厨擗麟脯器

皆金玉時經婦新產麻姑見之乃曰噫且止

勿前少許來來擲地皆成丹砂方平笑曰

麻姑猶作少年戲也姑云接待以來東海三

為桑田蓬萊水又淺矣

天/地/人/事/記 1:294

觀願未即去如此兩時間麻姑至

矣來時亦先聞人馬蕭鼓之聲既至從官半

於方平也麻姑至蔡經亦舉家見之是好女

子年可十八九許於頂中作髻餘髮垂之至

腰其衣有文章而非錦綺光彩耀日不可名

字皆世所無有也入拜方平平為之起立坐

定召進行厨皆金盤玉杯無限也餚饈多是

諸花果而香氣達於內外擘脯而行之如栢

炙云是麟脯也麻姑自說云接待已來見東

海三為桑田向到蓬萊水又淺於往昔會時

略半也豈將復還為

4:11a-11b YCJXL

麻姑

麻姑乃王方平之妹修道得仙年可十八許

於頂中作髻餘髮散垂至腰其衣有文章光

彩耀目世所無有也按道書云老君歷世無

八難示以禳除之法中有造北方黑騎天官

兵馬倉老麻姑五億萬騎等語則知麻姑浩

劫之高真乘運昔方平降祭經家遣使邀麻

姑同宴各進行厨皆金盤玉杯餚饈多是諸

花而香氣達于內外擘麟脯如行栢炙進天

酒如飲瓊漿麻姑曰接待以來見東海三為

TDTJHJ 3:5a-5b

LS 3: 206-21a

姑至年十八九頂中作髻餘髮垂腰既坐  
各進行厨金杯玉盤麟脯仙饌非人世所有  
姑曰自接待以來見東海三為桑田向到蓬  
萊水復淺於舊矣殆還為

SDQXL 11: 6a

仲仙傳麻姑時降蔡經之家入見王方平  
遂拜之姑曰自接待以來見東海三為桑  
田向見蓬萊又淺於往時至復還為

SDQXL 14: 19b

姑年十八九許於頂中作髻餘髮垂之至  
腰其衣有文章而非錦綺皆世所無

YJQQ 109:13a

陵陸乎方平笑曰聖人皆言海中復行揚塵也麻姑欲見蔡經母及經婦弟婦新產數十日麻姑望見乃知之曰噫且止勿前索少許米來便以擲之視以墮地皆成真珠方平笑曰麻姑故作少年戲也吾老矣不喜復作此狡獪變化也方平語經家人曰吾欲賜汝輩酒此酒乃出天廚其味淳醲非俗人所宜飲之或能爛人腸胃今當以水添之汝輩勿怪也乃以水一斗合酒一升攪之以賜經家人人飲一升許皆醉良久酒盡方平語左右曰

TPGJ 60:370

陵陸乎。方平笑曰。聖人皆言海中復揚塵也。姑欲見蔡經母及婦姪。時弟婦新產數十日。麻姑望見乃知之。曰。噫。且止勿前。即求少許米。得米便撒之擲地。視其米。皆成真珠矣。方平笑曰。姑故年少。吾老矣。了不喜復作此狡獪變化也。方平語經家人曰。吾欲賜汝輩酒。此酒乃出天廚。其味醇醲。非世人所宜飲。飲之或能爛腸。今當以水和之。汝輩勿怪也。乃以一升酒。合水一斗攪之。賜經家飲一升許。良久酒盡。方平語左右曰。

TPGJ 7:47

陵陸乎。遠嘆曰。聖人皆言海中行復揚塵也。麻姑欲見蔡經母及婦等。時經弟婦新產數日。姑見知之。曰。噫。且立勿前。即求少許米來。得米擲之墮地。即以米試其穢也。視其米皆成丹砂。遠笑曰。姑故年少也。吾老矣。不喜復作如此狡獪變化也。遠謂經家人曰。吾欲賜汝輩美酒。此酒乃出天廚。其味醇醲。非俗人所宜飲。飲之或能爛腸。今當以水和之。汝輩勿怪也。乃以斗水。合升酒攪之。以賜經家人。人飲一升許。皆醉。良久酒盡。遠謂左右曰。



陵陸乎方平笑曰聖人皆言海中行復揚  
 塵也麻姑欲見蔡經母及經婦而經之婦新  
 產數十日麻姑望見乃知之曰噫且止勿前  
 索少許米來便以擲之視米墮地皆成丹砂  
 方平笑曰麻姑故作少年戲也吾老矣不復  
 喜作此狡獪變化也方平語經家人曰吾欲  
 賜汝輩酒此酒乃出天廚其味醇醲非俗人  
 所宜飲之或能爛人腸胃今當以水添之汝  
 輩勿怪也乃以水一斗合酒一升攪之以賜  
 經家人飲一斗許皆醉良久酒盡方平語左  
 右曰

TDTJ 5:6a-6b

陵陸乎方平笑曰聖人皆言海中行復揚塵

也麻姑欲見蔡經母及婦姪時經弟婦新產數十日麻  
 姑望見乃知之曰噫且止勿前即求少許米至得米便  
 以撒地謂以米祛其穢也視米皆成真珠方平笑曰姑

SKQS 3:9b-10a

故少年也吾老矣不喜復作此曹輩狡獪變化也方平  
 語經家人曰吾欲賜汝輩酒此酒乃出天廚其味醇醲  
 非俗人所宜飲飲之或能爛腸今當以水和之汝輩勿  
 怪也乃以一升酒合水一斗攪之以賜經家人人飲一  
 升許皆醉良久酒盡方平語左右曰

陸乎方平笑曰聖人皆言海中行復揚塵也麻姑欲見蔡  
 經母及經弟婦新產數十日麻姑望見之已知曰噫且  
 止勿前即求少許米便以擲之墮地即成丹沙方平笑曰  
 姑故年少吾老矣不喜復作此費改增變化也

Q1W 338:6B

謂經家曰五呂與汝  
 華酒此酒方出天厨

BT5C 148:4a

陸陸乎方平乃曰東海行復揚塵耳

CXJ 6:117

陸乎  
 YWLSJ  
 8:151

陸池酒  
 X78Z  
 中9b

神仙傳王方平曰聖人言海中復揚塵

TPYL 37:10a

葛洪神仙傳曰王方平語蔡經家人曰吾欲賜汝華酒此  
 乃出天厨其味醲非俗人所宜飲之或能爛人腸今當以  
 水和之洪謹勿解也乃以一外酒以一觴水攪之以賜經  
 家人飲之常覽五百六十五 五 田堡

TPYL 765:5a-5b

神仙傳曰麻姑欲見蔡經母及經弟婦新產數日  
 麻姑望見之曰意且止勿前即求少許米便以擲地視未  
 墮地踏成珠方平笑曰姑故年少吾老矣不喜復作此變  
 化也

TPYL 803:6b

方平亦曰聖人皆言  
海中將復揚塵也

XJKJ  
1:29a-29b

陸陸乎方平笑曰聖人

皆言海中行復揚塵也姑欲見蔡經母及婦  
姪時弟婦新產數十日麻姑望見乃知之曰  
噫且止勿前即求少許米來得米便撒之擲  
地謂以米祛其穢也視米皆成真珠矣方平  
笑曰姑固少矣吾老矣了不喜復作此狡獪  
變化也方平語經家人曰吾欲賜汝葦酒此  
酒乃出天廚其味醇釀非世人所宜飲飲之  
或能爛腸今當以水和之汝葦勿怪也乃以  
一升酒合水一斗攪之賜經家人人飲一升  
許皆醉良久酒盡方平語左右曰

YCXL 4:116-129

將復揚塵也

TJTHJ  
3:5b

陵陸乎方平曰海

中行復揚塵也姑求米少許擲地皆成真珠

方平笑曰姑年少作此變化吾已年老不喜

為之矣

LS 3:2/a

SQRXL 11:64

陵陸

乎方平笑曰聖人皆云海中復揚塵也

不足復還取也。以一貫錢與餘杭姥相聞求  
 酤酒。須臾信還。得一油囊酒五斗許。信傳餘  
 杭姥答言。恐地上酒不中尊飲耳。又麻姑手  
 爪不似人形。皆似鳥爪。蔡經心言。背大癢時  
 得此爪以爬背。當佳也。方平已知經心中所  
 言。即使人牽經鞭之。曰麻姑神人也。汝忽謂  
 其爪可爬背。何也。但見鞭著經背。亦不見有  
 人持鞭者。方平告經曰。吾鞭不可妄得也。經  
 家比舍有姓陳者。失其名字。嘗罷尉。聞經家  
 有神人。乃詣門叩頭求乞拜見。於是方平引

YJQQ 109:13b

不足還取也。以千

錢與餘杭姥相聞。求其沽酒。須臾信還。得一油囊酒。五斗許。信傳餘杭姥答言。恐地上酒不中尊飲耳。又麻姑鳥爪。蔡經見之。心中念言。背大癢時。得此爪以爬背。當佳。方平已知經心中所念。即使人牽經鞭之。謂曰。麻姑神人也。汝何忽謂其爪可爬背耶。但見鞭著經背。亦不見有人持鞭者。方平告經曰。吾鞭不可妄得也。

YJQQ 60:370

不足復還取也。以千錢與餘杭姥。乞

酤酒。須臾信還。得一油囊酒。五斗許。使傳餘杭姥答言。恐地上酒不中尊飲耳。麻姑手爪似鳥。經見之。心中念曰。背大癢時。得此爪以爬背。當佳也。遂已知經心中所言。即使人牽經鞭之。謂曰。麻姑神人也。汝何忽謂其爪可爬背耶。但見鞭著經背。亦不見有人持鞭者。遂告經曰。吾鞭不可妄得也。經比舍有姓陳者。失其名。嘗罷縣尉。聞經家有神人。乃詣門叩頭。求乞拜見。於是遣使

YJQQ 7:47

引

不足還復取也以一貫錢與餘杭媿求  
 沽酒須臾信還得一油囊酒五斗許傳餘杭  
 媿答言恐地上酒不中尊者飲爾又麻姑手爪  
 不似人形皆似鳥爪蔡經心言背痒時得此  
 爪以爬背當佳也方平已知經心中所言即  
 使人牽經鞭之曰麻姑神人也汝謂其爪可  
 爬背何也但見鞭著經背亦不見有人持鞭  
 者方平告經曰吾之鞭可妄得也經家比舍  
 有姓陳者失其名字嘗罷尉聞經家有神人  
 乃詣門叩頭求乞拜見於是方平引

TDTJ 5:6b-7a

不足復還取也以

千錢與餘杭媿相聞求其酷酒須臾信還得一油囊酒

五斗許信傳餘杭媿答言恐地上酒不中尊者飲耳又

麻姑手爪不似人爪形皆似鳥爪蔡經中心私言若背

大痒時得此爪以爬背當佳也方平已知經心中所言

即使人牽經鞭之曰麻姑神人也汝何忽謂其爪可以

爬背耶便見鞭著經背亦不見有人持鞭者方平告經

曰吾鞭不可妄得也經比舍有姓陳失其名字嘗罷尉

聞經家有神人乃詣門叩頭求乞拜見於是方平引

SKQS 3.10a-10b

欽定四庫全書	神仙傳	+
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卷三		
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願姑字似馬

不禁經心中念背錄時得此不以把背乃佳也方平即

知經心中念言即使人奉經觀之曰麻姑者神人汝何意

謂其不可以把背邪見觀者望背亦不見有人持觀者方

平告經曰吾觀不可妄得也

QTW 338: 66-7a

者往餘劫阿母赤酒使迴得一壺五斗許  
麻姑鳥爪經心中云好爬背聞空中行鞭  
鞭經昔也

乃命使

X 8Z 中 96 - 10a

又曰王方平降蔡經家此舍有姓陳者失其字暫罷歸也  
聞經家有人乃詣門叩頭求乞拜見方平遣人引

TPYL 737:36

麻姑手似鳥爪蔡經私念

背痒時得此爪搔之佳方平即知乃鞭經背  
曰麻姑神人也汝謂其爪可搔背耶

X1XJ 1:296

比舍有陳尉者叩頭乞拜

XPL 1:146

不足復還

取也仍以千錢與餘杭媪相問求其沽酒須  
吏使還得一油囊酒五斗許使傳餘杭媪答  
言恐地上酒不中尊仙飲耳又麻姑爪如鳥  
爪蔡經見之心中所念言背大癢時得此爪  
以爬背當佳否方平已知經心中所念即使  
人牽經鞭之謂曰麻姑神仙也汝何忽謂爪  
可以爬背耶但見鞭著經背亦不見有人持  
鞭者方平告經曰吾鞭不可妄得也

4:12a-12b

YCXL

麻姑手爪頗似鳥爪蔡經心言

背痒時得此爪以爬背當佳也方平已知經  
心中所言即使神吏鞭之曰麻姑神人也汝  
可萌妄想哉宣州有麻姑仙壇建昌軍有麻  
姑山靈迹非止一處宋徽宗政和間寵褒麻  
姑為真寂沖應元君寧宗嘉泰間改封虛寂

TDJHJ 3:56

麻姑真寂



SDQ XL 14: 196

如鳥爪蔡經見之心中默念言昔大舜時  
得此爪以祀背當佳遠已知經心念使牽  
經鞭之

姑爪

前與語此人便乞得隨從驅使比於蔡經方  
 平日君且起向日立方平從後視之言噫君  
 心邪不正於經不可教以仙道也當授君地  
 上主者之職臨去以一符并一傳著小箱中  
 以與陳尉告言此不能令君度世能令君延  
 壽本壽自出百歲也可以禳災治病病者命  
 未終及無罪過者君以符到其家便愈矣若  
 有邪鬼血食作禍崇者君使帶此符以教社  
 吏當收送其鬼君心中當亦知其輕重臨時  
 以意治之陳尉以此符治病有效事之者數

YJQQ 109:14a

TPGJ 60:370

是日。又以一符傳授蔡經鄰人陳尉。能徵召鬼魔。救人治疾。蔡經亦得 解脫之道。如蛻蟬耳。

TPGJ 7:47-48

前與語。此人便欲從驅使。比於蔡經。遂曰。君且向日而立。遂從後觀之曰。噫。君心邪不正。終  
 未可教以仙道。當授君地上主者之職司。臨去。以一符并一傳。著以小箱中。與陳尉。告言此不能  
 令君度世。止能存君本壽。自出百歲向上。可以禳災治病者。命未終及無罪者。君以符到其家。便愈  
 矣。若邪鬼血食作祟者。便帶此符。以傳勸吏。遣其鬼。君心中亦當知其輕重。臨時以意治之。陳  
 以此符治病有效。事之者數

前與語

此人便乞得隨從驅使比於蔡經方平曰君  
 但起向日立方平從後視之言噫君心針不  
 正不可教以仙道也當授君地上主者之職  
 臨去以一符并一傳著小箱中以與陳尉告  
 言此不能令君度世能令君延壽本壽自出  
 百歲也可以攘災治病病者命未終及無罪  
 過者君以符到其家便愈矣若有邪鬼血食  
 作禍崇者君使帶此符以敕社吏當收送其  
 鬼君心當亦知其輕重臨時以意治之陳尉  
 以此符治病有效事之者數

TDTJ 5:7a - 7b

前

與語此人便乞得驅使比於蔡經方平曰君且起可向  
 日立方平從後視之曰噫君心不正影不端終不可教  
 以仙道也當授君地上主者之職臨去以一符并一傳  
 著小箱中以與陳尉告言此不能令君度世止能令君  
 竟本壽壽自出百歲也可以消災治病病者命未終及  
 無罪犯者以符到其家便愈矣若有邪鬼血食作禍者  
 帶此傳以勅社吏當收送其鬼君心中亦當知其輕重  
 臨時以意治之陳尉以此符治病有效事之者數

SKQS 3:106-11a

前代語

此人便乞得閱從師使止於蔡莊方半日君且記向日方  
 平使後視之言曰噫君心叙不正終不可教以仙道也當  
 授君以地上主者之寶器去以符併一傳君小箱中以與  
 陳尉告言此不令君度世也能令君本壽自出百餘歲也  
 可振災治病者命未終及無罪過者君以符到其家便愈  
 矣若有邪鬼血食作禍崇者君便以符帶此傳以劾社吏  
 當收送其鬼心中亦當知其輕重臨時以意治之陳尉以  
 此符治病有效乎之者數

TPYL 737: 3b-4a

願得驅使比於蔡經方

平曰君且起可向日立方平從後視之曰噫

君心不正影不端終不可教以仙道也當授

君地上主者之職臨去以一符一傳著小箱

中與陳尉云可以消災治鬼

XPL 1:146

是日又

以一符一傳授蔡經隣人陳尉能召鬼魔救

人治疾蔡經亦得解蛇之道如蛇蟬耳

4:126

YCJXL

百家壽一百一十歲而死死後子孫行其符  
 不復效方早去後經家所作數百斛酒飲在  
 庭中者皆盡亦不見人飲之也經父母私問  
 經曰王君常在何處經答言常治崑崙往來  
 羅浮山括蒼山此三山上皆有宮室如一王  
 君常平天曹事一日之中與天上相連反覆  
 者數十過地上五嶽生死之事皆先來關王  
 君王君出或不盡將百官唯乘一黃麟將十  
 數人每常見山林在下去地數百丈所到則  
 山海之神皆來奉迎拜謁也或有干道白言

YJQQ 109: 146

TPGJ 60: 370

經常從王君遊山海

TPGJ 7: 48

百家。壽一百一十歲而死。死後子弟行其符。不復驗矣。遽去後。經家所  
 作飲食。數百斛皆盡。亦不見有人飲食也。經父母私問經曰。王君是何神人。復居何處。經曰。常在  
 崑崙山。往來羅浮括蒼等山。山上皆有宮室。主天曹事。一日之中。與天上相反覆者十數過。地上五  
 嶽生死之事。皆先來告王君。王君出。城隍及七嶽等一〇九引神靈俱從。唯將百官從行。唯乘一黃麟。  
 將十數侍人。每行常見山林在下。去地常數百丈。所到則山海之神皆來奉迎拜謁。

百家壽一百一

十歲而死死後子孫行其符不復效方平去  
 後經家所作數百斛酒在庭中者皆盡亦不  
 見人飲之也經父母私問經曰王君常在何  
 處經答言常治崑崙往來羅浮山括蒼山此  
 三山上皆有宮室王君常平天曹事一日之  
 中與天上往復者數十過地上五嶽生死之  
 事皆先來關王君王君出入惟乘一黃麟道  
 從甚肅所至則山海之神皆來奉迎拜謁也  
 或者於道自言

TDTJ 5:76-8a

百家

陳尉壽二百一十一歲而死死後其子孫行其符不復  
 效矣方平去後經家所作飲食數百斛在庭中者悉盡  
 亦不見人飲食之也經父母私問經曰王君是何神人  
 復居何處經答曰常治崑崙山往來羅浮山括蒼山此  
 三山上皆有宮殿宮殿一如王宮王君常任天曹事一  
 日之中與天上相反覆者數過地上五嶽生死之事悉  
 關王君王君出時或不盡將百官惟乘一黃麟將士數  
 十人侍每行常見山林在下去地常數百丈所到山海  
 之神皆來奉迎拜謁或有千道者

SKQS 3:11a-11b

欽定四庫全書

神仙傳

十一

百歲壽一百一十歲而死後弟

于其符不列也

TPYL  
737:4a



方平<sub>三</sub>去麻姑亦辭去

XJKJ  
1:296

陳尉後年二百十歲

XPL  
1:146

經常從王君遊涉山海

YCXL  
4:126

YJQQ 109: 15a

者後數十年經復暫歸省家方平有書與陳尉其書書字廓落大而不可辨先是人無知方平名遠者起此乃知之陳尉家于今世世存錄王君手書及其符傳小箱也

TPCJ 60: 370

或暫歸家。王君亦有書與陳尉。多是花文。或真書字。廓落而大。陳尉世世寶之。宴畢。方平、麻姑命駕昇天而去。笳鼓道徒如初焉。出神仙傳

TPCJ 7: 48

暫歸家。遠有書與陳尉。其書廓落。大而不工。先是人無知方平名遠者。因此乃知之。陳尉家于今世世存錄王君手書。并符傳於小箱中。出神仙傳

共後數十年。經復

者後數十年經復暫歸省家

TDJ 5:8a

方平有書與陳尉書字廓落大而不楷先是  
人無知方平名遠者至此乃知之陳尉家今  
四世存錄王君手書及其符傳小箱也

SKQS 3:116-12a

後數年經復暫歸家

方平有書與陳尉真書廓落大而不工先是無人知方  
平名遠者起此乃因陳尉書知之其家於今世世存錄  
王君手書及其符傳於小箱中秘之也

嘗得方平賜書真書廓落大而不工先  
是無人知方平名遠者乃因陳尉傳之

XPL 1:146

或暫歸家王君亦有書與  
陳尉多似篆文或真書字廓落而大陳尉世  
世寶之宴畢方平麻姑命駕昇天而去簫鼓  
導從一如初焉

4:126  
YCXL

王遠與書陳尉真書廓落大而不工

GZJ 2:176

遠以書與陳尉其書廓落大而不工

L5 7a

## Appendix Three

Citations of *Shenxian zhuan* Arranged by Source TextSecular *Leishu**Beitang shuchao* (Tianjin, 1988 reprint of Kong Guangtao's 1888 edition)

77:7a	Luan Ba
103:6a	Jie Xiang
104:3a	Li Yiqi
104:8a	Yin Changsheng
109:6a	Sun Deng
110:5b	Wang Yao
113:9b	Zuo Ci
123:6a	Li A
123:7b	Li Zhongfu
128:10b-11a	Anqi sheng <sup>1</sup>
133:5a	Liu An
133:7b-8a	Shen Xi
133:13b	Hugong
134:10a	Taishan Laofu
135:15a	Liu Rong
136:10b	Wang Yao
136:17a	Zuo Ci
137:10b	Ge Xuan
145:5a-b	Ge Xuan
145:5b	Wang Yuan
145:8a-b	Jie Xiang
148:4a	Wang Yuan
148:5b	Ge Xuan
148:8b	Hugong
157:12a	Li Yiqi
160:17b	Dong Weinian
160:17b	Huang Chuping

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<sup>1</sup> Kong Guangtao, the editor of the standard 1888 edition of *Beitang shuchao*, notes that while his basic source text has the citation of Anqi sheng as being from *Shenxian zhuan*, his two main comparison texts - those of Chen and Yu - have this citation as being from *Liexian zhuan*. The same passage is quoted in *Taiping yulan* (see below) as being from *Liexian zhuan* and it is found in the *Daozang* edition of *Liexian zhuan*. It is not found in any version of *Shenxian zhuan*.

*Yiwen leiju* (Shanghai, 1985)

1:17	Ge Xuan
2:37	Luan Ba
6:108-9	Baishi Sheng
7:133	Dong Feng
7:135	Wang Lie
8:151	Magu
17:312	Zuo Ci
18:341	Liu An
19:345	Laozi
60:1085	Li Zhongfu
69:1208	Maojun
70:1217	Taishan Fu
72:1242	Wang Yuan
72:1243	Zuo Ci
74:1278	Hugong
78:1328	Dong Weinian
78:1328	Cheng Weiqi
78:1328	Ge Xuan
78:1329	Ge Xuan
78:1329	Laozi
78:1329	Pengzu
78:1329	Wang Lie
78:1329	Luan Ba
78:1330	Heshanggong
78:1330	Feng Heng
80:1365	Luan Ba
80:1377	Jiao Xian
81:1384	Gan Shi
81:1386	Chen Zihuang
81:1391	Kangfengzi
83:1429	Shen Xi
85:1458	Liu An
86:1465	Laozi
86:1469	Fan Furen
86:1469	Zhang Ling
86:1469	Gaoqiugong
86:1473	Jie Xiang
87:1487	Dong Feng
87:1503	Ge Xuan
89:1537	Lilougong
89:1548	Zuo Ci
90:1564	Jie Xiang

91:1574	Xiaoshi <sup>2</sup>
91:15788	Dongling Shengmu
94:1633	Huang Chuping
94:1633	Zuo Ci
95:1649	Lu Nüsheng

*Chuxue ji* (Beijing, 1985)

1:18	Laozi
2:24	Luan Ba
4:77	Wang Yuan
5:95	Taishan Laofu
5:99-100	Wei Shuqing
6:117	Magu
6:135	Wu Yan
8:178	Bai He
10:241	Liu An
16:400	Ji Zixun
21:520	Ban Meng
21:520	Ge Xuan
22:545	Zuo Ci
23:548	Laozi (3 times)
23:550	Maojun
23:550	Huangshijun
24:585	Bai He
25:598	Liu An
25:601	Wei Shuqing
25:613	Shen Xi
26:641	Zuo Ci
26:642	Wang Yuan
26:643	Hugong
27:645	Rongchenggong
27:710	Huang Chuping
30:739	Hugong

*Hifuryaku* preserved in *Luo Xuetao xiansheng quanji, chupian* (Taipei, 1968) v.17

868:7220	Liu An
868:7220	Zuo Ci
868:7221	unidentified
868:7230	Liu An

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<sup>2</sup> The biography of Xiaoshi seems to have been cited wrongly - it is present in *Liexian zhuan* but not in any version of *Shenxian zhuan*.

*Taiping yulan* (Beijing, 1985)

9:5b	Laozi	
9:5b	Ge Xuan	=Yiwen leiju 1:17
10:5a	Luan Ba	
15:7b	Luan Ba	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan
15:7b	Liu An	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan
26:9b	Wang Zhongdu	
37:10a	Wang Fangping	
38:6a	Dongguo Yan	
38:8b	Magu	
39:7a	Liu Feng	
39:7a	Taishan Laofu	
40:1b	Gan Shi	
40:2a	Wang Lie	
41:6b	Dong Feng	
43:5b	Pengzu	
45:10b	Bai He [=Bo He]	
49:5a	Yin Changsheng	
51:6a	Hugong	
51:6a	Jie Xiang	
51:6b	Baisheng[=Baishi Xiansheng]	=Yiwen leiju 6:108
55:2a	Li Yiqi	=Beitang shuchao 157:12a
60:3b	Magu	=Chuxue ji 6:117
71:5b	Heshanggong	
74:4b	Dong Feng	
186:7b	Liu An	
187:8a	Zuo Ci	
344:2b	unidentified	
345:9a	Li A	=Beitang shuchao 123:6a
346:9a	Li Zhongwen [=fu]	=Yiwen leiju 60:1085
353:9a	Zuo Ci	
361:7b	Laozi	
363:5a	Laozi	
366:10b	She Zheng	
368:4a	Laojun [=Laozi]	
369:7b	Laozi	
370:5a	Laozi	
373:1b	Liu Gen	
373:8a	Ji Zixun	
373:9a	Magu	
381:1b	Jie Xiang	
383:10b	Liu An	
387:4b	Fan Furen	
390:7a	Laozi	=Yiwen leiju 19:345



394:2a	Ge Yue		
394:6b	Hugong		
477:3b	Jiao Xian	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
500:1b	Li Babai		
551:6b	Jie Xiang		
581:5b	Wang Yao		
605:3a	Li Zhongfu		
605:4b	Wang Yuan		
605:5a	Ban Meng	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	=Chuxue ji 21:520
606:2a	Yin Changsheng		
616:6a	Laozi		
659:4a	Laozi	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
662:3b	Su Lin	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
662:3b	Shen Wentai	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
662:3b	Shen Xi	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
662:4a	Chen Anshi	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
662:4a	Wu Mu	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
662:4a	Dong Weinian	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
662:4b	Xiaoshi	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
662:4b	Heshanggong	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
662:4b	Huang Ziyang	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
662:4b	Hugong	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
662:5a	Liu Gen	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
662:5a	Ying Changsheng		Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan
664:2b	Jie Xiang		
664:2b	unidentified		
664:2b	Ge Xuan		
664:2b	Hugong		
664:2b	Baojingzi		
669:5b	Liu Jing	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
669:5b	Feng Junda	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
669:5b	Wei Shuqing	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
669:5b	Kong Yuan	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
669:6a	Jie Xian	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	=Yiwen leiju 80:1377
669:6a	Ling Shouguang	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
669:6a	Fan Miao	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
669:6a	Wang Bao	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
674:5b	Huang Chuping	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
676:9b	Wei Shuqing		
677:2b	Shen Xi		
677:2b	Liu An		
678:5b	Wang Yuan		
679:7b	Yan Jing	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
688:5a	Zuo Ci		
691:3b	Zuo Ci		

693:3b	Sun Deng		
698:4b	Zuo Ci		
699:3b	Maojun		=Yiwen leiju 69:1208
699:3b	Maojun		
700:5a	Liu An		
706:5b	Wei Shuqing		=Chuxue ji 25:601
707:3b	Taishan fu		
709:7b	Liu An		=Beitang shuchao 133:5a
710:6a	Shen Xi		
710:9b	Hugong		
710:9b	Hugong		=Beitang shuchao 133:9b
710:10a	Jie Xiang		
717:5a	Sun Bo		
719::1b	Liu Rong		=Beitang shuchao 135:15a
720:7a	Pengzu		
724:5a	Li Shaojun		
724:5b	Feng Gang		
724:5b	Dong Feng		
724:6a	Feng Heng		
736:6b	Liu Feng		
736:7a	Bo He		
736:7a	Ge Xuan	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	=Chuxue ji 21:520
737:3b	Yan Qing		
737:3b	Wang Yuan		
739:3a	Maojun	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
747:7a	Dongguo Yan		
747:7a	Wang Yuan		
752:2b	Ge Yue	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
754:2b	Wei Shuqing		
758:8a	Shen Xi		=Yiwen leiju 83:1429
759:8b	Zuo Ci		
759:9a	Liu Gang		
759:9a	Liu Gang		
760:5a	Ge Xuan		
761:8b	Hugong		=Chuxue ji 26:643
765:5a	Wang Yuan	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
766:8b	Fan Furen	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
767:1a	Wang Yuan	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
767:2b	Sun Bo	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
773:3b	Ge Xuan		=Yiwen leiju 1:17
773:4a	Xian [=Shen] Xi		=Chuxue ji 25:613
803:6b	Magu		
805:7a	Shen Xi		=Yiwen leiju 83:1429
811:3b	Rongchenggong	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
812:6b	Feng Heng		

812:7a	Yin Xi		
812:7a	Yin Xi		
814:3b	unidentified		
814:4a	unidentified		
814:9a	Chang Rong		
815:7b	Liu An		=Yiwen leiju 85:1458
815:7b	Zuo Ci		
827:9a	Li Ah		
834:5b	Zuo Ci		
839:10b	Wang Lie		
842:7a	Jie Xiang		
845:5b	Kong Yuanfang		
849:7a	Jie Xian		
857:2a	Feihuangzi		
860:4b	Hugong	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	=Chuxue ji 26:643
862:2a	Jie Xiang	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
862:6a	Wang Yuan	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	=Yiwen leiju 72:1242
862:6b	Zuo Ci	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	=Yiwen leiju 72:1242 =Chuxue ji 26:641
870:5b	Liu Feng		
870:8b	Wang Yao		
871:4b	Yan Jing		
887:1b	Dong Feng	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
892:3b	Jie Xiang		
900:6b	Zuo Ci		=Yiwen leiju 89:1548
901:6a	Ji Zixun		
902:6b	Huang Chuping	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
902:6b	Zuo Ci	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	
905:5a	Li Zhongfu		
906:6a	Lu Nüsheng		
910:4a	Jie Xiang		
912:2a	Luan Ba		
912:7a	Fan Furen		
916:6a	Jie Xiang		=Yiwen leiju 90:1564
927:3b	Dongling Shengmu		=Yiwen leiju 91:1578
927:7b	Yin Xi		
928:6b	Maojun		
930:2a	Hugong	Ge Hong Shenxian zhuan	= Chuxue ji 30:739
931:7a	Liu Rong		
932:3a	Hugong		
935:9a	Ge Xuan		
937:6a	Jie Xiang		
949:4a	Ge Xuan		
955:7b	Magu		
957:5b	Lilougong		

958:6b	Ganjun	
959:3a	Zuo Ci	=Yiwen leiju 89:1548
960:2a	Liu Gang	
960:2a	unidentified	
962:5b	Lilougong	
962:5b	Hugong	
965:4a	Shen Xi	
965:4a	Li Yiqi	
967:5a	Liu Gang	
967:5a	Zhang Ling	
967:5b	Gaoqiugong	
968:2a	Dong Feng	
969:2a	Jie Xiang	
970:4b	Liu Feng	
977:6b	Jie Xiang	
978:6b	Gegong [Ge Xuan]	=Yiwen leiju 87:1503
981:2b	Liu An	=Yiwen leiju 85:1458
985:3b	Pengzu	
985:3b	Ma Mingsheng	
985:3b	Liu An	
985:3b	Li Shaojun	
985:3b	Ge Xuan	=Yiwen leiju 78:1328
985:4a	Liu Yuanfeng	
986:3b	Feihuangzi	
986:3b	Diaozi	
987:3a	Liu Feng	
987:3b	Xuyou and Chaofu	
988:5b	unidentified	
989:1a	Gan Shi	=Yiwen leiju 81:1384
989:2a	Chen Zihuang	=Yiwen leiju 81:1386
989:3a	Xiumeigong	
989:3a	Huang Chuping	
991:5a	Feng Heng	
991:5b	Heikonggong	
996:2a	Kang Fengzi	
996:6a	Jie Xiang	
996:6a	Zuo Ci	
999:6a	Wang Xing	

*Leishuo* (Beijing, 1955)

4a	Wei Shuqing
4b	Zhou Muwang
4b	Qin Gao
5a	Xiwangmu

5a	Tao
5b	Ruoshi
5b	Qinjing Xiansheng
5b	Baishi Xiansheng
6a	Feng Gang
6a	Shen Xi
6a	Wang Yuan
6b	Bo Shanfu
6b	Liu Zheng
7a	Sun Bo
7a	Yüzi
7a	Wang Lie
7b	Maojun
7b	Zhang Ling
8a	Liu An
8a	Wang Yao
8a	Li Gen
8b	Jiuyi Xianren
8b	Ji Zixun
8b	Wei Boyang
9a	Cai Shaolu
9a	Zuo Ci
9b	Zuo Ci
9b	Li Babai
9b	Bozu
10a	Wang Cizhong
10a	Xiao Jing
10b	Pengzu
10b	Wangmu
10b	Laozi
11a	Dongwangfu
11a	Pengzu
11b	Mozi
11b	Jun Si
12a	Guowen
12a	Li Changzai
12b	Liu Gang
12b	Hugong
12b	Liu Shang
13a	Liu Rong
13a	Wang Guo

*Ganzhu ji* (*Siku quanshu* edition)

The location of the equivalent *Leishuo* citation is shown in the right-hand column

2:15b	Wei Shuqing	4b
2:16a	Ruoshi	5b
2:16b	Qingjing Xiansheng	5b
2:16b	Baishi Xiansheng	5b
2:16b	Pengzu	-
2:17a	Feng Gang	6a
2:17a	Shen Xi	6a
2:17a	Wang Yuan	6a
2:17b	Wang Yuan	6a
2:17b	Bo Shanfu	6b
2:17b	Liu Zheng	6b
2:18a	Sun Bo	7a
2:18a	Sun Bo	7a
2:18a	Wangzi [=Yüzi]	7a
2:18b	Wangzi [=Yüzi]	7a
2:18b	Liu Rong	13a
2:18b	Liu Gang	12b
2:19a	Wang Lie	7a
2:19a	Huangluzi	-
2:19a	Li Babai	9b
2:19b	Jiao Guang [=Jiao Xian]	7a
2:19b	Mao Ying	7b
2:19b	Zhang Ling	7b
2:19b	Liu An	8a
2:20a	Liu An	8a
2:20a	Wei He [=Bozu]	9b
2:20b	Ji Zixun	8b
2:20b	Wang Yao	8a
2:20b	Li Gen	8a
2:21a	Jiuyi Shanren	8b
2:21a	Wei Boyang	8b
2:21b	Wang Cizhong	10a
2:21b	Cai Shaolu	9a
2:22a	Pengzu	10b
2:22a	Xiao Jing	10b

**Secular commentaries**

Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguo zhi* (Beijing, 1982)

32 (Shu, 2):891	Li Yiqi
49 (Wu, 4):1192	Dong Feng
63 (Wu, 18):1427-8	Jie Xiang

Li Daoyuan's *Shuijing zhu* (*Hejiao Shuijing zhu*, Wang Xianqian, ed., Changsha, 1892)

Feng Heng	2:24b
Laozi	17:12a
Wei Shuqing	19:27b
Liu An	32:8a

Li Shan's commentary to *Wenxuan* (Shanghai, 1986)

16:755	Ruoshi
21:1009	Wang Lie
21:1021	Wei Shuqing
21:1022	Maojun
22:1058	Liu An
22:1058	Guangchengzi
28:1314	Liu Gen
28:1314	Wei Shuqing
28:1330	Ruoshi
30:1414	Liu An
31:1467	Liu An
31:1467	Ruoshi
38:1743	Heshanggong
58:2502	Wei Shuqing

Li Xian's commentary to *Houhan shu* (Beijing, 1983)

56:1822	Laozi
57:1841-2	Luan Ba (3 times)

Zhang Shoujie's commentary to *Shiji* (Beijing, 1982)

40:1690	Pengzu
63:2139	Laozi
63:2140	Laozi

## Texts from the Daozang

### *Sandong zhunang* (DZ 780-83, HY1131)

Biography	Shenxian zhuan Chapter ( <i>Sandong zhunang</i> )	Longwei mishu Chapter	Siku quanshu Chapter	<i>Sandong zhunang</i> Location
Ruoshi	2	-	1	8:4b
Pengzu	2	1	1	8:4b
Shen Xi	3	8	3	1:6a-b
Wang Yuan	3	2	3	8:4b
Magu <sup>3</sup>	3	7	-	8:4b
Ge Yue	4	10	4	1:6b
Sun Bo	4	8	4	1:18a-b
Kong Yuan	4	6	6	2:3b
Jiao Xian	4	-	6	2:4a
Taiyangnü	4	-	4	8:4b
Taiyangzi	4	10	4	8:4b-5a
Taiyinnü	4	-	4	8:5a
Sun Deng	4	6	6	8:5a
Shen Jian	5	6	2	1:6b
Liu An	6	4	6	8:5a
Dong Feng	7	6	10	1:18b-19a
Liu Gen	7	3	8	8:5a
Wang Yao	8	3	8	1:6b-7a
Li Changzai	9	3	-	1:7a
Gan jun	9	-	-	1:7a-b, 7b
Gui jun	9	-	-	1:19a-b
Mao jun	9	9	5	1:19b
Jie Xiang	9	9	9	3:3b
Feng Heng	10	10	10	1:19b
Zhao Ying	10	3	7	1:20a-b
Chen Chang	10	10	6	1:20b-21a
Li Gen	10	10	10	8:5a-b
Dongguo Yannian	10	10	7	8:5b

<sup>3</sup> The citation attributed to the biography of Magu is strictly provisional. It seems likely, on textual grounds, that a separate biography of Magu did not originally exist but was extracted later from the original biographies of Wang Yuan and Cai Jing. Later, the separate biography of Cai Jing seems to have been lost. While *Sandong zhunang* says that this citation came from a biography in chapter three of *Shenxian zhuan* it does not say from which biography it came.



*Daode zhenjing guangshengyi* (DZ 440-448, HY 725)

36:19b Fan Furen

*Xianyuan bianzhu* (DZ 329-330, HY 596)

Shang	4a	Laozi, Pengzu	Ge Xiangong says
	5a	Ruoshi	
	5b	Huangshanjun, Baishi Xiansheng	
	7a	Shen Wentai	
	8b	Chen Yongbo, Wang Yao	
	9a	Jie Xiang, Zuo Ci	
	9b	Taishan Laofu, Yan Zidu	
	10a	Heshanggong	Ge Xiangong says
	10b	Liu Zheng, Mozi	
	11a	Sun Bo, Ban Meng	
	11b	Tianmenzi, Yüzi	
	12a	Jiulingzi, Beijizi	
	12b	Taiyangzi, Juedongzi	
	13a	Taiyangnü, Taiyinnü	
	13b	Taixuannü, Nanjizi	
	14b	Liu An	
	15a	Dazu, Tang Feng	
	15b	Moronggong, Xianmenzi	
	15b	San lao, Si hao	
	18a	Huang Chuping, Feng Gang	
	18b	Lü Gong, Shen Jian	unascribed
	19b	Hua Ziqi, Le Zichang	
	20a	Wei Shuqing, Wei Boyang	
	20b	Shen Xi, Chen Anshi	
	21a	Li Babai, Li A	
Zhong	5a	Ma Mingsheng, Huangluzi	
	9a	Li Zhongfu, Guizi	unascribed
	9b	Wang Yuan <sup>4</sup>	
	13b	Gan Ji	
	14a	Wang Chang, Zhao Sheng (Zhang Ling)	
	14a	Li Shaojun	
	15a	Guijun, Yin Xi	
	15b	Liu Feng	
	16a	Kong An, Fan Li	
	16a	Li Gen, Chen Zihuang	

4 Following this entry for Wang Yuan there is a heading for a biography of Magu. Instead of a biography, the single line of text reads "All these events are in the section on Wang Yuan and Cai Jing" (*zhong*: 12a).

	16b	Liu Jing, Yan Qing	unascribed
	17a	Li Changzai, Li Zhongfu	unascribed
	17b	Bo He, Zhao Ying	unascribed
	18b	Gan Shi, Huang Qing	unascribed
	18b	Chen Chang, Gong Chong	unascribed
	21a	Ganlaizi, Louxiagong	
Xia	1a	Bo Shanfu	
	1b	Liu Gang, Fan Furen	unascribed
	1b	Dongling Shengmu, Kong Yuan	unascribed
	2a	She Zheng, Wang Lie	unascribed
	2b	Jiao Xian, Sun Deng	unascribed
	3a	Wang Zhen	
	3b	Luan Ba, Yin Changsheng	
	4b	Ji Zixun	unascribed
	5a	Hugong	
	5b	Dong Feng, Liu Gen	unascribed
	11a	Ling Shouguang, Dongguo Yannian	
	11b	Li Yiqi, Wang Xing	unascribed
	12b	Dong Zhongjun, Jing Ping	unascribed
	13a	Wang Zhongdu, Cheng Weiqi	unascribed
	13b	Liu Yuangang, RongChenggong	unascribed
	13b	Haoronggong, Xiumeigong	
	13b	Gaoqiugong, Qingniaogong	unascribed
	14a	Lu Nüsheng, Feng Heng	unascribed
	14a	Lilougong, Baihugong	unascribed

*Yiqie daojing yinyi miaoman youqi* (DZ 760, HY 1115)

8b-9b Laozi

*Sandong qunxian lu* (DZ 992-995, HY 1238)

1:6b	She Zheng
1:9a	Dou xian
1:11b	Ling Shouguang, Yü Zhen
2:7a	Qingjing Xiansheng
2:15a	Cheng Weiqi
3:7a	Ma Xiang
3:12b	Zhou Muwang
3:14b	Dongguo Yannian
3:16a	Liang Bo
3:19a	Yujun [=Ganjun]
4:1a	He He
4:2b	Chen Xiufu
4:5a	Dong Feng

4:9a	Wang Qiao
4:9b	Lu Shang
4:12a	Zhang Tianshi
4:14a	Sima Chengzhen, Wu Tan
5:1b	Wei Shuqing
5:4b	Nie Keshi
5:6a	Xu Dingci
5:13b	Lao Sou
6:8a	Duzi
6:8a	Zhang Lao
6:11a	Taishan Laofu
6:11b	Yan Qing
6:15b	Guo Pu
6:17a	Xu Shen
6:21a	Ji Zixun
7:8a	Guangchengzi, Ruoshi
7:10b	Ma Xiang
7:14a	Liu Gen
7:15a	Chen Tuan
8:6a	Guangshi
8:12a	Luan Ba
8:12b	Hugong
8:14a	Huang Chuping
8:17a	Liu An
8:17b	Zhao Sheng
8:21a	Liu Pinghe
9:9a	Wang Yao
9:9b	Liu Feng
9:18b	Dong Feng
10:2b	Chen Xiyi
10:6a	Cao Dexiu
10:6b	Fouhu Xiansheng
10:10b	Yang Guang
10:11b	Ji Zixun
10:19b	Yin Daoquan
10:20a	Ge Hong
11:6a	Magu
11:8a	Sima Chengzhen
11:14a	Ge Xiangong
11:15b	Xiao Wendi
12:5a	Li A
12:6a	Huangluzi
12:10a	Liu Gen
12:12a	Liu Chenyuan
12:13b	Li Shaojun

12:16b	Wei Boyang
12:17b	Louke
13:12a	Li Babai
13:15b	Jizhuzi
13:19a	Wei Ji
14:6b	Ge Hong
14:15a	Baishi Xiansheng
14:21b	Liu Zheng
15:1a	Heshanggong
15:2a	Tan Cixiao
15:2b	Qie
15:4b	Xuan Kai
15:5b	Liu Rong
15:11b	Jie Zitui
16:3a	Mozi
16:12a	Bo Shanfu
16:15b	Liu Shang
16:17a	Sun Bo
17:1a	Tian Xuan
17:18a	Gaoqiuzi
17:19a	Fu Lü
18:5a	Fouqiugong
18:5b	Pengzu
18:15b	Zhihezi
19:2a	Su Lin
19:4b	Wang Zhu
20:9a	Maonü

### **Texts from the Buddhist Canon**

*Poxie lun* (TT 52)

486b Wei Shu [qing]

*Bianzheng lun* (TT 52)

522b Laozi

*Tang hufa shamen Falin biezhuàn* (TT 50)

209c Laozi

*Bianhuo pian* (TT 52)

118a Laozi  
 148a Shen Xi  
 179a Laozi  
 145a Laozi

*Fayuan zhulin* (TT 53)

520b Laozi  
 520b Pengzu  
 704b Laozi

*Zhenzheng lun* (TT 52)

566c Liu An  
 566c Ji Shuye

**A Dunhuang Manuscript**

Pelliot number 2353, identified as *Laozi kaiti xujue yishu* (Ōfuchi Ninji, ed., *Tonkō dōkyō, zuroku hen* (Tokyo, 1979), pp. 461-466)

462a Laozi *Shenxian zhuan* says  
 463a Laozi Ge Hong *Shenxian zhuan* says

## Appendix Four

### Texts and Citations of *Shenxian zhuan* Arranged by Biography

#### **Baishi Xiansheng**

##### Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping guangji* 7:44

##### Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 1:8a-b

##### Citations

*Yiwen leiju* 6:108

*Taiping yulan* 51:6b (= *Yiwen leiju*)

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:5b

*Ganzhu ji* 2:16b

*Leishuo* 5b

*Xiaoyao xujing* 1:13b

*Sandong qunxian lu* 14:14b

##### Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian biography* 4:1b-2a

*Sandong qunxian lu* citing *Zhengao* 4:10a, 5:14 a/b

*Baopuzi* 15:66

#### **Ban Meng**

##### Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping guangji* 61:382

##### Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 4:5b-6a

##### Citations

*Chuxue ji* 21:520

*Taiping yulan* 605:5a (= *Chuxue ji*)

*Xianyuan bianzhu, shang*:11a

##### Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian biography* 5:10a-b

#### **Bo He**

##### Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Chuxue ji* 8:178 and *Chuxue ji* 24:585

##### Other versions

*Longwei mishu* edition 7

*Siku quanshu* edition 7:7b-8a

Citations

*Xianyuan bianzhu*, *zhong* :17b

*Taiping yulan* 45:10b, 663:6b (ascribed to *Daoxue zhuan* ),736:7a

Related texts

*Baopuzi* 19:336, 20:350

Note

*Chuxue ji* 24:585 and *Taiping yulan* 45:10b have Bai He

**Chao Fu**

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yiwen leiju* 89:1537

Citations

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia* :13b (unasccribed)

Related texts

*Baopuzi* 2:16, 8:152

**Chen Anshi**

*Shenxian zhuan* biography noted in Tao Hongjing's commentary to *Zhengao* 10:25a

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping guangji* 5:37

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 3:3a-4a

Citations

*Taiping yulan* 662:4a

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:21a

Related texts

*Baopuzi* 14:255, 17:310

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 12:8a-9b

**Chen Chang**

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Sandong zhunang*1:20a

Citations

*Xianyuan bianzhu zhong*:18b

*Sandong qunxian lu* 7:14b

Related Text

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 21:6b

**Chen Zihuang**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yiwen leiju* 81:1386

Citations

*Xianyuan bianzhu zhong*:16b

*Taiping yulan* 989:2a (= *Yiwen leiju* 81:1386)

**Cheng Weiqi**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yunji qiqian* 85:11a (unascribed)

Other version

*Taiping guangji* 59:366-7 where it is ascribed to *Jixian lu*

Citations

*Yiwen leiju* 78:1328

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:13a (unascribed)

*Sandong qunxian lu* 2:15a

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian houji* 5:4a-b

*Baopuzi* 16:285

*Taiping yulan* 812:4b

Notes

The *Baopuzi* citation looks similar to the *Yunji qiqian Shenxian zhuan* version - except that in it Cheng Wei's wife goes mad and dies when Cheng Wei tries to force her to pass on her knowledge. Furthermore in *Baopuzi*, this story is ascribed to Huan Junshan (Huan Tan) author of *Xinlun*. *Taiping yulan* cites this story also as being from Huan Tan's *Xinlun*. It is clear, however, that the *Yunji qiqian* version circulated independently - at least in the early Tang - as *Yiwen leiju* cites that version as being from *Shenxian zhuan*. *Shenxian zhuan* did not, then, borrow the *Xinlun* story.

**Dong Feng**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping guangji* 12:83-85

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 10:1a-4b

Citations

Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguo zhi* 49 (Wu, 4):1192



*Sandong zhunang* 1:18b  
*Yiwen leiju* 7:133, 87:1487  
*Taiping yulan* 41:6b, 74:4b, 724:5b, 887:1b, 968:2a.  
*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:5b (unascibed)  
*Sandong qunxian lu* 4:5a, 9:18b

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 16:1a-4a

**Dong Weinian**

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yiwen leiju* 78:1328

Citations

*Beitang shuchao* 160:17b  
*Taiping yulan* 662:4a (= *Yiwen leiju* 78:1328)

**Dongguo Yannian**

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Sandong zhunang* 8:5b

Other versions

*Longwei mishu* edition 10  
*Siku quanshu* edition 7:1a-b

Citations

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia* 11a  
*Taiping yulan* 38:6a, 747:7a  
*Sandong qunxian lu* 3:14b

Related texts

*Han Wudi waizhuan* 12b-13b  
*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 34:9a  
*Houhan shu* 82 xia:2750

Notes

The *Sandong zhunang* text is unusual in that it is not explicitly ascribed to a source text as most of the other *Sandong zhunang* citations are. That it is from *Shenxian zhuan* can be inferred from the context: it follows an editorial note explaining a point of the previously cited biography - Liu Gen - which is ascribed to *Shenxian zhuan*.

**Dongling Shengmu**

*Shenxian zhuan* biography noted in Tao Hongjing's commentary to *Zhengao* 10:24a

Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 60:374 where it is ascribed to *Nuxian zhuan*.

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 6:10b-11a

Citations

*Yiwen leiju* 91:1578

*Taiping yulan* 927:3b (= *Yiwen leiju*)

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:1b (unascribed)

*Yongcheng jixian lu* 6:18a

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian houji* 4:7a-b

**Fan Furen**Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 60:373-4 ceasing at line 2, ascribed to *Nuxian zhuan*.

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 6:9b-10b

Citations

*Yiwen leiju* 86:1469

*Taiping yulan* 387:4b, 759:9a, 766:8b, 912:7a, 960:2a, 967:5a

*Xianyuan bianzhu, xia*:1b (unascribed)

*Yongcheng jixian lu* 6:17a

*Ganzhu ji* 2:18b

*Leishuo* 12b

*Daode zhenjing guangsheng yi* 36:20a

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian houji* 4:6a-7a

**Feng Gang**

*Shenxian zhuan* biography noted in Tao Hongjing's commentary to *Zhengao* 10:24b

Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 4:24

Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 1:9a-b

Citations

*Taiping yulan* 724:5b

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:18b

*Sandong qunxian lu* 3:13a (ascribed to [*Taiping*] *guangji*)

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 34:9b-10a

**Feng Heng**

*Shenxian zhuan* biography noted in Tao Hongjing's commentary to *Zhengao* 10:23a (ascribed to *Shenxian zhuan wuyue xu*)

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Siku quanshu* edition 10:9a-b

Citations

*Shuijing zhu* 2:24b

*Sandong zhunang* 1:19b

*Yiwen leiju* 78:1330

*Taiping yulan* 669:5b, 724:6a, 812:6b, 991:5b

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:14a (unascribed)

*Sandong qunxian lu* 15:11b (ascribed to *Gaodao zhuan*)

Related texts

*Han Wudi waizhuan* 6b-7b

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 21:1a-b

*Baopuzi* 16:287-8

*Houhan shu* 82 xia:2750

Notes

It is possible that the best version of the *Shenxian zhuan* biography extant is the unascribed biography in *Han Wudi waizhuan* 6b-7b. The text included in the *Longwei mishu* edition of *Shenxian zhuan* comes directly from the unascribed biography in *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* and does not agree, in points of detail, with the early citations. On the other hand these citations do agree with the version of the biography in the *Siku quanshu Shenxian zhuan* - and this in turn seems to be a precis of the text in *Han Wudi waizhuan*. (The *Han Wudi waizhuan* version of this biography - cited as being from *Han Wudi neizhuan* as the *neizhuan* and the *waizhuan* had not been separated at this stage - is itself cited in *Yiwen leiju* 94:1626). The necessary link in the argument - that the authors of *Han Wudi waizhuan* borrowed the *Shenxian zhuan* text when it was compiled - cannot be made with certainty so the basic text remains the *Siku quanshu* version.

**Gan Shi**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping yulan* 40:1b

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 10:9a

Citations

*Yiwen leiju* 81:1384

*Taiping yulan* 989:1a (= *Yiwen leiju* 81:1384)

*Xianyuan bianzhhu zhong*:18b (unascibed)

*Sandong qunxian lu* 5:8b

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 12:12b

*Baopuzi* 2:16, 12:228, 15:267, 15:272

*Houhan shu* 82 *xia*:2750

**Gan jun**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Sandong zhunang* 1:7a-b

Citations

*Yiwen leiju* 89:1545-6

*Xianyuan bianzhu zhong* :13b-14a

*Sandong qunxian lu* 3:19a

*Taiping yulan* 958:6b

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 20: 1a-4a

*Dongxian zhuan* biography in *Yunji qiqian* 111:1a-2a

*Jiangbiao zhuan* cited in Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguo zhi* 46, Wu 1: 1110; also cited in *Beitang shuchao* 136:5a, *Taiping yulan* 717:5a-b, *Sandong qunxian lu* 13:20a-b

*Zhilin* cited in Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguo zhi* 46, Wu 1: 1110

*Soushen ji* 1:10-1, also cited in Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguo zhi* 46, Wu 1: 1110-1111

*Huanyuan ji* cited in *Fayuan zhulin* 79:764c (under the title *Yuanhun zhi*)

Notes

Petersen contends that the sentence in this version which refers to the two-chapter text being expanded into one hundred and fifty chapters is a late interpolation. There are some good grounds for this argument - while other citations note the two-chapter text, none mention the expansion. I do not intend arguing this point either way. See J.Ø. Petersen, "The Early Traditions Relating to the Han Dynasty Transmission of the *Taiping Jing*", *Acta Orientalia*, part 1, 50 (1989), 133-171 and part 2, 51 (1990), 173-216, especially part 2, pp. 177-192.

**Gaoqiugong**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yiwen leiju* 86:1469

Citations

*Taiping yulan* 967:5b (= *Yiwen leiju* 86:1469)

**Ge Xuan**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping guangji* 71:441-4. A section of this biography is also found at 466:3839.

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 8:1a-2b

Citations

*Beitang shuchao* 137:10b, 145:5a-b, 148:5b

*Yiwen leiju* 1:17, 78:1328, 78:1329, 87:1503

*Chuxue ji* 21:520

*Taiping yulan* 9:5b (= *Yiwen leiju* 1:17), 664:2b, 736:7a (= *Chuxue ji* 21:520), 760:5a, 773:3b (= *Yiwen leiju* 1:17), 935:9a (= *Yiwen leiju* 96:1672, attributed to *Runan xianxian zhuan*), 949:4a, 978:6b (= *Yiwen leiju* 87:1503), 985:3b (= *Yiwen leiju* 78:1328)

*Sandong qunxian lu* 11:11a (ascribed to *Dantai xinlu*), 12:4a (attributed to *Dantai xinlu*), 17:8b-9a (attributed to *Dantai xinlu*)

*Xuanpin lu* 2:19b

*Xiaoyao xujing* 2:3a

*Jingwei xianpu* 9a

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 23:1a-23b

*Taiji Gexiangong zhuan*

Citation from *Lingbao jing* in *Xianyuan bianzhu zhong*:13a

Citation from *Gaodao zhuan* in *Sandong qunxian lu* 6:3a

Notes

The *Taiping yulan* citation at 736:7a must derive from a source different from *Chuxue ji* 21:520 as an absence of twelve characters is noted towards the end of the citation.

**Ge Yue (Huangluzi)**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:18b-19a

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 4:12a

Citations

*Sandong zhunang* 1:6b

*Taiping yulan* 394:2a

*Xianyuan bianzhu zhong*:4b-5a

*Sandong qunxian lu* 12:6b, 14:20b (ascribed to *Baopuzi*)

Related texts*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 5:12b**Guangchengzi**Basic Shenxian zhuan text*Yunji qiqian* 109:1a-bOther versions*Siku quanshu* edition 1:1a-b*Taiping guangji* 1:5-6Citations*Wenxuan* commentary 22:26a*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:4b*Sandong qunxian lu* 7:8aRelated texts*Baopuzi* 8:152, 17:304, 18:324*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 2:2a-3a*Xiaoyao xujing* 1:6b*Guang Huangdi benxing ji* 4a-5a**Guijun**Basic Shenxian zhuan text*Sandong zhunang* 1:19a-19bCitations*Xianyuan bianzhu zhong* :14b-15a**Heshanggong**Basic text*Taiping guangji* 10:66Other version*Siku quanshu* 8:9a-10bCitations*Yiwen leiju* 78:1330*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*,10a*Taiping yulan* 71:5b,394:2a, 662:4b*Sandong qunxian lu* 15:1aRelated texts*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 12:13a-14b

## Huang Chuping

### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:3a-4a

### Other versions

*Taiping guangji* 7:44-45

*Siku quanshu* edition 2:1a-2a

*Taishang lingbao wufu xu, zhong*:13a-14a (unascribed)

### Citations

*Beitang shuchao* 160:17b

*Chuxue ji* 27:710

*Yiwen leiju* 94:1633

*Taiping yulan* 674:5b, 902:6b, 989:3a

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang* 18a-b

*Jinhua chisongzi zhi* 1a

*Sandong qunxian lu* 8:14a-15a

*Xiaoyao xujing* 1:26a

### Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 5:1a-2a

## Huangshijun

### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Siku quanshu* edition 1:9a

### Other versions

*Longwei mishu* edition 10

### Citations

*Chuxue ji* 23:550

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*: 5b

### Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 12:6b-7a

### Notes

The title of this immortal is generally listed as Huangshanjun. It has been emended here to Huangshijun on the basis of the the *Chuxue ji* citation.

## Hugong

### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 12:80-82

### Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 9:1a-4a

Citations

*Beitang shuchao* 133:13b, 148:8b

*Chuxue ji* 26:643, 30:739

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:5a

*Taiping yulan* 51:6a, 394:6b, 664:2b, 710:9b (two times, the second = *Beitang shuchao* 133:9b), 761:8b (= *Chuxue ji* 26:643), 860:4b (= *Chuxue ji* 26:643), 930:2a (= *Chuxue ji* 30:279), 932:3a, 962:5b

*Sandong qunxian lu* 4:8b (ascribed to *Dantai xinlu*)

*Leishuo* 12b

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 20:7a-10a

*Houhan shu* biography of Fei Changfang 82 *xia*:2743-4

**Ji Zixun**Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 12:82-3

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 7:6b-9b

Citations

*Chuxue ji* 16:400

*Taiping yulan* 373:8a, 901:6a

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:4b (unascibed)

*Sandong qunxian lu* 6:21a, 10:11b

*Leishuo* 8b

*Ganzhu ji* 2:20b

Related texts

*Han Wudi waizhuan* 13b-16b

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 20:5b-6b

*Houhan shu* 89 *xia*:2745-2746

**Jiao Xian**Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 9:62-3

Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 6:12a-b

Citations

*Yiwen leiju* 80:1377

*Sandong zhunang* 2:4a

*Taiping yulan* 477:3b, 669:6a (= *Yiwen leiju*), 849:7a

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:2b (unascibed)

*Xuanpin lu* 2:18a



*Sandong qunxian lu* 4:16a (ascribed to *Baopuzi*)

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* biography 15:10b-11b

Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguo zhi* 11:363-65

**Jie Xiang**

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping guangji* 13:89-90

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 9:6b-9b

Citations

Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguo zhi* 63 (Wu 18):1427-8

*Sandong zhunang* 3:3b

*Beitang shuchao* 103:6a, 145:8a-b

*Yiwen leiju* 86:1473, 90:1564

*Taiping yulan* 51:6a, 381:1b, 551:6b, 664:2b, 710:10a, 842:7a, 862:2a, 892:3b, 910:4a, 916:6a (= *Yiwen leiju* 90:1564), 937: 6a, 969:2a, 977:6b, 996:6a

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:9a-b

*Sandong qunxian lu* 13:8b (attributed to [*Taiping*] *guangji*)

*Taiping guangji* 466:3839

Related texts

*Baopuzi* 15:269, 17:305, 17:307, 19:336

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 15:14b-17a

**Kangfengzi**

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yiwen leiju* 81:1391

Citations

*Taiping yulan* 996:2a (= *Yiwen leiju* 81:1391)

**Kong Yuanfang**

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping guangji* 9:61

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 6:11a-b

Citations

*Sandong zhunang* 2:3b

*Taiping yulan* 669:5b, 845:5b

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:1b (unascibed)

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 15:9b-10b

Note

The *Siku quanshu* version has Kung Yuan.

**Laozi**Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 1:1-4

Citations

*Shuijing zhu* 17:12a

Li Xian's commentary to *Houhan shu* 56:1822

Zhang Shoujie's commentary to *Shiji* 63:2139, 2140

*Chuxue ji* 1:18, 23:548 (3 times)

*Yiwen leiju* 19:345, 78:1329, 86:1465.

*Taiping yulan* 9:5b, 361:7b, 363:5a, 368:4a, 369:7b, 370:5a, 390:7a (= *Yiwen leiju* 19:345), 616:6a, 659:4a

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:4a

*Sandong qunxian lu* 1:4a (ascribed to [*Taiping*]guangji)

*Bianzheng lun* 522b

*Bianhuo pian* 118a, 145a, 179a

*Fayuan zhulin* 520b, 704b

*Yiqie daojing yinyi miaomen youqi* 8b-9b

*Leishuo* 10b

Related texts

*Liexian zhuan*, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, p. 60

*Sandong zhunang*, 8:13b, 9:5b.

*Xiaoyao xujing* 1:3b

**Li A**Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:9a-10a

Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 3:5b-6b

*Taiping guangji* 7:50

Citations

*Beitang shuchao* 123:6a

*Taiping yulan* 345:9a (= *Beitang shuchao*), 827:9a

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:21a

*Sandong qunxian lu* 12:5a

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 15:13b-14b

*Baopuzi* 9:173-4, 20:347-8

**Li Babai**

*Shenxian zhuan* biography noted in Tao Hongjing's commentary to *Zhengao* 13:13a

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:8a-9a

Other versions

*Taiping guangji* 7:49-50

*Siku quanshu* edition 3:4b-5b

Citations

*Taiping yulan* 500:1b

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:21a-b

*Sandong qunxian lu* 10:2b

*Xiaoyao xujing* 1:11b

Related texts

*Xianren Tang Gongfang bei* in *Daojia jinshi lue*, 5-6

*Baopuzi* 19:174

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 10:1a-3b

**Li Changzai**

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping guangji* 12:85-6

Citations

*Sandong zhunang* 1:7a

*Xianyuan bianzhu zhong*:17a (unascribed)

**Li Gen**

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Siku quanshu* edition 10:4b-5b

Other version

*Longwei mishu* edition 10

Citations

*Sandong zhunang* 8:5a

*Xianyuan bianzhu zhong*:16a

*Sandong qunxian lu* 19:2b (ascribed to *Baopuzi*)

Related texts*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 12:10b-11b*Baopuzi* 16:284**Li Ming (Taiyangzi)**Basic Shenxian zhuan text*Sandong zhunang* 8:4bOther versions*Siku quanshu* edition 4:9a-b*Longwei mishu* 10Citations*Xianyuan bianzhu shang* 12bRelated text*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 10:8a**Li Shaojun***Shenxian zhuan* biography noted in Tao Hongjing's commentary to *Zhengao* 10:25aBasic Shenxian zhuan text*Taiping guangji* 9:59-60Other version*Siku quanshu* edition 6:2b-7bCitations*Taiping yulan* 724:5a, 985:3b*Xianyuan bianzhu zhong*:14a-b*Sandong qunxian lu* 7:20a, 12:13b-14a, 18:12a-b (ascribed to *Shiyi ji*)Related texts*Han Wudi waizhuan* 7b-12b*Shiji*, 28:1385-1386*Baopuzi* 2:17, 2:19 (citing from *Li Shaojun jialu* and *Han Jinzhong qiju zhu*), 20:347*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 6:13a-14aNotes

The biography of Li Shaojun in *Taiping guangji* is clearly composed of texts from two sources. The first ends with Han Wudi regretting he had not been more diligent in his dealings with Li; the second concerns one Dong Zhongshe who was, at one stage, given medicine by Li. Dong does not appear elsewhere. The editors of *Taiping guangji* admit that originally this biography had no ascription; "on inspection" they ascribe it to *Shenxian zhuan*. While this is conjecture - Li's biography is not cited in the Tang or earlier - the context of the biography in this chapter where its neighbours are all reliably from *Shenxian zhuan* adds credence to that conclusion. What is less reliable is the

ascription of the entire biography to *Shenxian zhuan*. It is my contention that only the first part is reliable - the second being added at some stage prior to the compilation of *Taiping guangji*. Significantly *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* ends its Li Shaojun biography - which in all likelihood came from *Shenxian zhuan* - with Han Wudi's regrets. The prehistory of the first part of the biography can be seen in the *Baopuzi* 2:19 citations where the extracts from both early texts (lost at least by the Tang) reappear in the *Shenxian zhuan* biography.

## Li Yiqi

### Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping guangji* 10:70

### Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 10:5b-7a

### Citations

*Beitang shuchao* 104:3a, 157:12a

*Taiping yulan* 55:2a, 965:4a

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:11b

### Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 15:11b-12b

## Li Zhongfu

### Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping guangji* 10:69

### Citations

*Beitang shuchao* 123:7b

*Yiwen leiju* 60:1085 (cited as Li Zhongwen)

*Taiping yulan* 346:9a (= *Yiwen leiju* 60:1085), 605:3a, 905:5a

*Xianyuan bianzhu zhong*:8b-9a, 17a

### Related texts

*Baopuzi* 12:228

## Lilougong

### Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yiwen leiju* 89:1537

### Citations

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia* :14a (unascribed)

### Related texts

*Baopuzi* 8:155, 9:170, 13:242

**Liu An**Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:22a-24a

Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 6:1a-2b

*Taiping guangji* 8:51-53

Citations

*Sandong zhunang* 8:5a

*Beitang shuchao* 133:5a

*Chuxue ji* 10:241, 25:598

*Yiwen leiju* 18:341, 85:1458

*Taiping yulan* 15:7b, 186:7b, 383:10b, 677:2b, 700:5a, 709:7b (= *Beitang shuchao* 133:5a), 815:7b (= *Yiwen leiju* 85:1458), 981:2b (= *Yiwen leiju* 89:1458), 985:3b

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:14b-15a

*Sandong qunxian lu* 8:17a, 10:5b (ascribed to *Xuxian zhuan*)

*Han Wudi waizhuan* 2b

Li Shan's Commentary to *Wenxuan* 30:1414, 31:1467

*Hifuryaku* 868:7220, 868:7230

*Leishuo* 8a

*Ganzhu ji* 2:19b, 2:20a

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 5:13a-16b

*Baopuzi* 20:350

*Baopuzi* (lost text citing *Lei Bei ji*) cited in *Taiping yulan* 888:1b-2a

*Xijing zaji* 3:16

Notes

*Shuijing zhu* 32:8a refers to the events described in this story, acknowledging their presence in *Shenxian zhuan* and *Baopuzi*, but does not cite *Shenxian zhuan* directly.

**Liu Gen**Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 10:67-69

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 8:10b-14a

Citations

*Sandong zhunang* 8:5a

Li Shan's commentary to *Wen Xuan* 28:1314

*Taiping yulan* 373:1b, 662:5a

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:5b (unascibed)

*Sandong qunxian lu* 7:14a, 12:10a

Related texts

*Baopuzi* 9:173 19:337

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 20:12b-14a

**Liu Rong (Nanjizi)**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:18b

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 4:11b-12a

Citations

*Beitang shuchao* 135:15a

*Taiping yulan* 719:1b (= *Beitang shuchao*), 931:7a

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:13b

*Ganzhu ji* 2:18b

*Leishuo* 13a

*Sandong qunxian lu* 15:5b

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 5:12b

**Lu Nüsheng**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Longwei mishu* edition 10

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 10:8b

Citations

*Yiwen leiju* 95:1649

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:14a (unascribed)

*Taiping yulan* 906:6a

Related texts

*Han Wudi waizhuan* 6a-6b.

*Houhan shu* 82 xia: 2740-1

Notes

It is possible that the best version of the *Shenxian zhuan* biography extant is the unascribed biography in *Han Wudi waizhuan* 6a-6b. The text included in the *Longwei mishu* edition of *Shenxian zhuan* seems to be a shortened version of this biography. The *Siku quanshu* version is briefer again. The necessary link in the argument - that the authors of *Han Wudi waizhuan* borrowed the *Shenxian zhuan* text when it was compiled - cannot be made with certainty so the basic text remains the *Longwei mishu* version.

## Lu Quan (Taiyinnü)

### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Siku quanshu* edition 4:10a-b

### Citations

*Sandong zhunang* 8:5a

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:13a

### Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian houji* 2:11b-12b

*Yongcheng jixian lu* 6:15a

## Luan Ba

*Shenxian zhuan* biography noted in Tao Hongjing's commentary to *Zhengao* 10:23b, 14:18b

### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:21a-22a. This text is also found at *Yunji qiqian* 85:11a.

### Other biographies

*Siku quanshu* edition 5:9b-10b

*Taiping guangji* 11:75

### Citations

*Beitang shuchao* 77:7a

*Yiwen leiju* 2:37, 78:1329, 80:1365

*Chuxue ji* 2:24

*Taiping yulan* 10:5a, 15:7b, 912:2a

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:3b

*Sandong qunxian lu* 3:15a (ascribed to [*Taiping*] *guangji*), 8:12a

### Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 15:3a-5b

*Houhan shu* biography 57:1841-1842; other references at 6:272, 43:1462, 61:2029, 61:2042, treatise 16:3331

*Baopuzi* 13:241

## Lü Gong

*Shenxian zhuan* biography noted in Tao Hongjing's commentary to *Zhengao* 10:23b

### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 9:64

### Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 2:2a-3b



Citations

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:18b

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 12:7a-8a

**Maojun**Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 13:87-88. For the final paragraph *Sandong zhunang* 1:19b is preferred. The readings given in this fragment are corroborated by the citation from *Taiping yulan* 739:3a.

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 5:4b-8a

Citations

*Chuxue ji* 23:550

*Yiwen leiju* 69:1208

*Taiping yulan* 699:3b (= *Yiwen leiju* 69:1208), 739:3a, 928:6b

Related Texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 16:5a-15b

**Pengzu**Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 2:8-11

Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 1:3a-8a

Citations

*Sandong zhunang* 8:4b

*Yiwen leiju* 78:1329

Zhang Shoujie's commentary to *Shiji* 40:1690

*Fayuan zhulin* 520b

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:4a

*Taiping yulan* 43:5b, 720:7a, 985:3b

*Sandong qunxian lu* 2:19b (ascribed to *Zhengao*), 18:5b

*Leishuo* 10b

*Ganzhu ji* 2:22a

*Xiaoyao xujing* 1:7a

Related texts

*Lixian zhuan*, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, p. 82

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 3:3a-4a

## Rongchenggong

### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Chuxue ji* 27:645

### Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 7:5a

### Citations

*Taiping yulan* 811:3b (= *Chuxue ji* 27:645)

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:13b (unascibed)

### Related texts

*Liexian zhuan*, Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien Tchouan*, p. 55

*Guang Huangdi benxing ji* 1b-2a

## Ruoshi

### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:1b-2b

### Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 1:1b-2b

### Citations

*Sandong zhunang* 8:4b

Li Shan's commentary to *Wenxuan* 16:755

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:5a

*Leishuo* 5b

*Ganzhu ji* 2:16a

### Related texts

*Huainanzi* 12:20b-22b

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 4:16a-18a

## Shen Jian

### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:4a-4b

### Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 2:3b-4a

*Taiping guangji* 9:65

### Citations

*Sandong zhunang* 1:6b

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:19a (unascibed)

*Sandong qunxian lu* 3:10b-11a (ascibed to *Xianzhuan shiyi*)

### Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 5:2a-b

**Shen Xi**

*Shenxian zhuan* biography noted in Tao Hongjing's commentary to *Zhengao* 10:23a

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:6b-8a

Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 3:1a-2b

*Taiping guangji* 5:36

Citations

*Beitang shuchao* 133:7b

*Sandong zhunang* 1:6a-b

*Chuxue ji* 25:613

*Yiwen leiju* 83:1429

*Bianhuo pian* 148a

*Taiping yulan* 662:3b, 677:2b, 710:6a, 758:8a (= *Yiwen leiju*), 773:4a (= *Chuxue ji*), 805:7a (= *Yiwen leiju*), 965:4a

*Xianyuan bian zhu shang*:20b

*Ganzhu ji* 2:17a

*Leishuo* 6a

*Sandong qunxian lu* 3:18a-b (ascribed to *Baopuzi*)

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 4:8b-10b

**Sun Bo**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:15b-16b

Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 4:4a-5b

*Taiping guangji* 5:33

Citations

*Sandong zhunang* 1:18a-b

*Taiping yulan* 717:5a, 767:2b

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:11a

*Ganzhu ji* 2:18a

*Leishuo* 7a

*Sandong qunxian lu* 16:17a-b

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 5:9a-10a

**Sun Deng**Basic Shenxian zhuan text*Taiping guangji* 9:63-64.Other version*Siku quanshu* edition 6:12b-13bCitations*Beitang shuchao* 109:6a*Sandong zhunang* 8:5a*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*:2b*Sandong qunxian lu* 12:11b (ascribed to *Baopuzi*)*Taiping yulan* 693:3b*Xuanpin lu* 2:22b*Xiaoyao xujing* 2:5aRelated texts*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 34:4a-5a**Taishan Laofu**Basic Shenxian zhuan text*Taiping guangji* 11:73Other version*Siku quanshu* edition 8:7b-8aCitations*Beitang shuchao* 134:10a*Chuxue ji* 5:95*Yiwen leiju* 70:1217*Taiping yulan* 39:7a, 707:3b*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:9b*Sandong qunxian lu* 6:11a*Xiaoyao xujing* 1:13aRelated texts*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 12:4b-5a**Wang Lie**Basic Shenxian zhuan text*Taiping guangji* 9:61-2Other version*Siku quanshu* edition 6:11b-12aCitations*Yiwen leiju* 7:135, 78:1329

Commentary to *Wenxuan* 21:1009

*Taiping yulan* 40:2a, 839:10b

*Leishuo* 7a

*Ganzhu ji* 2:19a

*Xianyuan bianzhu xia*: 2a (unascribed)

*Sandong qunxian lu* 15:8a (ascribed to *Wangshi Shenxian zhuan*)

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 31:5b-6a

**Wang Yao**

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping guangji* 10:72

Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 8:6a-7a

Citations

*Beitang shuchao* 110:5b, 136:10b

*Sandong zhunang* 1:6b-7a

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang* 8b

*Taiping yulan* 581:5b, 870:8b

*Sandong qunxian lu* 9:9a, 17:7a (ascribed to *Wangshi shenxian zhuan*)

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 5:19a-20a

**Wang Yuan**

Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:10a-15a. This contains the named biographies of Wang Yuan and Cai Jing. However, as the narrative is continuous and the beginning of the biography of Cai Jing does not conform to the form of a standard biography the text is treated as a single biography.

Other versions

Wang Yuan: *Siku quanshu* edition 3:6b-12a.

Wang Yuan: *Yunji qiqian* 85:10a-11a (unascribed).

Wang Yuan: *Taiping guangji* 7:45-48.

Magu: *Taiping guangji* 60:369-70.

Citations

"Fuzhou Nanchengxian Magu shan xiantan ji" *Quan Tang wen*, 338: 5b-8a.

*Sandong zhunang*, 8:4b.

*Beitang shuchao*, 145:5b, 148:4a.

*Chuxue ji*, 4:77, 6:117, 26:642.

*Yiwen leiju*, 8:151, 72:1242.

*Taiping yulan*, 37:10a, 38:8b, 60:3b (= *Yiwen leiju*, 8:151 check), 373:9a, 605:4b, 678:5b, 737:3b, 747:7a, 765:5a, 767:1a, 803:6b, 862:6a (= *Yiwen leiju* 72:1242), 955:7b.

*Xianyuan bianzhu*, *zhong*:9a-10a, *zhong*:13a.

*Yongcheng jixian lu*, 4:10a-12b (unascribed).

*Xuanpin lu*, 2:13a-14b (unascribed).

*Ganzhu ji*, 2:17a, 2:17b.

*Leishuo*, 6a.

*Xiaoyao xujing*, 1:28b-29b (unascribed).

*Sandong qunxian lu*, 11:6a,14:19b (ascribed to *Jixian lu*), 16:20a-20b (ascribed to *Wangshi shenxian zhuan*), 18:5a-5b (ascribed to *Liexian zhuan*), 20:2b (ascribed to *Wangshi shenxian zhuan*).

#### Related texts

Wang Yuan: *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 5:3a-4a (unascribed).

Cai Jing: *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 5:4b-7a (unascribed).

Magu: *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian houji* (unascribed) 3:5a-b

### **Wei Shuqing**

#### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 4:28-30

#### Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 2:5a-6b

#### Citations

*Shujing zhu* 19:27b

*Poxie lun xia*:486b

*Chuxue ji* 5:99-100, 25:601

Li Shan's commentary to *Wenxuan* 21:1021, 28:1314, 28:2502

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:20a

*Taiping yulan* 662:5b (ascribed to *Sandong zhunang*), 669:5b, 676:9b, 706:5b (= *Chuxue ji* 25:601), 754:2b,

*Sandong qunxian lu* 5:1b

*Leishuo* 4a

*Ganzhu ji* 2:15b

#### Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 7:3a-4b

### **Wu Yan**

#### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Taiping guangji* 11:73-74.

#### Other version

*Siku quanshu* edition 8:8a-9a

Citations*Chuxue ji* 6:135*Sandong qunxian lu* 4:14bRelated texts*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 12:5a-6a**Xu You**Basic Shenxian zhuan text*Yiwen leiju* 89:1537Citations*Xianyuan bianzhu xia* :13b (unasccribed)Related texts*Baopuzi* 2:16, 8:152, 11:199, Appendix 1: 378**Yin Changsheng**Basic Shenxian zhuan text*Taiping guangji* 8:53-55Other version*Siku quanshu* edition 5:1b-4bCitations*Beitang shuchao* 104:8a*Xianyuan bianzhu xia* :3b*Taiping yulan* 49:5a, 606:2a, 662:5a*Wudang fudi zongzhen ji xia*:21aRelated texts*Yunji qiqian* 106:21a*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 13:8b-13aNotes

The basic text for this biography is rather different in form from all the other biographies bar that of Laozi in that it contains citations from named texts as well as a basic story. The first is from an unmaed part of Yin's own writings in nine sections referred to as *Zhushu jiubian*. The second is from *Baopuzi*. The third from *Yinjun zixu*. After this citation are three poems ascribed to Yin. The *Yunji qiqian* text of the Yin Changsheng biography appears in a chapter of *zhuan* for which no source is given - thus it cannot be determined if it originally derived from *Shenxian zhuan* or not. It reads like a somewhat extended version of the *Taiping guangji* text and includes the citation from *Zhushu jiupian* but the citation that appears in the *Taiping guangji* text from *Baopuzi* is ascribed in *Yunji qiqian* to "Danyang Ge Hong, courtesy name Zhichuan". As the citation itself cannot be found in

the book *Baopuzi*, it appears that the *Taiping guanji* citation also refers to the man Baopuzi, i.e. Ge Hong. The *Yinjun zixu* citation appears in *Yunji qiqian* as a separate entry immediately after the biography. No poems appear. *Taiping yulan* 664:6a includes what appears to be an independent citation from *Yinjun zixu* but on closer inspection it is revealed as a continuation of the previous entry where a part of Yin's biography is cited from *Lingbao chishu*. The *Beitang shuchao* citation comes immediately after that part of the biography that is cited from *Yinjun zixu*, and begins "After that Lord Yin..." so the *Yinjun zixu* citation is likely to have been attached to the *Shenxian zhuan* biography by the early seventh century. The unascribed citation from *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* has the same basic biographical text as *Yunji qiqian* as well as the other citations however it rearranges them in the order: biography, *Zhushu jiupian*, *Yinjun zixu*, poems, "Jin Danyang Ge Hong says...". From this we may conclude that the *Taiping guangji* text may be a shortened version of an original represented in *Yunji qiqian* and *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* but that there is insufficient evidence to be certain. Secondly, all the citations had been attached to the basic biography by the seventh century. Thirdly, since the poems do not appear in *Yunji qiqian* or in *Wenxuan* there is some doubt over their antiquity.

## Zhang Ling

### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Yunji qiqian* 109:19a-21a

### Other versions

*Taiping guangji* 8:55-58

*Siku quanshu* edition 5:8a-9b

### Citations

*Yiwen leiju* 86:1469

*Xianyuan bianzhu zhong*:13b 9 (ascribed to *Zhengyi jing*)

*Taiping yulan* 967:5a

*Sandong qunxian lu* 2:7a (ascribed to *Ben zhuan*), 14:9b (ascribed to *Gaodao zhuan*)

*Leishuo* 7b

*Ganzhu ji* 2:19b

*Xuanpin lu* 2:4b

*Han tianshi shijia* 2:1b

*Xiaoyao xujing* 1:2a

*Jingwei xianpu* 11a

*Soushen ji* 2:12b

### Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 18:1a-25a

## Zhao Qu

### Basic Shenxian zhuan text

*Sandong zhunang* 1:20a-b. The final paragraph which is not found in *Sandong zhunang* comes from *Taiping guangji* 10:71.



Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 7:4a-5a

*Taiping guangji* 10:71

Citations

*Xianyuan bianzhu zhong*:17b (unascribed)

*Sandong qunxian lu* 12:14a (ascribed to *Dantai xinlu*)

Related texts

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 34:10a-11a

*Baopuzi* 11:206

**Zhu Yi (Taiyangnü)**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Siku quanshu* edition 4:9b

Citations

*Sandong zhunang* 8:4b

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:13a

Related texts

*Yongcheng jixian lu* 6:14b

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian houji* 2:11b

**Zuo Ci**Basic *Shenxian zhuan* text

*Taiping guangji* 11:76-78

Other versions

*Siku quanshu* edition 8:2b-6a

*Yunji qiqian* 85:16b-18b (unascribed)

Citations

*Beitang shuchao* 113:9b, 136:17a

*Chuxue ji* 22:545, 26:641

*Yiwen leiju* 17:312, 72:1242, 89:1548, 94:1633

*Taiping yulan* 187:8a, 353:9a, 688:5a, 691:3b, 698:4b, 759:8b, 815:7b, 834:5b, 862:6b  
(= *Yiwen leiju* 72:1242, *Chuxue ji* 26:641), 900:6b (= *Yiwen leiju* 89:1548) , 902:6b,  
959:3a (= *Yiwen leiju* 89:1548), 996:6a

*Mao shan zhi* 14:5a

*Xianyuan bianzhu shang*:9b

*Xuanpin lu* 2:19a

*Sandong qunxian lu* 5:15b (ascribed to *Houhan yinyi zhuan*), 9:16a (ascribed to *Dantai xinlu*), 15:10b (ascribed to *Sandong shenxian ji*), 20:10a (ascribed to *Dantai xinlu*)

*Xiaoyao xujing* 2:5b

Related texts

*Houhan shu* biography 82 xia: 2747-2748

*Baopuzi* 2:16, 4:71, 4:85, 5:114, 12:228, 15:271, 16:283, 18:325

*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 15:5b-9b

## Bibliography

This bibliography is divided into three sections: versions of *Shenxian zhuan*, other pre-modern texts and modern texts. It lists only those works cited in this dissertation.

Abbreviations:

SKQS: *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書

TT: *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經

DZ: *Zhengtong daoze* 正統道藏

HY: *Harvard-Yenching Daoze Index*

SBCK: *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊

### *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳

*Daoze jinghua lu* 道藏精華錄 (10 chapters), compiled by Shouyizi 守一子[Ding Fubao 丁福保], 1st edition: Shanghai, 1922; 3rd edition: Taipei, 1980

*Longwei mishu* 龍威秘書 (10 chapters), compiled by Ma Junliang 馬俊良, 1794

*Qinding siku quanshu* (10 chapters), 1782

*Shuofu* 說郭 (1 chapter), 100 chapter version, compiled by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀, Zhang Zongxiang 張宗祥 (ed.), 1927

*Shuofu* (1 chapter), 120 chapter version, compiled by Tao Zongyi, Tao Ting 陶珽 (ed.), 1646

*Shuoku* 說庫 (10 chapters), compiled by Wang Wenru 王文濡, 1915

*Yimen guangdu* 夷門廣牘 (1 chapter), compiled by Zhou Lüjing 周履靖, Wanli period

*Yiyuan junhua* 藝苑掇華(5 chapters), compiled by Gu Zhikui 顧之逵, 1868

*Zengding Hanwei congshu* 增定漢魏叢書 (10 chapters), Wang Mo 王謨, 1791

### Other Pre-modern Texts

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## Character List

This list is divided into four sections: names, places, titles and terms. In the name list figures are listed by their family and given names when these are known. Titles are noted in curly brackets thus, Yin Heng {Beijizi}. Alternative versions of a name are found in round brackets thus, Baishi sheng (Baishi xiansheng). Courtesy names are found in square brackets thus, Bo He [Zhongli]. Titles of texts that have been consulted, as well as the names of their authors and editors can be found in the bibliography.

### Names

Anqi sheng (Anqi xiansheng) 安期生 (安期先生)

Bai He 白和

Bai Juyi 白居易

Baishi sheng (Baishi xiansheng) 白石生 (白石先生)

Ban Gu 班固

Ban Meng 班孟

Bie Ling 鼂令

Bo He [Zhongli] 帛和 (仲理)

Bo Shanfu 伯山甫

Bo Yi 伯夷

Bo Zhouli 帛州黎

Cai Jing 蔡經

Cai Yong 蔡邕

Cao Cao 曹操

Cao Quan 曹全

Cao Tang 曹唐

Cao Zhi 曹植

Chang 敞

Chang Rong 昌容

Chao Fu 巢父

Chen 陳

Chen Anshi 陳安世

Chen Baoguang 陳葆光

Chen Chang 陳長

Chen Dan 陳耽

Chen Jingyuan 陳景元

Chen Min 陳敏

Chen Shi 陳寔

Chen Yongbo 陳永伯

Chen Zihuang 陳子皇

Cheng Xuanying 成玄英

Cheng Weiqi 程偉妻

Chengxiangong 成仙公

Chisongzi 赤松子

Chixuzi 赤須子

Cuiwenzi 崔文子

Dai Meng 戴孟

Daoshi 道世

Dao Xuan 道宣

Dong Feng [Junyi] 董奉 (君異)

Dong Jing 董經

Dong Weinian 董威輦

Dong Zhongjun 董仲君

Dong Ziyang 董子陽

Dongfang Shuo 東方朔

Dongguo Yan (Dongguo Yannian) 東郭延 (東郭延年)

Dongling Shengmu 東陵聖母

Dongwanggong (Dongwangfu) 東王公 (東王父)

Du 杜

Du Guangting 杜光庭

Du Shu 杜恕

Duan Chengshi 段成式

Duzi 犢子

Falin 法琳

Fan Furen 樊夫人

Fan Li 范蠡

Fan Yi 范軼

Fang Hui 方回

Fei Changfang 費長房

Feng 鳳

Feng Gang 鳳綱

Feng Heng [Junda] 封衡 [君達]

Feng Yu 馮遇

Fu 福

Fu Lü 服闋

Fu Xuan 傅玄

Fu Yue 傅說

Fuxi 伏羲

Gan Shi 甘始

Gan jun 甘君

Gao 高

Gao Xin 高辛

Gao Yang 高陽

Gao Yao 皋陶

Gaoqiugong 高丘公

Ge Hong 葛洪

Ge Lu 葛廬

Ge Xuan [Xiaoxian] 葛玄 [孝先]

Ge Yue {Huangluzi} 葛越 {黃盧子}

Geng Fu 耿黼

Gong Chong 宮崇

Gong Gong 共公

Gu Qiang 古強

Guan Ning 管寧

Guan Yu 關羽

Guangchengzi 廣成子

Guifu 桂父

Guijun 桂君

Guo Pu 郭璞

Han Zhong 韓眾

He Yunzhong 何允中

He Zhizhang 賀知章

Heng 衡

Heshanggong 何上公

Hongya 洪崖

Hou Wuyang 侯武陽

Hu Yin 胡愔

Hua Ziqi 華子期

Huan Tan [Shanjun] 桓譚 [山君]

Huang Chuping 黃初平

Huang Hua {Jiulingzi} 皇化 {九靈子}

Huang Jing 黃敬

Huang Shanjun (Huang Shijun) 黃山君 (黃石君)

Huang Zheng 黃整

Huangdi 黃帝

Huangfu Mi 皇甫謐

Huangjizi 黃極子

Hugong 壺公

Ji Jundao 嵇君道

Ji Kang [Shuye] 嵇康 [叔夜]

Ji Shijun 嵇使君

Ji Zixun 薊子訓

Jia Mu 賈穆

Jia Song 賈嵩

Jian 建

Jian Keng {Pengzu} 錢鏗 {彭祖}

Jiansuzi 見素子

Jiao Xian (Jiao sheng) [Xiaoran] 焦先 (焦生) [孝然]

Jie Xiang [Yuanze] 介象 [元則]

Jiqiujun 稷丘君

Ju 鞠

Kangfengzi 康風子  
 Kong Anguo 孔安國  
 Kong Yuanfang (Kong Yuan) 孔元方 (孔元)  
 Lai Yan 來豔  
 Laozi 老子  
 Le Zichang 樂子長  
 Lei Bei 雷被  
 Li A 李阿  
 Li Babai 李八百  
 Li Changzai 李常在  
 Li Daoyuan 酈道元  
 Li Fang 李昉  
 Li Gen [Ziyuan] 李根 [子源]  
 Li Guang 李廣  
 Li Kuan 李寬  
 Li Ming {Taiyangzi} 離明 {太陽子}  
 Li Shan 李善  
 Li Shaojun 李少君  
 Li Xian 李賢  
 Li Xiu {Jue dongzi} 李修 {絕洞子}  
 Li Yiqi 李意期  
 Li Zhongfu (wen) 李仲甫 (文)  
 Liang Su 梁肅  
 Liangmu 梁母  
 Lie Yukou 列禦寇  
 Lilougong 離婁公

- Lin Yiguo 林邑國
- Ling Shouguang 靈壽光
- Liu An {Huainanwang} 劉安 {淮南王}
- Liu Bei [Xuande] 劉備 [玄德]
- Liu Biao 劉表
- Liu Feng 劉馮
- Liu Gang 劉綱
- Liu Gen [Jun'an] 劉根 [君安]
- Liu Jing 劉京
- Liu Qian 劉遷
- Liu Rong {Nanjizi} 劉融 {南極子}
- Liu Tao 劉陶
- Liu Xiang 劉向
- Liu Xiaobiao 劉孝標
- Liu Zheng 劉政
- Lu Ban 魯班
- Lu Nüsheng 魯女生
- Lu Quan {Taiyinnü} 盧全 {太陰女}
- Luan Ba 欒巴
- Luan Da 欒大
- Lü Gong [Wenjing] 呂恭 [文敬]
- Lü Wenqi 呂文起
- Ma Mingsheng 馬鳴生
- Ma Shu 馬樞
- Ma Xiang 馬湘
- Magu 麻姑

Mao Jin 毛晉

Maojun 茅君

Maonü 毛女

Mingdi 明帝

Mozi 墨子

Mu Xuanxu 木玄虛

Nan Bofeng 南伯逢

Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修

Pan Yuanwen 潘淵文

Pei Songzhi 裴松之

Ping Zhongjie 平仲節

Qing Pingji 清平吉

Qiong Shu 邛疏

Qiu Sheng 仇生

Quan Shuben 權叔本

Rongchenggong (Rongchengzi) 容成公 (容成子)

Ruan Cang 阮倉

Ruan Ji 阮籍

Ruoshi 若士

Shao Ping 邵平

Shaoqian 少千

She Zheng 涉正

Shen Fen 沈汾

Shen Huai 沈懷

Shen Jian 沈建

Shen Wentai 沈文泰



Shen Xi 沈羲

Shennong 神農

Shi Bing 史冰

Shi Chong 史崇

Shi Xie 士燮

Shu Qi 叔齊

Shun 舜

Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎

Sima Jingwang 司馬景王

Sima Qian 司馬遷

Sima Rui 司馬睿

Sima Sheng 司馬生

Sima Ye 司馬鄴

Sima Zhi 司馬芝

Songzi 松子

Su Wu 蘇武

Sun Bo 孫博

Sun Ce 孫策

Sun Deng 孫登

Sun Quan 孫權

Sun Wenyang 孫文陽

Sun Xingyan 孫星衍

Suxiangong 蘇仙公

Taijia 太甲

Taishan Laofu 泰山老父

Taixuannü 太玄女

Taiyi 太乙

Taizhen Furen 太真夫人

Tang 湯

Tang Gongfang 唐公房

Tao Hongjing 陶弘景

Teng Sheng 滕升

Tianmenzi 天門子

Tiantai Ernü 天臺二女

Wan Xi 萬熹

Wang Bao 王褒

Wang Chang 王長

Wang Chong 王充

Wang Fu 王符

Wang Gu 王古

Wang Jia 王嘉

Wang Lang 王郎

Wang Lie [Changxiu] 王烈 [長休]

Wang Songnian 王松年

Wang Wenshang 王文上

Wang Xing 王興

Wang Xuanhe 王懸河

Wang Yao [Boliao] 王遙 [伯遠]

Wang Yi 王逸

Wang Yin 王隱

Wang Yuan [Fangping] 王遠 [方平]

Wang Zhen 王真

Wang Zhongdu 王仲都  
Wang Zinian 王子年  
Wangzi Qiao 王子喬  
Wei Boyang 魏伯陽  
Wei Dushi 衛度世  
Wei Shuqing 衛叔卿  
Wei Zheng 魏徵  
Wen Bin 文賓  
Wendi 文帝  
Wo Ding 沃丁  
Wo Jiao 沃焦  
Wo Quan 沃佺  
Wu Bei 伍被  
Wu Guang 務光  
Wu Liang 武梁  
Wu Yan [Zidu] 巫炎 [子都]  
Wu Zixu 伍子胥  
Xi Fu 谿父  
Xiang Wandu 項曼都  
Xiang Yu 項羽  
Xianzong 顯宗  
Xiaofu 蕭父  
Xiaoshi 嘯史  
Xihe Shaonü 西河少女  
Xiuyanggong 脩羊公  
Xiwangmu 西王母

Xu Fu 徐福  
Xu Jia 徐甲  
Xu Jian 徐堅  
Xu Nanrong 許南容  
Xu Shichang 徐世昌  
Xu Xun 許訓  
Xu Yue 許彧  
Xuan Su 玄俗  
Xuan Yi 玄嶷  
Xuyou 許由  
Yan 延  
Yan Qing 嚴清  
Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿  
Yang Ci 楊賜  
Yang Jun 楊駿  
Yang Pei 楊沛  
Yang Wangsun 楊王孫  
Yang Xiong 揚雄  
Yangzi 陽子  
Yanzi 顏子  
Yancong 彥琮  
Yao 堯  
Yin Changsheng 陰長生  
Yin Gui 尹軌  
Yin Heng {Beijizi} 陰恆 {北極子}  
Yin Si 尹思

You Bozi 幼伯子

You Mao 尤袤

Yu 禹

Yu Fan 虞翻

Yu Shinan 虞世南

Yuan Shao 袁紹

Yun 雲

Yüzi 玉子

Zang Rongxu 臧榮緒

Zeng Cao 曾慥

Zhang 張

Zhang Da 張大

Zhang Du 張讀

Zhang Heng 張衡

Zhang Hua 張華

Zhang Ji 張濟

Zhang Junfang 張君房

Zhang Kai 張楷

Zhang Ling (Zhang Daoling)[Fuhan] 張陵 (張道陵)[輔漢]

Zhang Shoujie 張守節

Zhang Zidao 張子道

Zhao Da 趙達

Zhao Fu 趙輔

Zhao Qu [Zirong] 趙瞿[子榮]

Zhao Sheng 趙昇

Zheng Yin 鄭隱

Zhonghuang Zhangren 中黃丈人

Zhongni 仲尼

Zhou Jitong 周季通

Zhou Yishan 周義山

Zhu Nan 朱南

Zhu Yi (Taiyangnü) 朱翼 (太陽女)

Zhuan Xu 顛頊

Zhuo Kong (Zhuo Kongning) 卓孔 (卓孔寧)

Zi Chan 子產

Zu Taizhi 祖台之

Zuo Ci [Yuanfang] 左慈 [元放]

#### Places

Bagong shan 八公山

Baipo 白波

Baishi shan 白石山

Baodu shan 抱犢山

Beidi 北地

Beihai 北海

Beishan 北山

Bohai 渤海

Changan 長安

Changle 長樂

Chengdu 成都

Chenggu 城固

Chongqing 重慶  
Dang 宕  
Danxi 丹溪  
Danyang 丹陽  
Dayang 大陽  
Daye shan 大冶山  
Difei shan 地肺山  
Dongshan 東山  
Donghai 東海  
Feng 豐  
Fufeng 扶風  
Gong 共  
Guangling 廣陵  
Guangzhou 廣州  
Guanzhong 關中  
Guiji 會稽  
Guocang shan 括蒼山  
Hailing 海陵  
Handan 邯鄲  
Hanzhong 漢中  
He 河  
Hedong 河東  
Houguan 侯官  
Huashan 華山  
Huainan 淮南  
Huming shan 鶴鳴山

Huoshan 霍山  
Jiangdong 江東  
Jiangsu 江蘇  
Jianye 建業  
Jiaozhou 交州  
Jijun 汲郡  
Jingzhao 京兆  
Jinhua shan 金華山  
Kongtong shan 崆峒山  
Kunlun 崑崙  
Lanfeng shan 蘭風山  
Langye shan 琅邪山  
Lanxi 蘭溪  
Lanzhou 蘭州  
Liangzhou 梁州  
Liaodong 遼東  
Linlü shan 林慮山  
Longxi 隴西  
Lu 魯  
Luo 洛  
Luofu shan 羅浮山  
Lushan 廬山  
Lujiang 廬江  
Luoyang 洛陽  
Maoshan 茅山  
Mati shan 馬蹄山



Menggu zhi shan 蒙穀之山

Nanyang 南陽

Pei 沛

Peiguo 沛國

Pengcheng 彭城

Penglai 蓬萊

Pingdu shan 平都山

Qi 齊

Qiaoguo 譙國

Qin 秦

Qingcheng shan 青城山

Quren 曲仁

Runan 汝南

Sanfu 三輔

Shan 陝

Shangdang 上黨

Shangyu 上虞

Shanyang 山陽

Shijiazhuang 石家莊

Shouchun 壽春

Shu 蜀

Siming shan 四明山

Songgao shan 嵩高山

Taishan 泰山

Taihang shan 太行山

Taiyuan 太原

Tiantai shan 天臺山  
 Tianzhu shan 天柱山  
 Wangwu shan 王屋山  
 Wu 吳  
 Wuhan 吳漢  
 Wuhu 蕪湖  
 Wuxi 無錫  
 Wuyue 吳越  
 Wuzhong shan 無終山  
 Xinye 新野  
 Xuchang 許昌  
 Xuzhou 徐州  
 Yan 燕  
 Yangzhou 揚州  
 Yi 益  
 Yichang 宜昌  
 Yidu 宜都  
 Yiyang shan 宜陽山  
 Yongchuan 永川  
 Youzhou 幽州  
 Yuntai shan 雲臺山  
 Yuyang 漁陽  
 Zhongshan 中山  
 Zhuyu 紆箕

**Titles**

Baopuzi waipian 抱朴子外篇

Bianhuo 辯惑

Bianhuo pian 辯惑篇

Binxian zhuan 賓仙傳

Chunqiu yuanmingbao 春秋元命苞

Danfang 丹方

Daoxu 道虛

Daoxue zhuan 道學傳

Daren xiansheng lun 大人先生論

Dongxian zhuan 洞仙傳

Fengshan shu 封禪書

Fuming bao 復命苞

Fushi fang 服食方

Gaoshi zhuan 高士傳

Guang hongming ji 廣弘明集

Guangyi ji 廣異記

Guxiang 骨相

Hongming ji 弘明集

Huandan jing 還丹經

Huangdi jiuding danfa 黃帝九鼎丹法

Huangting neijing wuzang liufu tu 黃庭內景五臟六腑圖

Ji Kang jixu 稽康集序

Jin Hongzhou xishan shier zhenjun neizhuan 晉洪州西山十二真君內傳

Jin taikang diji 晉太康地記

Jinye danjing 金液丹經

Jieshu 詰術

Jiubian 九變

Jiubian jing 九變經

Jiugong 九宮

Jiudan jinye jing 九丹金液經

Jiudan zhi jing 九丹之經

Jiuding danjing 九鼎丹經

Jiuzhuan dan 九轉丹

Jiuzhuan huanjing 九轉還經

Jixian lu 集仙錄

Jixian zhuan 集仙傳

Laozi benqi zhongpian 老子本起中篇

Laozi kaiti xujue yishu 老子開題序訣義疏

Laozi Yuce 老子玉策

Lienü zhuan 列女傳

Lieshi zhuan 列士傳

Liexian tu 列仙圖

Lieyi zhuan 列異傳

Liji 禮記

Liwang jing 立亡經

Magu baojuan 麻姑寶卷

Magu pusa baojuan 麻姑菩薩寶卷

Mishusheng xubiandao siku qeshumu 祕書省續編到四庫闕書目

Mozi wuxing ji 墨子五行記

Qingling zhenren Peijun zhuan 清靈真人裴君傳

Qishou 氣壽

Sanwu jing 三五經  
Sanwu zhongjing 三五中經  
Shangshu 尚書  
Shendan luhuo zhi fang 神丹爐火之方  
Shenjie 神解  
Shenxian jing 神仙經  
Shenxian neizhuan 神仙內傳  
Shenxian zhuanlüe 神仙傳略  
Shenxian zhenjing 神仙真經  
Shenxian zhi shu 神仙之書  
Shenyi jing 神異經  
Shiyi ji 拾遺記  
Shiyi lun 釋疑論  
Shuori 說日  
Shuoxian zhuan 說仙傳  
Shushi baijia 書史百家  
Shuwang benji 蜀王本紀  
Shuyi ji 述異記  
Sun Deng biezhuan 孫登別傳  
Suxian 俗嫌  
Taiping jingchao 太平經鈔  
Taiqing danjing 太清丹經  
Taiqing shendan jing 太清神丹經  
Tongbai zhenren Wangjun waizhuan 桐柏真人王君外傳  
Wangshi shenxian zhuan 王氏神仙傳  
Wangxian fu 望仙賦

- Weilüe 魏略
- Weishi chunqiu 魏氏春秋
- Wenshi zhuan 文士傳
- Wensi boyao 文思博要
- Wudan jing 五丹經
- Wushu 吳書
- Xian jing 仙經
- Xiang'er 想爾
- Xianjun shendan yaojue 仙君神丹要訣
- Xiaodan 小丹
- Xingchu jing 行廚經
- Xinlun 新論
- Xisheng 西昇
- Xiuwen yulan 修文御覽
- Xuanshi zhi 宣室志
- Xuanzhong ji 玄中記
- Xuanzhou shangqing Sujun ji 玄州上卿蘇君記
- Xuefu 雪賦
- Yanghu zhumeiyun zhuan 楊胡朱梅云傳
- Yangxing zhuan
- Yinjun zixu 陰君自序
- Yinyi zhuan 隱逸傳
- Yixian zhuan 疑仙傳
- Youming lu 幽明錄
- Youyang zazu 酉陽雜俎
- Yuansheng shi'erhua jing 元生十二化經

Yuanyou 遠遊

Yuanchen jing 元辰經

Yuce ji 玉策記

Yuqian jing zhongpian 玉鈐經中篇

Zhengao 真誥

Zhiguai 志怪

Zhongtai 中胎

Zhouyi 周易

Zhushu jiupian 著書九篇

Zhutao yuji 珠韜玉機

Ziyang zhenren neizhuan 紫陽真人內傳

Zuo Wu ji 左吳記

### Terms

An 按

Baicao hua 百草花

Bianding 辨訂

Bianhua 變化

Biqi 閉氣

Ce 策

Chao 鈔

Chi 尺

Chi chi 叱叱

Chongying jinggan zhenren 沖應淨感真人

Chongying zhenren 冲應真人

Chuanqi 傳奇

Congtan 叢談

Cun 寸

Cunshen 存神

Da chen 大辰

Dajun 大君

Dansha 丹砂

Dao 道

Daojia 道家

Daoshi 道士

Daoshu 道術

Daoyin 導引

Ding 丁

Dou 斗

Duo 咄

Dushi 度世

Dixian 地仙

Fangshi 方士

Fangzhong 房中

Fu 符

Fujun 府君

Fuling 茯苓

Fuqi 服氣

Hanying 含影

Hu 斛



Huang jing 黃精

Huangbai 黃白

Huaqu 化去

Huma 胡麻

Jia 甲

Jiaojie 交接

Jin 禁

Jing 精

Jingpo 精魄

Jingren 精人

Jingsi lianzhi 精思鍊志

Jingxie 精邪

Jinye 金液

Jinzhou 禁咒

Jiuguang zhi 九光芝

Jiudan 酒丹

Lang lang 琅琅

Lei 類

Leishu 類書

Li 里

Liang 兩

Lianghuai yanzheng caijinben 兩淮鹽政採進本

Liezhuan 列傳

Lin 麟

Lingfei san 靈飛散

Mijiao san 麋角散

Ming 命  
Muweixi zhi 木威喜芝  
Muzhi 木芝  
Neixi 內息  
Neizhuan 內傳  
Pingzuo 平坐  
Pixie 辟邪  
Qi 氣  
Qi ming 七明  
Qian 鉛  
Renxian 人仙  
Shen 神  
Shenbian 神變  
Shendan 神丹  
Sheng 昇  
Sheng 笙  
Shenling 神靈  
Shenren 神人  
Shenxian 神仙  
Shenxian dao 神仙道  
Shenzhen 神枕  
Shi 石  
Shidan 石膽  
Shijie 尸解  
Shisui 石髓  
Shouxing 守形

Shouyi 守一  
Shuidan 水丹  
Shuigui 水桂  
Shuixian 水仙  
Shuiyin 水銀  
Sishen 思神  
Songbai 松柏  
Songzhi 松脂  
Songzi 松子  
Suru 俗儒  
Sushu 素書  
Taiyi jinye 太乙金液  
Tianmendong 天門冬  
Tianshi dao 天師道  
Tianxian 天仙  
Tongbian 通變  
Tu'na 吐納  
Wenti 文體  
Wuse yunmu 五色雲母  
Xian 仙  
Xian 僊  
Xianqu 仙去  
Xianren 仙人  
Xiaojun 小君  
Xiaoshuo 小說  
Xingqi 行氣

Xingchu 行廚  
 Xiong huang 雄黃  
 Xulie 序列  
 Yangsu jingzheng zhenren 養素淨正真人  
 Yangsu zhenren 養素真人  
 Yangxing 養性  
 Yao 藥  
 Yinjian wufang 隱見無方  
 Yinlun wufang 隱淪無方  
 Yinyi 隱逸  
 You 又  
 Yunmu 雲母  
 Yunmu fen 雲母粉  
 Yunshuangdan 雲霜丹  
 Zalu 雜錄  
 Zazhuan 雜傳  
 Zhang 丈  
 Zhengui 箴規  
 Zhenzhu 真珠  
 Zhiguai 志怪  
 Zhong 鍾  
 Zhongguo daojiao xiehui 中國道教協會  
 Zhu 朮  
 Zhu 著  
 Zhuan 傳  
 Zhuan 撰

Zhuni 祝衤

Zi 鯀

Zuo dao 左道

Zuo sangang liuji 坐三綱六紀

Zuoxu 坐虛

Zuozai liwang 坐在立亡