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ABBREVIATIONS

- DP1 *Declarations of the Perfected, Part One: Setting Scripts and Images into Motion*, the first volume of this translation.
- DZ *Daozang* 道藏, the Daoist canon, as numbered in Komjathy 2002.
- ET *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio, 2 vols. Hundreds of relevant short articles.
- HDC *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典, ed. Luo Zhufeng 羅竹風, 12 volumes. An essential reference tool.
- JS *Jin shu* 晉書 (History of the Jin), ed. Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578-648). The official history of the Jin dynasty; the ten-volume Beijing Zhonghua shuju, 1974 edition.
- SK *Shinkō kenkyū: yakuchu hen* 真誥研究：譯注篇, eds. Yoshikawa Tadao 吉川忠夫 and Mugitani Kuniō 麥谷邦夫. The Japanese translation of ZG.
- TC *The Taoist Canon*, eds. Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, 3 vols. Short articles on each of the nearly 1,500 titles in DZ.
- WSMY *Wushang miyao* 無上祕要 (Secret Essentials beyond Compare; DZ 1138), a sixth-century Daoist encyclopedia.
- WYT *Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu* 洞玄靈寶真靈位業圖 (Chart of the Positions of Perfected Numina; DZ 167). Based on a chart that Tao Hongjing had compiled; essential for grasping where the various Perfected, immortal, or otherworldly figures fit into the vast Higher Clarity pantheon.
- YJQQ *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (Seven Slips from the Bookbag of the Clouds; DZ 1032). Song dynasty compendium that functions like a miniature Daoist canon.
- ZG *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected; DZ 1016).
- ZW *Zangwai daoshu* 藏外道書 (Daoist Texts outside the Canon). A modern compendium that gathers Daoist texts written after the DZ's publication, as well as a few older texts not included in the DZ; as numbered in Komjathy 2002.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction to the previous volume, *Declarations of the Perfected, Part One: Setting Scripts and Images into Motion* (DP1), began with basic information about this book and its formation. For the benefit of readers who have not read that volume or who wish to refresh their memories, I present here a shortened version of the original “Background in Brief,” with a modified last paragraph.

Background in Brief

Through the prime years of his life, Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536) collected manuscripts of three men who had lived in the century before him: (1) Yang Xi 楊羲 (330-386), a shaman-like figure who was also a gifted writer and calligrapher, (2) Xu Mi 許謚 (303-376), Yang’s aristocratic patron and benefactor, and (3) Xu Hui 許翮 (341-370), Xu Mi’s youngest son. At the Xu’s behest, Yang Xi had established contact with a group of divine, immortal beings known as the “Perfected” (*zhenren* 真人), who would come down to him at night in a kind of vivid dream. His records of these visits, together with the scriptures they revealed to him and a handful of other materials that the Xus already had in their possession, formed the foundation of the Higher Clarity (Shangqing 上清) movement in Daoism and eventually had a pervasive, lasting influence on the Daoist religion as a whole.¹

Although early Chinese history is replete with shamans and spirit-mediums, none approached Yang Xi for scope of vision or quality of literary output. On a nightly basis he produced poetry, scriptures, talismans, letters, various instructions, all supposedly dictated to him by the Perfected. He wrote them down in exquisitely beautiful calligraphy that Tao Hongjing later would judge the equal of work by China’s “sage of calligraphy” Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361). These writings, moreover, reflected an encyclopedic, synthesizing mind with deep knowledge not only of earlier Daoist traditions, but of Chinese literature in general, astronomy, dietetic practices, alchemy, and so on. Needless to say, these manuscripts were cherished by almost all who had the good fortune to see them.

By Tao Hongjing’s time, these writings had already been scattered, copied, altered, or plagiarized. Some were lost. Only thirty years after the Higher Clarity revelations there arose another Daoist movement, Numinous Treasure or Lingbao 靈寶, which combined the Higher Clarity source-materials with

¹ This background is based mostly on Strickmann 1977 and short introductory materials on Tao Hongjing, ZG, and related texts, such as Verellen 1998, Robinet in TC 198-200, and other articles in references such as Kohn 2000, TC, and ET.

Buddhist ideas and practices to weave an even vaster, more complex web of belief. The Higher Clarity materials were already being mixed in so thoroughly with those from other lineages that they were at risk of being lost entirely. A scholar who preceded Tao Hongjing, Gu Huan 顧歡 (420/428-483/491), had collected the original manuscripts into an anthology titled *Zhenji jing* 真迹經 (Scripture of the Traces of the Perfected), but he missed many items and included some inauthentic or unrelated materials. However, Tao Hongjing was able to conduct a more thorough search over several decades, and he determined authenticity by examining the calligraphy. He compiled the writings that he had authenticated into two works: (1) *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected; ZG for short),² which soon passed into general circulation, and (2) *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 (Secret Instructions for Ascent to Perfection), which focused on the more technical details of how to attain the status of a Perfected being; it was divulged only to Daoist practitioners. The ZG has survived to the present, though not without a few missing phrases, miswritten characters, later insertions, and formatting errors. In its original form, it had seven chapters; these have since been split among twenty fascicles or scrolls.³ As for *Dengzhen yinjue*, only three of its original 24 or 25 fascicles, plus various citations of the text in other works, have survived. Significant parts of the ZG's content appear also in the *Dengzhen yinjue*, but with Tao's meticulous, nearly phrase-by-phrase commentary added.

The ZG enjoyed wide circulation after Tao completed his work around 499, due to the strength of his reputation, the strong interest in spiritual matters throughout the educated classes during that period, and the exquisite quality of its writing. Gu Huan's earlier anthology eventually disappeared. Apart from its religious importance, the ZG also had an immense influence on Chinese literature, especially poetry. Many poets through the following centuries emulated the poetry it contains or used it as source-material whenever they contemplated the other world—the far-flung paradise-isles in the sea east of China, the distant holy mountains of the west and north, the starry realms and their undying inhabitants. Accordingly, it was widely cited in various encyclopedias and learning guides during the later period of division and the Tang and Song dynasties.

The version of the ZG that now appears in the Daoist canon or *Daozang* 道藏 (DZ), first printed in 1447, comes with a preface dated 1223 by the eminent Song dynasty bibliographer Gao Sisun 高似孫 (1158-1231). From Gao's preface (translated in DP1:21-22), we know that this canonical version was

² I am quite aware that the title's *pinyin* Romanization normally omits the apostrophe, but I am also aware that English speakers who do not know Chinese will often read “Zhengao” with the “ng” sound instead of the separate “n” and “g”.

³ Parts One to Five are devoted to instructions from the Perfected, Part Six (fasc. 17-18) to writings by Yang Xi and the Xus, and Part Seven (fasc. 19-20) to Tao Hongjing's introduction to the book, to Yang and the Xus, the dispersal of their manuscripts, and textual glosses. Much of Part Seven (ZG 19.9b5-20.4b4) is translated in Strickmann 1977.

based originally on an edition kept during the Southern Song era (1127-1279) either at Maoshan, the center of Higher Clarity Daoism located a little to the southeast of Nanjing, or at Shangqing gong 上清宮 (Higher Clarity Temple) near what is now Yingtian, Jiangxi province. The head of the latter temple, Yi Rugang 易如剛 (*fl.* 1200-1225), was having the ZG printed at Maoshan, and he asked Gao, then serving as an Assistant in the Palace Library, to contribute a preface.

Gao Sisun correctly observes that the main title and seven chapter titles of the ZG were designed by Tao to indicate its “weft” or apocryphal status in support of the “warp” or canonical texts (Daoist scriptures, Confucian classics). The main title recalls that of documents in the *Shangshu* 尚書 (The Book of History), while the chapter titles resemble weft titles. Gao does not say *how* they resemble weft titles—he assumes his readers will spot their similarity with the three-character titles of *Zhuangzi*’s seven “inner chapters.” However, it seems that for Gao the “warp” or canonical titles were limited to *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi*, and the Confucian classics. His teacher’s remark, “Reading the *Changes* [i.e., the *Yi jing*] is enough!” runs completely counter to Higher Clarity teaching, which places primacy on the *Dadong zhenjing* 大洞真經 (True Scripture of the Great Cavern). Gao belongs to a different era, with a different set of beliefs.

In any case, the edition in the DZ remains the standard text, even though other versions continued to circulate outside of the canon. During the late Ming, a Nanjing-based poet and bibliophile named Yu Anqi 俞安期 (1551-1627) managed to gain access to the DZ, which was usually kept off-limits in select temples, and he reprinted the ZG in 1600 and 1604, the second time with annotations at the end of each fascicle that discussed pronunciations and variant readings. Yu Anqi also asked his friend, the dramatist and calligrapher Tu Long 屠隆 (1542-1605), to contribute a new preface, probably because Tu, who had his own extracanonical copy of the ZG, knew the text well. The Yu Anqi redaction in turn was reprinted in many other collectanea during the Qing dynasty (see Feng 2006). It became the *de facto tongxingben* 通行本 or “commonly circulating edition.”

On Tu Long’s Preface

Tu Long’s preface to ZG has long been ignored, but it is in fact a truly remarkable document—a literary *tour de force* in its own right. Many Chinese poets through the ages had alluded to the ZG’s content, many bibliographers had written short notices about it, and many scholars, especially followers of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) had written brief, usually critical remarks about it,⁴ but to my knowledge this is the only essay in which a renowned literatus during China’s long imperial era displays a deep understanding of the text and expresses a

⁴ Zhao Yi (2011, 358-73) provides a convenient collection of the bibliographers’ records, critical comments, and prefaces.

personal, even emotional response to it. I decided to include its translation in this volume, not only because its list of scriptures is based on one in Fascicle Five, but also because it also touches subtly on the theme of family, which runs through the second half of Part Two.

When reading this preface, it is useful to keep in mind some of the details of Tu Long's own life. He was one of the foremost calligraphers of the late Ming (his works fetch high prices at auction today). He was also the first dramatist in China to create plays that were to a large extent autobiographical or that represented life experiences in dramatic form (Lin Zhili 2011, 96-97). A few years before he wrote the preface, his eldest daughter Tu Yaose 屠瑤瑟 (1575-1600), eldest son Tu Jinshu 屠金樞 (1580-1600), and the latter's wife Shen Tiansun 沈天孫 (1580-1600) had all died within a short period of time in the winter of 1600-1601, perhaps in an epidemic. Each of these young people had literary talent, and the family had formed a virtual literary society of its own for an all-too-brief period in the 1590s.⁵ In his last play, *Xiwen ji* 修文記 (A Tale of Literary Cultivation), he dramatized them: the main character Meng Yao 蒙曜 represents Tu Long himself, the heroine Meng Yaose 蒙瑤瑟 his daughter, and Meng Yushu 蒙玉樞 his son. Tu's preface to ZG was written around the same time as the play, and we may note that the one of the play's opening lines, describing it as "rare, singular events seen through my own eyes" (眼中親見希奇事) is rather similar to one in Tu's ZG preface: "I have managed to see [these things] with my eyes, and they stirred my earth-souls and startled my cloud-souls" (予得目睹，動魄驚魂). Moreover, he mentions in passing two Daoist masters whom he revered, the Perfected Man of Six Plumes (Liuyu zhenren 六羽真人, or Yi Zhenzi 宜真子) and the Perfected Man of Shaoxing (Shaoxing zhenren 邵行真人); the latter was Tu Long's contemporary Sun Rongzu 孫榮祖, a master of methods (*fangshi* 方士) and spirit-medium who would contact the otherworldly Master Wise Vacuity (Huixuzi 慧虛子). Both of these figures also appear in *Xiwen ji*; the latter brings to salvation the heroine Meng Yaose (Lin Zhili 2011, 105).

The preface begins with an extended meditation on the quality of speech that distinguishes divine sages (the Perfected) from the common crowd. He likens it to the kind of numinous music described in *Zhuangzi's* second chapter. These individuals are capable of mounting up to heavenly palaces, where even their casual utterances and phrases form orations capable of expressing the deepest mystic truths (i.e., the kind found in ZG and the scriptures).

Tu then lists out the more important Perfected figures and Higher Clarity scriptures. The scriptures on the latter list are either hidden away or conveyed to ordinary humans, but in either case, he asserts, they are not like ordinary books, even the ones that, like Sima Qian's great history, are "hidden in a fa-

⁵ On the young women's poetry, see Waltner and Hsu 1997; Waltner in Lee et al., 2014, 350 and 404-07; Berg 2013, 67-73.

mous mountain, with copies in the capital.” This, for him, explains why Tao Hongjing compiled ZG. Those who doubt the ZG (Zhu Xi and his followers are implied) simply lack the necessary perception or are so filled with vulgar sentiments that the whole book seems absurd to them. However, Tu claims to have personally witnessed many strange and wonderful things (one wonders whether some were also seen in his mind’s eye, as a reader, or through the medium of theater), and for this reason, the book compiled by the far more distinguished Tao Hongjing deserves even more to be believed. Tao had been endowed with a mystic mind from childhood, so the matter of compiling the ZG could not have been a matter of chance. Tu says that he had long been studying the ZG but had always kept it secret. However, once Yu Anqi’s edition brings it to the wider public, it will certainly have greater significance.

The personal, emotive aspect of Tu Long’s preface, then, comes first through his description of things that he has personally seen, including from his two teachers, whose spiritual interventions he believed could bring him and his recently deceased family members salvation. The “liberating pill of terminal quietude” alludes to the ingestion of the elixir. When he mentions having seen “the thronging sages’ superior seals that fly above the clouds, the celestial emblems contained in the sages’ speech, and the auroral colors that leap from their calligraphy, plummet from the azure heavens, and descend upon the Turquoise Terrace,” he may be describing what he sees through his mind’s eye while reading Lady of Purple Tenuity’s teachings about the revelation of scriptures (ZG 1.7b7-10a3; DP1:49-55), but he may also be describing his own teachers’ talismanic writing. Perhaps he also visualized the process when executing his own calligraphy—we cannot really be certain. But it is certain that the things he read in ZG strongly resonated with his own experience. The second emotive aspect, I believe, comes through the language itself—the parallel phrases, the internal rhymes, the exalted diction—in its evocation of unsurpassable, otherworldly beauty. I can only hope the translation manages to capture some of it.

Outline of Part Two

Part Two of ZG has more of a this-worldly focus than Part One. While Part One described the process of establishing and maintaining spiritual union with the Perfected, this part turns its attention on the kinds of problems that the ordinary Daoist practitioner will likely encounter, and how he or she should overcome them. The title for Part Two, “Instructions on Shaping Destiny” (*Zhenming shou* 甄命授) is entirely apt. The verb in the title suggests the way that a potter shapes clay on the wheel, as in the line from Part One, “The eastern crags are suitable for perpetual [self-]shaping” (ZG 4.6a8; DP1: 259), and certainly this part is filled with exhortations to retreat, meditate, purify oneself, and so on. All these practices lay the groundwork for protecting oneself in a turbulent world and preparing oneself for future elevation.

A person encountering this material for the first time, without any prior introduction, would probably find it a haphazard, confusing assortment of statements from the Perfected. However, there is an organizational scheme, and for this we must thank Tao Hongjing once again for applying his editorial skills on such variegated material. Unlike Part One, which follows a mostly chronological order, Part Two follows a thematic order. However, Tao also tried to keep material from the manuscripts he worked with together whenever possible, so that occasionally one finds passages that seem out of sequence or that do not fit their context. If we set aside the undated *Instructions on the Way* (*Daoshou* 道授) in Fascicle Five, which probably predates the rest, the first and last passages, chronologically speaking, appear together near the very end. Both relate to the Prince of Kuaiji 會稽 Sima Yu 司馬昱 (320-372), the future Jin Emperor Jianwen 晉簡文帝 (r. 372). The first is dated August 10, 361, and although the last is undated, internal clues indicate that it comes from late 369.

We may outline Part Two as follows:

I. Basic teachings

- A. *Instructions on the Way* (ZG 5 all)
- B. *Introduction to the Ingestion of Atractylodes* (6.1a4-5b10)
- C. “General Instructions and Admonitions on Studying the Way” (6.6a1-12b7)
- D. Miscellaneous advice (6.12b8-7.4b10)

II. The Xu family drama

- A. The Xu family’s earlier spirit-medium Hua Qiao 華僑 (7.5a1-6a8)
- B. Sepulchral complaints and their consequences (7.6a9-13a9, 7.13b7-7.15a5)
- C. Miscellaneous advice on preserving health (7.13a9-13b6, 7.15a6-8.2b5)

III. Family matters of other persons interested in Higher Clarity

- A. Mr. Kong 孔氏 (8.2b6-8.3b6)
- B. Liu Yuanzhi 劉爰之 (8.3b7-8.4b5)
- C. Lu Na 陸納 and Lu Shi 陸始, Yu Zhao 虞昭, and Yu He 庾龢 (8.4b5-8.5b4)
- D. Chi Yin 郗愔 (8.5b5-8.8a9)
- E. Gao Qi 高耆 and Xie Feng 謝奉 (8.8a9-8.9b5)
- F. Sima Yu (8.9b6-8.12a8)

IV. Supplement: a spurious document (8.12a9-8.14a9)

The first part (I.) gathers materials that would be of interest to a beginning practitioner and starts with two very long transmissions bearing their own titles: *Instructions on the Way* and *Introduction to the Ingestion of Atractylodes* (*Fushu xu* 服朮敘). The first, occupying all of Fascicle Five, is a set of instructions from the Perfected Lord Pei 裴君. However, as we shall see, the spirit-medium who revealed it was not Yang Xi but probably the Xu family’s earlier spirit-medium, Hua Qiao. The literary style is much plainer than that found in the rest of ZG,

and some of the ideas contained therein are at odds with the later revelations through Yang Xi. It contains a long list of Perfected scriptures and accoutrements and a discussion of the various tests that the Perfected might give to aspiring adepts. Besides providing pointers on how to pass these tests, it relates many colorful, memorable anecdotes about past test-takers, successful and unsuccessful, and warns about deceptive tests given by malevolent spirits. *Introduction to the Ingestion of Atractylodes* returns us to the Lady of Purple Tenuity (speaking through Yang Xi) and the young adept Xu Hui, probably at the start of their courtship. Little of the *Introduction* actually concerns atractylodes—most of it discusses Xu Hui’s need for further cultivation, his position within a rapidly deteriorating world, and what he may expect in his own future, when he eventually attains Perfection. Only then does it begin to discuss specific practices, especially diet and the avoidance of sex.

“General Instructions and Admonitions on Studying the Way” (my heading) is based on a Buddhist text that was very popular during the Jin dynasty, the *Sutra in Forty-two Sections* (*Sisbi'er zhang jing* 四十二章經), but here transformed into a set of Daoist teachings. Like its Buddhist source text, the Daoist version covers basic ideas and practices, using vivid metaphors to get its points across. All of the next part, the “Miscellaneous advice” (I.D. in the outline above), likewise consists of basic instructions on what one should do or not do, especially avoiding sex and avoiding funerals, and there is no need to go into further detail on it here.

In the second half of “General Instructions,” we find two passages that do not fit their context at all—they concern the Xu family—but Tao Hongjing keeps them here because they had appeared on the original Yang Xi manuscript that had formed its basis. Meanwhile, by carefully examining his textual notes for the first and second halves of the “Instructions,” we learn that the poetic sequence on dependency and non-dependency, which had appeared in Part One (DP1:159-165), had originally preceded the first half of “General Instructions” on the unknown copyists’ manuscripts he had examined. In other words, the poetic debate may have functioned as a kind of preface, but Tao had decided to present it among the poems of Part One. This illustrates why the ZG often seems to be haphazardly organized, when in fact it is not. Tao Hongjing does his best to organize the material, but he cannot completely overcome the fact that the manuscripts he worked with were anything but organized.

Throughout the rest of Part Two (i.e., II. and III. above), a major concern is practicing the Way within the context of family—and in this regard, the ZG may be said to “cut close to home” and reflect a distinctly Chinese family-centered outlook. The family is essential, but at the same time, it is a huge distraction, the stage for emotional dramas of all kinds, big and small: how is the adept to negotiate among its demands? If there is any overriding theme through the latter half of Part Two, I would argue that it is the problems that may arise within the family, and how the adept must overcome them. It first focuses on the Xu family itself, approaching the matter obliquely through dis-

cussions on Hua Qiao, their first spirit-medium, whose family was connected by marriage to the Xus, and then it proceeds to the subject of sepulchral plaints (*zhongsong* 塚訟; lawsuits from the dead), their consequences, and the various solutions. The “miscellaneous advice on preserving health” includes advice for Xi Mi from his deceased wife, who now occupies an otherworldly palace for virtuous women who receive posthumous training for Perfection.

The same kind of dramas are reenacted within the families of many of the notables who ask Xu Mi for spiritual or medical assistance from Yang Xi (III.); Fascicle Eight gives us a brief glimpse into each. Here we see a greater diversity of family situations, with Chi Yin and Sima Yu providing by far the greatest interest. Not all sepulchral plaints come from ancestors or the victims of ancestors’ crimes. For example, Yu Zhao encounters a sepulchral plaint not from a figure in a past generation but from a nephew who predeceased him; one of the plaints against Chi Yin comes from a predeceased daughter-in-law. In these pages, we will see a frequent recurrence of tension in uncle-nephew relationships, not only in the matter of sepulchral plaints, but also among the living.

The Perfected beings visiting Yang Xi in Part Two are generally the same as we have seen in Part One. To review, the three main groups of Perfected, in outline:

I. Past saints of Higher Clarity

A. Mao Ying 茅盈, Mao Gu 茅固, and Mao Zhong 茅衷, the
“three Lords Mao”

B. Wei Huacun 魏華存, the Lady of the Southern Marchmount

C. Zhou Yishan 周義山, the Perfected Man of Purple Yang

D. Wang Bao 王褒, the Perfected Man of Xiaoyou

E. Lord Pei 裴君, the Perfected Man of Pure Numinosity

II. Yang Xi’s divine wife and her mother

A. The Perfected Consort An 安妃

B. The Displayer of Numina on Fangzhang Terrace, Lady Li 李夫人

III. Daughters of the Queen Mother of the West 西王母

A. Lady of Purple Tenuity 紫微夫人

B. Lady Right Blossom 右英夫人

C. Lady in Attendance Within 中候夫人

D. Lady Purple Prime of the Southern Pole 紫元夫人

“Outlier” figures would include the Perfected Man of Mount Tongbo, Wangzi Qiao 王子喬 (“Prince Qiao”) and the Perfected Man of Westwall, Wang Yuan 王遠. In this volume, the main speakers by far are Lord Pei, who has all of Fascicle Five to himself, and Mao Zhong, who as lord of the underworld has much to say about sepulchral plaints. Zhou Yishan does not appear at all; Lady Li appears only in the “Supplement” of spurious material. Wang Ziqiao has only

one speech. Other speeches by more exalted figures like Lord Blue Lad 青童君, Master Redpine 赤松子 (Yang Xi's divine father-in-law), and the Lady of Dark Clarity 玄清夫人 are, in Tao Hongjing's opinion at least, reported only second-hand to Yang Xi.

In Part Two we also encounter speeches from several of Mao Zhong's subordinates in the underworld who have the difficult task of governing the unsaved dead—generally a fractious, resentful multitude. These subordinates are not Perfected officials, but rather people who obtained a low grade of immortality, that of “underground chief” (*dixiazhu* 地下主; DP1: 305n247). Many of these figures are former military officers, and they expect payment in the form of valuables like silk and silver hairpins from the faithful for their efforts in thwarting their charges' sepulchral plaints.

I shall leave the discussion of the “Basic teachings” and the “Supplement” to the comments following the translation of each of the relevant passages, but before moving on, I should alert the reader that Fascicle Five's *Instructions on the Way*, like the New Testament, begins after a brief introduction with a rather tedious list, not of names in a genealogy, but of scripture titles. The titles themselves are quite colorful—they certainly fascinated Tu Long—but working out their meanings and identifying their counterparts in today's canon, if any, was quite a challenge, so the footnotes will come fast and heavy. Also, because most of the material in Part Two is prose, not poetry, and because many of the individual sections and passages (*tiao* 條) are very long, in this volume I am placing Tao Hongjing's translated comments at the end of each passage, instead of piling them up at the end of each section as I had in DP1.

In the rest of this introduction I shall concentrate on the Xu family drama and especially the family matters of some of the other persons interested in Higher Clarity, not only because of the more complex nature of the material, but also because this is where we can begin to piece together the broader picture of how the early Higher Clarity movement was formed.

The Xu Family Drama

In the Introduction to Part One, where I discussed the “Cast of Characters” in ZG, the human cast was rather limited, but now, with the focus on the families of Xu Mi and his visitors, the human cast is greatly expanded. Within the Xu family, besides the elderly Xu Mi and his younger son Xu Hui, we see a bit more of his older son Xu Lian 許聯 (337-404), who is not as interested in spiritual pursuits as his younger brother—perhaps because he is expected to inherit the Xu family estate. He is nevertheless destined for immortality, as we have read in Part One. Even Xu Quan 許剛, Xu Mi's eldest son (by a concubine) is mentioned a few times. We are also introduced to various female members of the family. First, there is Xu Mi's stepmother, Ying Laizi 應來子, whose passing puts Xu Mi in a predicament: should he provide her an elaborate funeral and observe the mourning period, as is expected for a man of his class, or should

he heed his Perfected teachers' admonitions to refrain from mourning? Then there is his second wife, Tao Kedou 陶科斗, recently deceased (probably around 363-365) and still very much on his mind. Her spirit visits Yang Xi, offering all kinds of tender advice to the family, but for a time the underworld authorities involve her in a sepulchral plaint, too. Xu Mi's younger half-brother Xu Que 許確 (the personal name is actually written 石+霍, a character not in the MS Word character set) also finds himself at the receiving end of a sepulchral plaint, and Xu Mi finds that his sister and brother-in-law Xu Ehuang 許娥皇 and Huang Yan 黃演, both deceased, have launched another. Xu Mi's daughter-in-law Hua Zirong 華子容, Xu Lian's wife (also related to Hua Qiao), becomes the focus of another family drama when she refuses to make a thank-offering of hairpins demanded by the Perfected and their underworld assistants. The young children of Xu Lian and Hua Zirong also figure as potential victims of sepulchral plaints: a daughter, Xu Ziqi 許子奇, and an infant son, Xu Chisun 許赤孫. As the eldest son of the eldest son (by primary wives), Xu Chisun makes an especially desirable target.

Xu Mi's father Xu Fu 許副 had eight sons and four daughters: four and one by his first wife Hua Tuan 華團, none by Ying Laizi, the rest by concubines. In outline, the ones mentioned in Part Two, with their spouses, are:

- A. Xu Mai ♂ + Sun 孫 ♀
- B. Xu Mi ♂ + Tao Kedou ♀
- C. Xu Ehuang ♀ + Huang Yan ♂
- D. Xu Que ♂ (by concubine) + Ji 紀 ♀

As for Xu Mi's children, excluding a daughter who does not figure in Part Two:

- A. Xu Quan ♂ (by concubine) + Liu 劉 ♀
- B. Xu Lian ♂ + Hua Zirong ♀
 - 1. Xu Ziqi ♀
 - 2. Xu Chisun ♂
- C. Xu Hui ♂ + Huang Jingyi 黃敬儀 ♀ (daughter of C. above)
 - 1. Xu Huangmin 許黃民 (361-429) ♂

At one point, the Xus are dealing with as many as five sepulchral plaints at the same time, from deceased persons related and unrelated, from ancestors distant and recent. Xu Mi, Xu Que, Xu Lian, Hua Zirong, Xu Chisun, and others are all fighting one or another ailment as a result. Since we can follow this narrative only through the highly allusive language of the Perfected ones' statements and the occasional response from Xu Mi or Xu Hui, it is extremely hard to follow, but the material collected by Tao Hongjing does proceed chronologically here. Thankfully a number of scholars have already explored

these passages for what they show about early medieval Chinese religious and medical beliefs, particularly Michel Strickmann (1981), Peter Nickerson (1996), and Stephen Bokenkamp (2007). I was greatly aided by working with their findings, plus the complete Japanese translation of ZG (SK); see also the “Past Translations Consulted” at the end of this volume. Even so, I think that in several places they overlooked certain things about the Xu family dynamic.

For example, while most of the Xus are preoccupied with the sepulchral complaints, we hear little about Xu Hui or his son, Xu Huangmin, presumably because Xu Hui’s religious self-discipline has given them powerful spiritual protection. Recall from Part One that one of the main requirements that the Perfected lay on their followers is to avoid sex. Although they recognize the necessity of their followers to produce male heirs to preserve their families, they also want their followers to be single, widowed, or divorced. Thus after Xu Mi’s wife dies, the Perfected repeatedly tell him not to remarry. In Xu Hui’s case, he is so virtuous that he sent his wife, Huang Jingyi, a first cousin, back to her family after she bore a son who could continue the family line; this way, he could focus on his relationship with his spiritual partner. However, this divorce was actually a highly disruptive event in the Xu family history, and its many repercussions help to explain much of what happens in these sections.⁶ When Huang Yan and Xu Ehuang posthumously launch their suit, they do not direct it at Xu Hui, who is strongly protected, nor do they direct it at Xu Huangmin, who is, after all, their own grandson—instead, they direct it at the likely heirs of the Xu estate, Xu Lian and Xu Chisun. What better way to punish Xu Mi and Xu Hui?

Likewise, when the matter of the sepulchral complaints reaches an impasse, with Hua Zirong and Xu Lian not cooperating with the Perfected persons’ demands even to save their own son, Xu Hui suddenly presents a letter to the Perfected, offering to take his father and brother’s place. Why? It is not only to show his special virtue, but also to admit his responsibility for causing one of the main sepulchral complaints against the family. As we shall see, the divorce also helps to explain Xu Lian and Hua Zirong’s noncooperation, as well as certain things that Tao Kedou says from beyond the grave. In any case, the letter apparently has its intended effect, since the various sepulchral complaints in the end do not result in any serious illness or death. Indeed, only a few months after the complaints die down, one of Mao Zhong’s underlings, Watch Officer Xun 荀中候, blandly comments, in a master-stroke of understatement, “This year, the Xu family has had a small increase of demonic infusions, but even so, none were unbearable” (ZG 7.16b2-3). The details of how Yang Xi and the Xus square off against the complaints, however, fascinate not only for what they reveal about early

⁶ Bokenkamp (2007, 148-149) writes about the cousin marriage but does not offer a reason for the divorce, nor does he consider the special problems that would follow such a divorce; he attributes Hua Zirong and Xu Lian’s recalcitrance, meanwhile, to their seeing a different spirit-medium—but I do not see any sign of that happening.

medieval Chinese religion and medical beliefs, but also for what they reveal about family tensions and anxieties. Therefore, in my comments to the translation in these sections, although I provide explanations of the Xus' religious beliefs and practices, I try above all to focus on the family dynamics, because I think this aspect of ZG has not yet been given its proper emphasis. As an account of persons responsible for the founding of a new religious movement, the ZG is remarkable in that it is not conventionally hagiographic—sometimes it treats us to a “warts-and-all” account.

Xu Mi's Network and the Early Higher Clarity Movement

The latter part of Fascicle Eight, which focuses on the various figures who consult with Xu Mi and Yang Xi, is vitally important for understanding the formation of Higher Clarity Daoism in its early days. However, this section is not arranged in any chronological order, and its ramifications are not apparent without a detailed knowledge of who Xu Mi's friends are, the history of the Eastern Jin dynasty, and so on. I have already published an article (Smith 2017) based on the “Comments” and footnotes of the present translation, so most of my remarks below are excerpted from the first part of that article.

One of the most common approaches for introducing the Higher Clarity movement has been to start with a discussion of the social and political background of the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420). The loss of the old capital Luoyang in 311 had forced the ruling Sima 司馬 house and the northern aristocracy to flee south and establish a new capital at Jiankang (Nanjing). For many decades afterward, the tense relations between the old southern aristocracy and the displaced northern aristocracy often led to conflict and rebellion. The differences extended into the religious sphere as well. Generally, the northerners followed the Celestial Master tradition in Daoism, while the southerners followed their own lines of belief, with the writings of Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343) often taken as representative. The Higher Clarity movement, then, has often been seen as a kind of fusion and transformation of these northern and southern traditions.

There is nothing wrong with this view—it provides a useful macro-perspective on the emergence of this new form of Daoism, and as an added advantage it is fairly easy to grasp, even for those who know little of the history of this period. However, getting beyond that is a real challenge.

Some aspects of Higher Clarity's early formation have been thoroughly studied. First, many scholars, such as Chen Guofu (1963) and Strickmann (1977), have turned to Tao Hongjing's essay in Fascicles 19 and 20 of ZG in order to trace the transmission of the Higher Clarity scriptures *after* they left the hands of Yang Xi, Xu Mi, and Xu Hui. A second group of scholars have tried to trace the *earlier* days of the movement by examining who received which scriptures from whom, i.e., through master-disciple relationships, or by glean-

ing clues from the sequence of esoteric biographies (*neizhuan* 內傳) of earlier figures like Wei Huacun (251-334) and Wang Bao (b. 36 BCE). Some good examples of this approach are Xiao Dengfu (2005, 1-50) and Zhang Chaoran (2008). However, a topic which I believe has not been adequately investigated is Xu Mi's political and social connections.⁷ This would shed light on what was happening *during* the revelations.

When analyzing the beginnings of Higher Clarity, Kamitsuka Yoshiko (1999, 27-28) argues that although the young, otherworldly Xu Hui was probably the intended leader of the nascent movement, it would not have taken root if not for his worldlier father Xu Mi: a hut in the mountains does not make a religious movement. She thus examines Xu Mi's connections: first his older brother Xu Mai 許邁 (301-363), and then his visitors, described in ZG 8. Yoshihara Tadao (1998, 3-22) provides a helpful overview of the life of Xu Mai and examines all the people with whom he came into contact. These studies, taken together, go a long way toward delineating the Xu family's connections. Missing, however, is a broader narrative—we need to connect more dots.

The last two-thirds of ZG 8 (Part III in the outline above) relate how an entire series of officials, including a prince, had sought help from Xu Mi and Yang Xi for spiritual and medical problems during the 360s. Most were southerners, but a significant number had northern origins, specifically, Yu He (c. 329-366), Chi Yin, and Sima Yu (the prince), so clearly the old northerner-southerner division seemed not to be affecting Xu Mi's connections very much. Southerners still dominate the list, but that is to be expected—Xu lived in the south, and even several of the “northerners” by this time had been born and raised there. They all had varying levels of interest in Daoism, and many practiced the art of pure conversation (*qingtan* 清談) besides. Despite their dissimilar family backgrounds, they were beginning to overcome the old northerner-southerner tensions forty to fifty years after the fall of Luoyang. Xu Mi had managed to be on good terms with a number of high officials despite all the political tensions of his time, which indicates that he was not only socially adept but also reasonably capable as an official. In modern parlance, Xu Mi knew how to network. He may have hoped that his broad contacts in the official world would help to spread the Higher Clarity teachings and elevate their status as well. But how did a relatively minor official like Xu Mi manage to build such an impressive network? How could he attract so many visits, or at least inquiries, from important people?

In a way, Xu Mi benefited by being born at the right time. Most Jin officials came from a relatively small group of elite families to begin with: their members knew one another, married one another, and used many different

⁷ Before my 2017 article, Zhong Laiyin (1992, 47-66) had done the most to explore this area, focusing properly on Xu Mi's support for the Jin ruling house, but he tends to skirt difficult issues in dating the ZG's undated passages, which leads to a few errors. For example, Zhong dates Yang Xi's predictions on the future of the ruling house as occurring in 372; I believe it should date to late 369. This greatly affects how one interprets the prediction.

means to retain their status from one generation to the next. In fact, class division and the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a tiny percentage of the population were perhaps more severe during this period of Chinese history than in any other (Yu Rusong 2009, 3-4). Thus, even though Xu Mi's own position was relatively minor, his *family* would have been well-known to those in power. They would still view him as "one of us," as opposed to the vast multitude of ordinary folk. The "Comments" that I write to the relevant sections in the translation will thus seek to illustrate how closely all of these officials' families were linked.

Xu Mai's Role

To explore the Xu family network, a convenient place to begin is by looking into the life of Xu Mi's older brother Xu Mai, because there is so much biographical information about him.⁸ If we examine the biographical materials that have been preserved about him in *Jin shu* 晉書 (History of the Jin Dynasty; hereinafter abbreviated JS), ZG, and elsewhere, it soon becomes apparent that they were based on the unofficial biography or *biezhuan* 別傳 that his close friend, the "sage of calligraphy" Wang Xizhi, had written about him.⁹ Only fragments of the *biezhuan* remain. However, its material also formed the basis of much of Tao Hongjing's capsule biography of Xu Mai (ZG 20.7b8-8a7), as well as the biography of Xu Mai preserved now only in fragments in *Daoxue zhuan* 道學傳 (Biographies of Students of the Dao; Bumbacher 2000, 130-43).

In later ages, the episode of Xu Mai's trial before spiritual authorities from ZG 4.9a8-12b7 (DP1:275-86) was readapted and combined with the *biezhuan*-based material, as evident from the Xu Mai biographies found in YJQQ 106.25b10-30a7 and *Xuanpin lu* 玄品錄 (A Record of the Mysterious Ranks; DZ 781) 3.3b-6a3. However, the *biezhuan*-based JS biography and the ZG 4 account differ sharply on Xu Mai's ultimate outcome: the *biezhuan* implies that he "transformed into a feathered being" (*yuhua* 羽化), while the ZG describes him as achieving an inferior type of immortality by means of a simulated corpse. The preserved fragments are also sometimes at odds with one another on the location of certain events. Even so, if we assemble the bits and pieces of information in JS, the *biezhuan*, and the ZG, we can develop a better grasp of his life, as well as his social circle. For our purposes, I will focus on the events in Xu Mai's life that are most relevant to the ZG.

Xu Mai felt called to a religious life from a young age, but he delayed going into full retreat and studying the Way for as long as his father was alive. He

⁸ Yoshikawa Tadao (1998, 3-22) makes this abundantly clear.

⁹ The penultimate sentence of Xu Mai's JS biography (80.2107) obliquely indicates that it is in fact an abbreviated version of Wang Xizhi's work: "Xizhi wrote his biography, which narrates a great many miraculous and strange deeds that cannot be recorded in detail [here]." 義之自為之傳，述靈異之跡甚多，不可詳記。

married, and probably had at least one concubine as well. His wife was the daughter of one Sun Hong 孫宏, whom the *Daoxue zhuàn* identifies as a Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary in Wu.¹⁰ Sun Hong was a descendant—probably a grandson—of Sun Xiu 孫秀 (before 234-301/302), a member of the imperial family of the Three Kingdoms state of Wu and one of Wu's top generals. In 270, when Sun Xiu thought that the last Wu emperor, Sun Hao 孫皓 (242-284; r. 264-280), no longer trusted him and was preparing to have him removed, he fled to the rival state of Jin with his family and close associates; a few months later, five thousand of his men also switched their allegiance to the Jin under Emperor Wu 武帝, i.e., Sima Yan 司馬炎 (236-290; r. 265-290).¹¹ Wu never fully recovered after this, and it was destroyed ten years later. The Simas thus treated Sun Xiu well, though other officials tended to avoid him (JS 66.1768). Returning to Xu Mai, then, his marriage with a daughter of the Suns, whom the royal family favored, would have boosted his social standing.

One of the *Daoxue zhuàn* fragments also records that while Xu Mai was still young, he formed a close friendship with Xu Xun 許詢 (fl. 347-373), a noted poet and practitioner of pure conversation who was also closely associated with Sima Yu (Bumbacher 2000, 137n99). The same passage describes Xu Mai as a man of extensive learning and a skilled writer.¹² Thus another indirect connection between Xu Mai and the Simas would have come through his youthful friendship with Xu Xun.

Despite having this good family background, a wife from a prominent family, abundant talent, and connections, he turned his back on all of these things in his quest for immortality. He built a meditation hut at Mount Xuanliu 懸壺 in Yuhang 餘杭 District (present-day Hangzhou), from which he traveled back and forth to the cave-chamber in Maoshan. He put aside worldly affairs. The site was also convenient because he could still visit his parents—but he limited his visits to the first and fifteenth day of each month.¹³ During this time, the *biezhuàn* reports, he sent his concubine(s) back to their home(s).¹⁴

¹⁰ Cited in Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) et al., ed., *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Imperial Readings from the Era of Grand Tranquility; rpt. Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1992), 666.6a6-11; trl. Bumbacher 2000, 142. Sun Hong's name but not his title is given in ZG 20.8a5.

¹¹ Chen Shou 陳壽 (233-297), *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Record of the Three Kingdoms; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuhu, 1960), 48.1168 and 51.1213.

¹² Preserved in Li Shan, ed., *Taiping yulan*, 409.2b12-13; trl. Bumbacher 2000, 136-37.

¹³ Concerning his parents, his father Xu Fu had outlived his mother Hua Zhuan 華轉 (from the Jinling Hua family—the same that produced Xu Mi's earlier spirit-medium Hua Qiao and his daughter-in-law Hua Zirong) and remarried Ying Laizi, who died around 365-366 (ZG 6.14b4-6.15a10; 20.6b1-2), well after Xu Mai's ultimate disappearance. Thus Xu Mai stayed only as long as his father was still alive—he did not wait for his stepmother to pass away.

¹⁴ Cited in Li Fang et al., ed., *Taiping yulan*, 489.4b3-4 and Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641) ed., *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1985), 29.512.

