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PART ONE

EARLY COMMUNITIES

THE CELESTIAL MASTERS

1. Precepts of the *Xianger* Commentary to the *Laozi*

Laozi xianger zhu, contained in *Laojun jinglü* (Scriptural Precepts of Lord Lao, DZ 786, fasc. 562), 1a-2a; and in *Taishang jingjie* (Highest Scriptural Precepts, DZ 787, fasc. 562), 17b-19a. The text picks up *Daode jing* concepts and creates rather abstract guidelines for behavior and community attitudes. An earlier translation of the precepts is found in Bokenkamp 1989. A complete translation and analysis appears in Bokenkamp 1997. For more on the text, see also Boltz 1982; Mugitani 1985; Bokenkamp 1993; Ôfuchi 1991, 251-57; Kleeman 1991, 188. A modern adaptation of the precepts is found in O.D.A. 1998, Parts 1-2.

[1a] Practice nonaction [O.D.A.: honesty]; practice being soft and weak [O.D.A.: weakness]; practice guarding the female and never moving first [O.D.A.: modesty]. These are the highest three practices.

Practice being nameless [O.D.A.: humility]; practice being pure and tranquil [O.D.A.: serenity]; practice doing only good [O.D.A.: kindness]. These are the medium three practices.

Practice having no desires [O.D.A.: desirelessness]; practice knowing when to stop [O.D.A.: restraint]; practice yielding and withdrawing [O.D.A.: nonaggression]. These are the lowest three practices.

These nine practices are contained in the eighty-one stanzas of the two sections of the scripture. Taken all together, they contain the entire Dao, high and low joined together equally.

[1b] Those who follow them all, including the highest three, will become spirit immortals. Those who follow the lower six will double their lifespan. Those who follow the lowest three will extend their years and never meet with adversities.

Precepts of the Scripture of Dao and Virtue

Not to delight in excess, since joy is as harmful as anger.

Not to waste essence or *qi*.

Not to harm the dominant *qi*.

Not to eat beings that contain blood to delight in their fancy taste.

Not to hanker after merit and fame.

Not to explain the teaching or describe Dao to outsiders.

Not to forget the divine law of Dao.

Not to try to set things in motion.

Not to kill or speak about killing.

These are the highest nine precepts.

Not to study false texts.

Not to covet high glory or vigorously strive for it.

Not to pursue fame and praise.

Not to do things pleasurable to ears, eyes, or mouth.

Always remain modest and humble.

Not to engage in frivolous undertakings.

Always be devout in religious services, of respectful mind, and without confusion. [2a] Not to indulge in fancy garb or tasty food.

Not to overextend oneself.

These are the medium nine precepts.

Not to strongly pursue riches and honor if poor and humble.

Not to do evil.

Not to set many taboos and avoidances.

Not to pray or sacrifice to demons or spirits of the dead.

Not to strongly oppose anyone.

Not to consider oneself always right.

Not to quarrel with others over what is right and wrong. If in a debate, concede first.

Not to praise oneself as a sage of great fame.

Not to take delight in soldiering.

These are the lowest nine precepts.

These twenty-seven precepts altogether make up the foundation of Dao, joining high and low together equally. Those who follow them all, including the highest nine, will become spirit immortals. Those who follow the lower eighteen will double their life expectancy. Those who follow the lowest nine will extend their years and never meet with adversities.

27 Precepts of Orthodox Daoism of America

(O.D.A. 1998, Part 2)

1. Delight in observance and cultivation. Do not find pleasure in deviance.
2. Conserve your *jing* and *qi*.
3. Guard your original *qi*.
4. Eat only what you need. Do not relish sacrificial meat.
5. Do not be attached to 'worldly measure.' Do not envy the achievement and fame of others.
6. Practice *Zhengyi dao*. Do not practice false Methods. Do not take Dao lightly.
7. Diligently study and practice the View and Method of *Zhengyi dao*. Do not neglect or ignore the *Zhengyi dao*.
8. Be cautious and careful. Do not act recklessly.
9. Be sensitive to your actions and speech. Do not kill or speak of killing.
10. Stay focused in your studies. Avoid erroneous texts (non-orthodox).
11. Be a(anti)-social. Avoid coveting or seeking glory.
12. Disregard name. Do not seek fame.

13. Take refuge within. Do not be deceived by your ears, eyes, or mouth.
14. Practice humility. Place yourself below others.
15. Embrace the real. Avoid the drama of anger.
16. Be cautious/considerate in all undertakings to avoid Conflicting Emotions.
17. Demonstrate simplicity. Avoid trendy, fancy clothes and delectable foods.
18. Be calm. Avoid emotionality (*qi* overflow).
19. Be unattached. Avoid the strain of both poverty and wealth.
20. Be law-abiding. Do not commit wrongful acts.
21. Be realistic about commitment. Avoid being too 'straight-laced' in observances.
22. Trust in Dao. Do not petition or worship gods, spirits, and ghosts.
23. Be open. Avoid being obstinate.
24. Practice selflessness. Avoid egoism and harsh certainty.
25. Practice impartiality. Avoid contention (arguing right and wrong).
26. Be honest. Make no false claims (spiritual). Do not contribute to the fame of the powerful.
27. Practice peacefulness. Do not delight in arms (or armed conflict).

