



Envisioning the Daoist Body in the Economy of Cosmic Power

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Source: *Daedalus*, Vol. 130, No. 4, Religion and Ecology: Can the Climate Change? (Fall, 2001), pp. 265-282

Published by: [The MIT Press](#) on behalf of [American Academy of Arts & Sciences](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027727>

Accessed: 19/05/2011 15:13

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INTRODUCTION

AS MARY EVELYN TUCKER AND JOHN GRIM have shown in their pioneering work on religions and ecology, the crux of the debate lies in the question of worldviews. From a sociological perspective, religious traditions represent and construct the collective values and systems of meaning of human societies. As such, religious traditions influence the way their adherents interpret their experience of the world and, consequently, influence their actions upon it. Religious ideologies, however, are themselves always *in medias res*. Even though their adherents may uphold an eternal vision of archaic principles handed down from the gods, in actuality this vision is continuously renegotiated and reconstructed in conversation with the changing demands of historical and cultural context.

Today we are faced with an extraordinary, and potentially far-reaching, transformation in our natural environment as a result of global climate change. The task facing all the religious traditions of the world is how to make sense of this change in a religiously meaningful way, a change that is unprecedented in the history of the world's religions. For Daoism, however, this is not just a question of worldview, in terms of human experience and human consciousness. Daoism takes to its heart the notion that we human beings are inextricably woven into the fabric of our natural environment or, as I have termed it elsewhere, an economy of cosmic power.¹ When our climate changes it is inevitable that so must we. Although Daoists have never

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experienced anything on the scale of present-day global warming, it is clear that Daoist traditions have always paid particular attention to the circumstances of their physical environment. A recent declaration of the Chinese Daoist Association on Global Ecology states:

Daoists in China have diligently worked toward disseminating Daoist teachings and in maintaining the famous Daoist mountains and hermitages, planting trees and cultivating forests, and protecting the natural environment. We believe that as the Chinese state and society today are paying greater attention to ecological problems, educational programs concerning public health issues will be further fostered and developed. We pray that tomorrow's world will be better than today's, and that, by following the principle of mutuality among all things in nature, a new harmonious world will emerge.²

Now, as Daoism spreads across the world it is increasingly incumbent upon Daoists to pay attention to their environment in a global sense. There is an intellectual danger, however, when we move from considering things in the particular to the universal, from the small-scale to the global. Scholars of religions have rightly been wary of the problems of reification or essentialism, in which a living complex of historical phenomena is abstracted into a doctrinaire set of principles that may conveniently be applied to a set of facts or an ethical problem. Of course, some religious bureaucracies, such as the Vatican, purport to speak for the diversity of religious cultures of which they are the institutional representation, but this can only take place through the widespread acceptance among Catholics of the doctrine of papal infallibility.

Moreover, the trenchant orientalist critique of the Western study of "Eastern religions" has demonstrated the ways in which the religious studies academy, being genealogically rooted in Western colonial and missionary interests, has been complicit in imposing a central ideology and even an institutional apparatus upon Eastern religious cultures. As Richard King has demonstrated, the modern construction of "Hinduism" has been profoundly influenced by Western attempts to locate its essential doctrines in a narrow body of Sanskrit texts.³

In China, the bureaucratic interests of the Chinese Communist Party have also served to authorize, and thereby control, Daoism as a social, doctrinal, and institutional entity. Two branches of Daoism are recognized—Quanzhen (Complete Perfection) and Zhengyi (Orthodox Unity)—and both fall under the auspices of the Chinese Daoist Association, a unit of the government's Religious Affairs Bureau. Daoist temples are recognized as valuable tourist attractions, and thus the functioning of Daoism is now authorized so long as it falls within the bounds of the economic goals of the state authorities.⁴

The problem of relating "Daoism" with a global phenomenon such as climate change is that it runs the risk of falling into this same paradigm of appropriation and control. The historic affinity of environmentalists for Daoist "mystical philosophy" has all too frequently been predicated upon a version of Daoist philosophy that construes the existence of a benign natural force, "the Dao," that serves to harmonize and regulate the ecological order of things. The environmentalist Edward Goldsmith has attempted to discover this "Way" throughout pre-Enlightenment "vernacular" societies, seeing it in the Chinese concept of *Dao*, the Egyptian *Maat*, the Indian *R'ta*, and the Greek *Nomos* or *Dike*.⁵ This ancient "Way" is presented as a holistic alternative to the reductionistic scientism of the Enlightenment mentality. In this surprisingly brutal act of cultural strip-mining, Goldsmith commits the same sort of reductionism that he condemns in scientism. The problem is that either our worldview is local, and therefore parochial, narrow-minded, and divisive, or it is global, and therefore imperial and totalitarian. For this reason, countries that have experienced Western colonialism are rightly suspicious of being subjected to a new form of Western hegemony in the form of global environmentalism. The great danger for global problems such as climate change is that the desire for the harmonious reintegration of human beings into the fabric of nature will lead to a reductive, even destructive, cultural colonialism. An example of this has been documented in Liu Xiaogan's analysis of the unintended, but no less real, cultural consequences of the European Union's decision to ban baby seal pelts:

In 1983, following seven years of pressure from Greenpeace, the new European Parliament outlawed baby seal pelts in Europe. This miserably affected the life of the 100,000 Inuit living in the Canadian Arctic. The seal furnished most of the Inuit diet and nearly all essentials of life, like the buffalo of North American Plains Indians. In the years following the seal-pelt ban, an economic winter swept across the Canadian Arctic and welfare soared. In Canada's tiny Clyde River, nearly half of the population was soon collecting unemployment checks. As their lives soured, their social problems escalated. Many Inuit turned to alcohol and drugs. Crime and family violence doubled. The despair led to an epidemic of suicides, mostly that of young men. There were 47 suicides among Canadian Inuit in the eleven years before the ban but 152 in the same period after it.⁶

Liu goes on to note that this problem was brought about chiefly by the media-savvy politics of confrontation employed by Greenpeace:

Simplified and intensified movements may create a furor and cause a sensation, but they often mislead people, even bring disasters as the Inuit have suffered. Environmental preservation involves serious and complicated issues affecting various groups of people, different nations and regions; thus it demands a patient, gradual and enduring working attitude that is in line with the Daoist wisdom of *wuwei* [nonassertive action].⁷

The historic Daoist emphasis on the local and the particular suggests that it may make a valuable contribution to global questions by always insisting on focusing on the small-scale effects of global activity. This cautionary tale suggests to me that the chief question at stake is whether or not it is possible to have an environmental ethic on global climate change that respects the diversity of human cultures as well as it respects the unity of the earth that sustains them. In this essay I would like to make two Daoist-inspired arguments that address this unity-in-diversity question. The first is that there can be no single principle or value that will lead to a correct solution to such a culturally complex problem. The second is that the best way of optimizing the situation in order to maximize the positive outcomes for all concerned is to adopt the metaphor of the

human body as the preeminent hermeneutical tool or *theoria* for considering such problems and as the preeminent value to be adopted in environmental practice.

A VISION OF ORGANIC UNITY

One of Confucius's chief concerns, as recorded in the *Analects* (*Lunyu*), is how to retrieve and reauthenticate the ancient ritual codes (*li*) as a practical means of restoring the unity of the fractured Chinese empire. Conversation, or shared discourse, was the primary means to achieve this. Confucius said of his student Zi Gong that they could discuss the Odes because Confucius only needed to begin a phrase and Zi Gong would know its proper sequence.⁸ Familiarity with the classics, therefore, was the prerequisite for any meaningful conversation, just as familiarity with cultural codes (*li*) was the prerequisite for successful social interaction and the rectification of names (*zheng ming*) was the prerequisite for good government. From the Confucian perspective, the unity of humankind within the cosmos may only be envisioned and authentically lived out from within some established social, semiotic, and political system: it may not be imposed from without, which was the position of the Legalist school (*fajia*). In fact, from the Confucian perspective, the particularity of language and culture, far from constituting a sort of permanent hermeneutical alienation from what is real, genuine, and authentic, is to be celebrated as our only means of intercourse with it. Human beings are always and irrevocably instituted. Being true, correct, appropriate, or optimal is likewise an institutional process. This Confucian model of discourse is the one, broadly speaking, that is adopted by international congresses such as Kyoto and Rio that seek to institute a shared discourse (*lunyu*) as the path (*dao*) toward developing optimal codes of behavior (*li*).

The Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi argued on the other hand that optimal patterns of behavior are developed through skillful practice and cannot be communicated adequately by verbal teaching or erudite discourse. He illustrates this with the story of the wheelwright Bian.

Duke Huan was reading a book at the top of the hall, wheelwright [Bian] was chipping a wheel at the bottom of the hall. He put aside his mallet and chisel and went up to ask Duke Huan

“May I ask what words my lord is reading?”

“The words of a sage.”

“Is the sage alive?”

“He is dead.”

“In that case what my lord is reading is the dregs of the men of old, isn’t it?”

“What business is it of a wheelwright to criticize what I read? If you can explain yourself, well and good; if not, you die.”

“Speaking for myself, I see it in terms of my own work. If I chip at a wheel too slowly, the chisel slides and does not grip; if too fast, it jams and catches in the wood. Not too slow, not too fast; I feel it in the hand and respond from the heart, the mouth cannot put it into words, there is a knack in it somewhere which I cannot convey to my son and which my son cannot learn from me. This is how through my seventy years I have grown old chipping at wheels. The men of old and their untransmittable message are dead. Then what my lord is reading is the dregs of men of old, isn’t it?”⁹

Zhuangzi’s mystical philosophy puts the highest value on an intuitive, holistic grasp of the unity of subject and object, wheelwright and wheel. The nature of this intuition is such that it cannot be translated into cultural codes and transmitted through the ages in a body of cultural discourse. The experience of the supremely skilled person suggests the possibility of a noncategorizable field of experience that is somehow logically prior to the culturally mediated or culturally constructed experience. Zhuangzi offers this suggestion in order to counter those who offer principles or “formulae” as fragmented solutions to organic problems. Formulae are fractured, elemental structures that cannot hope to correspond to the organic unity-in-diversity of the spontaneous transformation of things in the natural environment:¹⁰

Down below in the empire, there are many who cultivate the tradition of some formula, and all of them suppose that there is nothing to add to what they have. In which of them is it finally to be found, that which of old was called the tradition of the Way? I say it is to be found in them all. I say:

From where does the daemonic [*shen*] descend?
From where does illumination [*ming*] come forth?
Sagehood is born from something,
Kingship forms out of something;
All have their source in the One. . . .

There is an analogy in the ears, eyes, nose and mouth; all have something they illuminate but they cannot exchange their functions, just as the various specialties of the Hundred Schools all have their strong points and at times turn out useful. However, they are not inclusive, not comprehensive; these are men each of whom has his own little corner. They split the glory of heaven and earth down the middle, chop up the patterns of the myriad things, and scrutinize some point in what for the ancients was a whole. There are few who are able to have the whole glory of heaven and earth at their disposal, and speak of the full scope of the daemonic-and-illuminated [*shenming*].¹¹

In one sense, therefore, the mystical aspect of the Daoist religion may be considered as comprising ways to realize “the whole glory” of the unity of humans, heaven, and earth. The organic metaphors employed in Daoist writing suggest that this unity is to be conceived as an ontogenetic unity, that is, a root from which the diversity of things flowers. The genetic metaphor of root and branch (*ben-mo*) is a powerful way of conceiving our relation to the primordial source (*yuandao*) from which all life flows. Human beings experience a unity with this transformative, multifarious vitality within their bodies. For the Daoist, then, it is the body, not just the heart-mind (*xin*), that must be cultivated and imaged in order to realize the unity of humans and the cosmos. It is this point that most clearly distinguishes Daoist cultivation practices from Confucian intellectual discourse. This does not mean that Daoism and Confucianism are in any sense opposed to each other intellectually or practically. Rather, they operate on different terrains. Confucians seek primarily the transformation of the self through the cultivation of the heart-mind by means of devoted attention to the classics. Daoists seek primarily to realize a sort of transparency or porosity between their bodily identity and the economy of cosmic power in which it is embedded. For this reason, Daoism has the potential to be an important conversation part-

ner in the question of religion and global climate change because of its natural concern for the impact of global climate change on the health of individual bodies.

In the practice of Daoist cultivation, then, the human body forms the preeminent landscape or terrain for the Daoist imagination. To use an analogy from the Chinese, the character *xing* means “form” primarily in the concrete sense of the bodily form and secondarily in the abstract sense of the form of things. The body, in Daoist thought, informs—is the preeminent form of—human understanding and may serve as a vital metaphor for understanding our relationship with the world and for managing the practical complexities of social organization.

The Daoist religious system known as Highest Clarity (*Shangqing*) employed this theory of microcosm/macrocosm correspondence in its practice of invoking the presence of celestial divinities in the energy systems of the body, naming them, and describing how they configure the energy in each physiological system of the body.¹² To get at the contribution of Daoism to understanding the human problem of global climate change it is necessary to understand in more detail how the correspondence between the body and its environment functions.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CORRELATIVE THINKING ABOUT THE BODY POLITIC¹³

A theory of “the body politic” had been developed as early as the third century B.C.E. in the *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lü* (*Lüshi Chunqiu*):

Human beings have 360 joints, nine bodily openings, and five yin and six yang systems of function. In the flesh tightness is desirable; in the blood vessels free flow is desirable; in the sinews and bones solidity is desirable; in the operations of the heart and mind harmony is desirable; in the essential *Qi* regular motion is desirable. When [these desiderata] are realized, illness has nowhere to abide, and there is nothing from which pathology can develop. When illness lasts and pathology develops, it is because the essential *Qi* has become static. . . .

States too have their stases. When the ruler's virtue does not flow freely [i.e., if he does not appoint good officials to keep him and his subjects in touch], and the wishes of his people do not reach him, a hundred pathologies arise in concert, and a myriad catastrophes swarm in. The cruelty of those above and those below toward each other arises from this. The reason that the sage kings valued heroic retainers and faithful ministers is that they dared to speak directly, breaking through such stases.¹⁴

In the above text, the free flow of virtue (*de*) is not to be understood in terms of moral philosophy but by analogy with what is necessary to keep the body alive. Just as the circulation of bodily fluids is necessary for human survival, so also the free flow of "virtue" is necessary in the state. The concept of good that is the basis for making the connection between the natural world and the political world is basically medical rather than moral. Virtue seems to be understood here as a sort of moral energy that must flow freely like blood. This points toward an intriguing contribution that Daoism can make to the question of religion and global climate change: neither religion nor the problems of the environment are best understood in terms of morality. The problem of the human condition is what we do with our bodies and about how they are best harmonized with their environment. This is a psycho-physio-energetic problem, not a problem of ethics (affect) or doctrine (intellect). Our emotions, wills, and intellects are important, but they are systems of energy in the body and in the body-politic, and as such are no more or no less important than our gall bladders and our spleens.

In the foundational medical text *Huangdi neijing suwen* (Simple Questions on the Yellow Emperor's Internal Classic), however, we see the above analogy reversed. In this text the relative functions of the physiological systems are understood by analogy to the political hierarchy of the state:

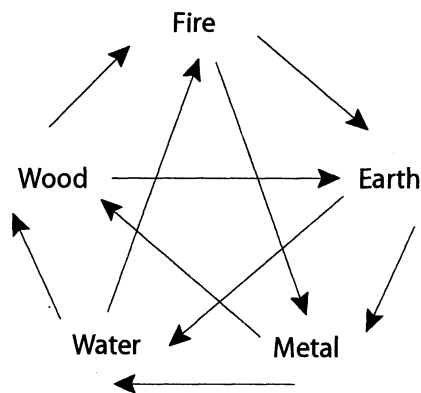
The cardiac system is the office of the monarch: consciousness issues from it. The pulmonary system is the office of the minister-mentors: oversight and supervision issue from it. The hepatic system is the office of the General: planning issues from it. The gall bladder system is the office of the rectifiers: decisions issue from

it . . . [and so on for the twelve systems of body functions associated with internal organs]. It will not do for these twelve offices to lose their co-ordination.¹⁵

Here we see how the physiology of the body was correlated with the hierarchical configuration of the state, in which the emperor, like the heart, remains supreme, but cannot function without proper communication with the other administrative departments. Traditional Chinese thought thus displays an organic, mutually reciprocal system of “correlative thinking” in which various dimensions of existence are understood by means of reciprocal correlation with other dimensions of existence.

This way of thinking was systematized in the well-known sequence of the five phases: earth, wood, fire, metal, and water. These phases represent moments in two cycles of transformation: a cycle of generation in which one phase leads into the subsequent phase; and a cycle of control in which one phase blocks or controls the preceding phase. Figure 1 shows the sequences of generation (*sheng*) and control (*zhu*): wood generates fire, which generates earth, which generates metal, which generates water, which generates wood; water controls fire, which controls metal, which controls wood, which controls earth, which controls water.

Figure 1. Cycles of Generation and Control



Notes: The sequence of generation is represented by the outer arrows and the sequence of control by the inner arrows.¹⁶

Within each sequence, the order is invariable, but any number of categories of things can be sequenced in this way. The addition of a new category of sequence is known as extension (*tui*) (see table 1). When an extension is made, and two different lists of items are brought into correlation, then it is possible to make an analysis or a diagnosis by following through the sequences of the two things that are now correlated. But it is important to remember that we are not comparing “things” or “items” in this way; rather, we are making comparisons between the dynamics within the phases of two different categories of transformation.

Table 1. Table of Correlations in Traditional Chinese Thought

Agent	Direction	Color	Season	Orb	Emotion	Sense	Flavors
Wood	East	Green	Spring	Liver	Anger	Eyes	Sour
Fire	South	Red	Summer	Heart	Joy	Tongue	Bitter
Earth	Center	Yellow	Late summer	Spleen	Worry	Lips	Sweet
Metal	West	White	Fall	Lungs	Sadness	Nose	Pungent
Water	North	Black	Winter	Kidneys	Fear	Ears	Salty

Correlation was chiefly employed as a heuristic tool, often for the diagnosis of diseases. The system of causative generation and control combined with synchronic correspondence makes it possible to understand events as particular configurations within the multiple life processes of an organism. If some excess has occurred, it is either because the preceding item in the generative sequence has proved too strong, or the preceding item in the destructive or controlling sequence has proved too weak. In either case the remedy to the situation is to be sought in treating not the symptoms but the deficient or excessive cause, thus restoring the system to its natural balance. Internally the system is one of cause and effect, but when one system is correlated to another system, the relationship between the two is that of mutual implication or synchronous resonance.

Thus a transformation in the seasons implies a corresponding transformation in the relative strengths of the various bodily functions, which requires a corresponding transformation in diet in order to maintain a homeostatic equilibrium. Or, as the

Most Elementary Aspects of the Yellow Emperor's Internal Classic (Huangdi neijing taisu) puts it:

The Yellow Emperor: I should now like to hear why it is that in certain years everyone is struck by a similar illness.

Shao Shi: This is the result of a manifestation [of the winds] of the eight seasonal turning points.¹⁷

Thus, according to the traditional Chinese worldview, the universe is not comprised of a number of discrete elements, but, in broad terms, of configurations (*xing*) of power or force that transform or “phase” (*xing*, lit. “walk”) (1) according to the diachronic sequence of the five phases within one category and (2) according to the synchronic correspondence between the same phase in different categories. The influence or inspiration that is the mechanism for these synchronic transformations is known as *Qi*, conventionally translated as vital energy.¹⁸

THE DYNAMIC OF *QI* IN THE ECONOMY OF COSMIC POWER

In traditional Chinese medicine, the human body is viewed first and foremost as a network of systems of energetic transpiration or *Qi*. Each system of transpiration is an “organ” of which there are two kinds: yin systems (*zang*) and yang systems (*fu*). According to the *Simple Questions*, the function of the *zang* systems is to store or collect (*zang*) the “essential energy” (*jingqi*). This is defined by Manfred Porkert as “structive [structuring] potential.”¹⁹ It is the function of the complementary *fu* systems to “transmit or transform things.”²⁰ Thus the body contains two basic physiological dynamics. The yin systems (*zang*) store the potential energy to maintain the dynamic homeostasis of the body, and the yang systems (*fu*) transmit this energy.

In the system of traditional Chinese medicine, therefore, the basic physiological principle is the continuous exchange of vital energy according to the pattern of yin and yang. Since the time of the Book of Changes (*Yijing*), this pattern of yin and yang has been regarded as the basic pattern of the cosmos. The treatise on yin and yang in the *Suwen* stresses the cosmic significance of these categories:

The Yellow Emperor spoke: [The two categories] yin and yang are the underlying principle of heaven and earth; they are the web that holds all ten thousand things secure; they are father and mother to all transformations and alterations; they are the source and beginning of all creating and killing; they are the palace of spirit brilliance.

In order to treat illnesses one must penetrate to their source.

Heaven arose out of the accumulation of yang [influences]; the earth arose out of the accumulation of yin [influences]. Yin is tranquility, yang is agitation; yang creates, yin stimulates development; yang kills, yin stores. Yang transforms influences, yin completes form.²¹

It is important to remember that yin and yang are not forces or substances but modes or aspects of the transpiration of vital energy. This energy is the stuff of the universe as well as the vitality of our bodies. The last sentence of the quotation is particularly instructive. The nature of yang-*Qi* (expiration) is to transform, whereas the nature of yin-*Qi* (inspiration) is to receive and store form. The transformation of things, that is, the process of life itself, takes place by means of the continuous dynamic of the projection (yang) and reception (yin) of energy. Moreover, this dynamic, at its root, informs the cosmic diversity of the “ten thousand things.” The binary dynamic that models the energetic transpiration of human physiological systems is the same dynamic that models the phases of the moon and the orbits of the stars. The basic binary character of the universe is a function of the dynamic nature of energy: *Qi* is never static; it is either expanding or contracting, activating or storing. There is no such thing as a steady state.

Within the bodily “ecosystem,” each physiological subsystem, then, is constructed for the purpose of the free circulation of vital energy and fluids throughout the body. In traditional Chinese medicine, the diagnosis of pathologies consists of analyzing the network of relations between energy systems in order to detect disturbances to the homeostasis. This means taking into account the causal relationships within the systems, and also the synchronic correlation between the bodily systems and the macrocosmic environment. It is this latter, synchronic correspondence that provides the means for understanding the

microcosm/macrocosm relationship between human bodies and global climate change.

All physiological systems are rooted in the cosmic dynamic of yin-yang transpiration. Moreover, the medical definition of good is the harmonious integration and optimization of all energy systems. This means that the well-being of the physiological systems can only be achieved by harmonizing with the broader macrocosmic dynamics in which they are located. In traditional Chinese medicine, the most important macrocosmic dynamics are the positions of the sun and moon, the planets, and the seasons. To the Daoist mind—and body—this synchronic, correlative thinking is just as necessary as diachronic cause and effect to understand the whole range of relationships that obtains within nature, understood as an evolving organic system of diverse processes. When a change takes place in the global environment, therefore, it is inevitable that this will produce a synchronous reaction on other processes. For this reason different forms of ritual “astro-geomantic” practice are prescribed by Daoist priests, in accordance with the rotations of the stars and the contours of the earth.

The Daoist tradition, then, points the way toward understanding how it is possible in the religious imagination to conceive of the relationship between the physiological systems of the body and more large-scale systems such as social structures and astronomic patterns. It is a simple matter to see how this process of analogy and resonance can be extended (*tui*) to include transformations within the global climate system. Until now, however, Daoists have not had to take account of the transformation of their environment in this global way, but the Daoist tradition does allow us to understand the implication of human bodies in global climate systems, and it does offer a theory of organic optimization as being the ideal toward which we should aspire. Organic optimization means that systems must be considered as dynamic and constantly interacting with each other. The optimal state of the organism is reached when all the energy systems permit the free flow of energy. In this way Daoism does not therefore propose a moral vision for environmental protection or action to prevent global climate

change, but a physiological model of the interrelationship between many different complex systems.

IMPLICATION

So far I have attempted to resist describing what the usefulness of “Daoism” might be for environmental protection. Instead, I have aimed to highlight Daoism as a way of thinking about and acting upon the mutual implication of human beings, their social systems, and their natural environment. This way of thinking is clearly anthropocentric, for it takes the human body as its starting point, but it is a vision of the body that is rooted in what I have termed an “economy of cosmic power.” This fully anthropocosmic vision has the practical—bodily—consequence of requiring us to take absolutely seriously the concept of our personal implication in the single fabric of the environment. The problem of global climate change is thus a problem for our bodies. It is not something that takes place in the abstract or on the horizons of our consciousness, but is a change that is occurring deep within us. As Kristofer Schipper explains:

The emphasis on the self, on the personal relationship to the Dao, implies, also with respect to the preservation of the natural environment, that each person is responsible for the Dao, each person embodies the Dao. The preservation of the natural order therefore depends absolutely on the preservation of this natural order and harmony within ourselves and not on some outside authority. The environment is within us.²²

The second practical ramification is the emphasis on gradual change and the refusal to employ persuasive power or violent rhetoric. Commenting upon the environmental precepts that governed one of the earlier Daoist communities, Schipper writes:

The *One Hundred and Eighty Precepts* never speak of protests to the higher authorities, of political actions, revindications, demands for justice and peace, but only of respiration exercises, of inner harmony and individual peace. This is the only way to save the environment. True perfect nature can only be found within oneself.

To regulate the world, we have to cultivate ourselves, to tend our inner landscape. Beyond, beneath, behind and inside the Precepts of the Daoist Libationer, we find a whole new world of spiritual ecology.²³

This slow and gradual approach coheres well with Liu Xiaogan's analysis of the nonassertive action advocated in the *Daode jing*.

Such disappointingly personal and physiological self-cultivation may well not be what environmentalists have had in mind when they have championed the usefulness of Daoism as a cultural resource in the battle against environmental degradation. But as Lisa Raphals notes, that "would be to ignore the porosity of notions of selfhood in a wide range of Chinese thought: the inseparability of 'inner' and 'outer,' the high cultural value of 'selflessness,' macrocosm-microcosm identifications, and constructions of individuality that differ from Western norms."²⁴

If, on the other hand, the purpose of investigating the cultural resources of the world's religious traditions is to locate alternative ways of envisioning ourselves in our environment, then the Daoist tradition of mapping the world in the body and the body in the world stands as a rich and enduring hermeneutical figure. It is the task of Daoists now to extend this hermeneutical figure to take into account the global changes in the economy of cosmic power that enfolds and nourishes us, just as in the past they have paid meticulous attention to the contours of the earth and the orbits of the stars.

ENDNOTES

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²Zhang Jiyu, "A Declaration of the Chinese Daoist Association on Global Ecology" in *Daoism and Ecology*, ed. N. J. Girardot, James Miller, and Liu Xiaogan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, 2001).

³Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and "The Mystic East"* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999). See also Rosalind O'Hanlon, "Cultures of Rule, Communities of Resistance: Gender, Discourse

and Tradition in Recent South Asian Historiographies,” *Social Analysis* 25 (1989): 94–114.

⁴Brock Silvers, “The Current State of Taoism in the People’s Republic of China,” a paper delivered at the conference on *Asian Human Rights: Critical Issues*, Center for Asian Studies, University of Colorado, Boulder, 7–8 April 2000.

⁵Edward Goldsmith, *The Way: An Ecological World-View*, rev. and enl. ed. (Totnes, England: Themis Books, 1996), 402–406.

⁶Liu Xiaogan, “Non-action (*Wuwei*) and the Environment Today: A Conceptual and Applied Study of Laozi’s Philosophy,” in Girardot, Miller, and Liu, eds., *Daoism and Ecology*.

⁷Ibid.

⁸*Analects* 1:15.

⁹Zhuangzi 13, trans. Angus C. Graham, *Chuang-tzu* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), 139–140; see also Lee Yearley, “Zhuangzi’s Understanding of Skillfulness, and the Ultimate Spiritual State,” in Paul Kjellberg and Philip J. Ivanhoe, eds., *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism and Ethics in the Zhuangzi* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996).

¹⁰It is fairly certain that the following chapter of the Zhuangzi was not written by Zhuangzi himself. Graham refers to this as one of the later “syncretist writings.” Graham, *Chuang-tzu*, 256.

¹¹Zhuangzi 33, trans. Graham, *Chuang-tzu*, 275–276.

¹²See James Miller, “Respecting the Environment: Visualizing Highest Clarity,” in Girardot, Miller, and Liu, eds., *Daoism and Ecology*.

¹³Much of what follows is based on chap. 2 of my dissertation, “The Economy of Cosmic Power: A Theory of Religious Transaction and a Comparative Study of Shangqing Daoism and the Christian Religion of Augustine of Hippo.”

¹⁴*Lüshi chunqiu* 20, trans. Nathan Sivin, *Medicine, Philosophy and Religion in Ancient China* (Aldershot, England: Variorum, 1995), 6.

¹⁵*Huangdi neijing suwen* 8.1, trans. Sivin, *Medicine, Philosophy and Religion in Ancient China*, 7.

¹⁶This way of representing the five phases is taken from Shen Ziyin and Chen Zelin, *The Basis of Traditional Chinese Medicine* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1996), 17.

¹⁷*Huangdi neijing taisu* 1.1, trans. Paul U. Unschuld, *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 243.

¹⁸The interpretation argued here is based on Unschuld’s discussion of translating *Qi* as “influence” (Unschuld, *Medicine in China*, 67–73). From the perspective of the thing influencing, it is yang-*Qi* (expiration); from the perspective of the thing influenced, it is yin-*Qi* (inspiration); and from the perspective of the whole transaction, it is simply *Qi* (transpiration).

¹⁹Manfred Porkert, *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1974), 179–180.

²⁰*Suwen* 2.4, trans. Unschuld, *Medicine in China*, 286.

²¹*Ibid.*, 283.

²²Kristofer Schipper, "Daoist Ecology: The Inner Transformation: A Study of the Precepts of the Early Daoist Ecclesia," in Girardot, Miller, and Liu, eds., *Daoism and Ecology*.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴Lisa Raphals, "Metic Intelligence or Responsible Non-Action? Further Reflections on the *Zhuangzi*, *Daode jing* and *Nei ye*," in *ibid.*