

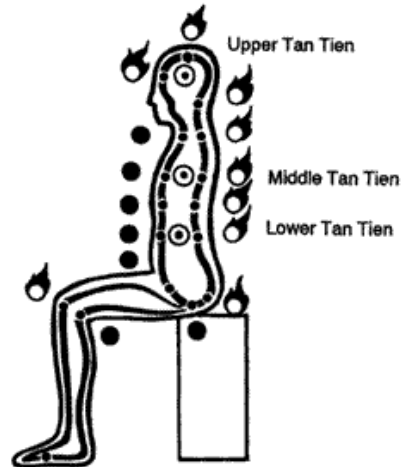
SEVEN TAOIST MASTERS IN CONTEXT

A “folk novel”

- Describes “Seven Perfecteds of the North” (*Beiqizhen* 北七真) of Song 宋 dynasty (960-1279 CE)
- Compiled by unknown author from oral sources during Ming 明 (1368-1644) or early Qing 清(1644-1911) dynasties
- Sectarian evangelism tool and practitioner’s manual

Quanzhen 全真 (“Complete Perfection”) Taoism

- After loss of north China to Jin 金 “barbarians” (1126), Taoism diverges by region:
 1. In south, *Tianshi* 天師 (“Celestial Masters”) sect (established in late Han 漢 era by Zhang Daoling 张道陵) becomes dominant
 2. In north, “Taoist Renaissance” develops and new sects emerge
- Just as Tang 唐 represents rise and fall of Chinese Buddhism, Song witnesses apex and anapex of Taoism:
 1. 1019 – Song emperor Zhenzong 真宗 orders compilation of Taoist canon
 2. 1119 – First mass printing of Taoist canon
 3. 1281 – All Taoist texts burned by order of Yuan 元 (Mongol) emperor Shizu 世祖 (a.k.a Kublai Khan)
- Quanzhen sect founded by Wang Chongyang (“rebirth of *yang*”) 王重陽 (1112-1170), ex-Confucian official:
 1. Interiorizes previously external practices (e.g., alchemy)
 2. Spiritualizes previously physical goals (e.g., immortality)
 3. Syncretizes previously distinct traditions (e.g., Confucianism, Buddhism)
 4. Asceticizes nature of practice (e.g., celibacy, dietary regimens, yoga)
 5. Monasticizes community of practitioners (e.g., monks, nuns)
- “Inner alchemy” (*neidan* 内丹) – manipulation of *qi* 氣 (“vital energy”) within body (*dantian* 丹田, “cinnabar field”):
 1. to attain balance of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽
 2. to return to primordial unity with Tao 道
 3. to promote mental clarity and dispel egoism



The Masters

1. Ma Danyang (“pill of yang”) 馬丹陽 (1100s)
2. Sun Bu’er (“no second [way]”) 孫不二 (1119-1182)
3. Qiu Changchun (“eternal spring”) 丘長春 (1148-1227) -- succeeded Wang Chongyang as Quanzhen leader, courted by various Song emperors
4. Liu Changsheng (“eternal life”) 劉長生 (1147-1203) -- became active Quanzhen missionary and eventual head of Quanzhen sect
5. Tan Changzhen (“eternal perfection”) 譚長真(1123-1185) -- popularized idea of Quanzhen self-cultivation for solitary laypersons
6. Hao Taigu (“great ancient”) 郝太古 (1149-1212) -- became active Quanzhen missionary, incorporated Chan 禪 Buddhist ideas into Quanzhen practice
7. Wang Yuyang (“jade of yang”) 王玉陽 (1142-1217) -- emphasized *wuwei* 無為 as ideal for Quanzhen practice



Wang Chongyang



Sun Bu'er



Qiu Changchun