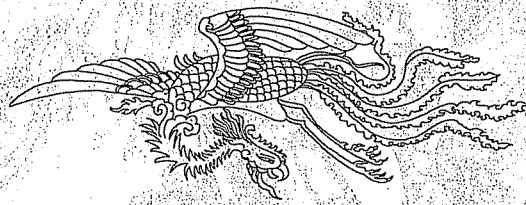


A
COMMUNION
of
SUBJECTS

Animals in Religion, Science, and Ethics



Paul Waldau and Kimberley Patton

EDITORS



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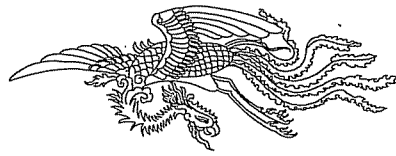
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DAOISM



Daoism and Animals

E. N. ANDERSON AND LISA RAPHALS

The Animal World of Ancient China

Ancient China was a world rich in animals. In dramatic contrast to the devastated modern landscape, China's biodiversity was the greatest of any temperate land. It was a land of vast lush forests, rich grasslands, fertile mountains, and enormous expanses of wetland-marsh, swamp, and river bottom. In these dwelt elephants, rhinoceri, pandas, apes, tigers, leopards, and countless smaller forms.

The earliest Chinese artifacts from the Shang dynasty (traditionally 1766–1122 BCE, actually somewhat later) include many representations of dragons and other imaginary creatures, but relatively few portrayals of real-world animals. Actual animals depicted include water buffaloes, tigers, sheep, and birds. Pigs, the most common animal found in archaeological remains, are conspicuously absent. In succeeding periods, more and more animals were portrayed, as were countless imaginary creatures, such as the nine-tailed fox, human-headed birds, the

three-legged crow in the sun, and the humanoid owl.

The ancient Chinese knew their fauna intimately. The *Classic of Poetry* or *Shi jing* mentions at least ninety-three species, including twenty-one mammals (one mythical), thirty-five birds (one mythical, the phoenix), three reptiles (plus the mythical dragon), one amphibian, thirteen fish, and nineteen insects.¹ Here and elsewhere in Chinese literature, there is a striking awareness of insect life. The songs of the *Shi jing* reflect the fresh, direct vision of people who knew animals from daily experience. The wasp carries off the caterpillar to feed its young; the rats nibble the grain; the spider spins her web over abandoned doorways.

By the Warring States period (ca. 403–221 BCE), China's heartland—the North China Plain, the loess uplands west of it, and the Yangtze and Huai river valleys—had already been transformed by humans and biotically impoverished. Rhinos and elephants were exotic creatures, known from trade with non-Chinese

groups on the margins. The common animals of daily experience were domestic: Horses, donkeys, cattle, goats, dogs, buffaloes, sheep, pigs, chickens. Of these, the last four were native, the others introduced (as domesticates—although some had local wild forms) but known for millennia. Pigs, then as now, were by far the most important meat source. Chickens and dogs were common, but horses were a luxury for the elite and cattle were uncommon beasts of the plow. Rulers kept large game parks, in which they hunted deer and other large animals. These were seen by many social critics as wasteful luxuries that tied up good land.

Animals per se are not a distinct category in most Chinese texts, Daoist or otherwise. More typically, texts that talk about animals at any length use the four or five distinct categories of beasts, birds, insects, and fish, with the occasional addition of dragons and snakes.

The term Daoism is equally problematic, because of the unclear affiliations of some of the texts and practices in which animals are most prevalent. Most textual accounts of animals come from the Six Dynasties period. While hagiographies from the *Dao zang* are unproblematically Daoist, the same cannot be said for the *Soushen ji* and other literature dealing with anomalies, which prominently features accounts of animals, both “normal” and anomalous.

In this essay we focus discussion on actual animals or on individual instances of animals that are described as anomalies for their kind. This approach largely omits the many accounts of mythological animals (the dragon, phoenix, unicorn, etc.) and the use of animals as purely directional symbols. We draw on both standard texts from the Warring States period and on recently excavated archaeological texts.

Early Daoism

The term “Daoism” as a specific body of thought is anachronistic when applied to ancient China.

Attributed to Sima Tan in the *Historical Records* or *Shi ji* (ca. 100 BCE), the term has been widely used to refer to mystical and quietistic interpretations of two texts: the *Dao de jing*, a collection of gnomic verses still wildly popular today, probably compiled around 200 BCE, and *Zhuangzi*, attributed to the fourth-century BCE figure Zhuang Zhou. Recent archaeological finds and contemporary scholarship have brought about a reappraisal of the term as applied to pre-Han texts. Sima Tan’s use of the term included a number of thinkers whose common ground was skepticism about active, interventionist government. Most of them talked about the need to find *dao*—the Way, the proper way of living, acting and governing—but so did most other Chinese philosophers.

Another important source was the *Chu ci* or *Songs of the South*, a collection of early poems by court officials of Han and immediately pre-Han times. Most of these invoke shamanistic and/or Daoistic images, and some are frankly Daoist. The *Chu ci* is incredibly rich in animal and plant images, mentioning at least eighty-eight animal species, many of which are imaginary. Its pages are rich with dragons, rainbow-serpents, wasps as big as gourds, and ants as big as elephants. Even the “real” animals are often completely unidentifiable.

The *Zhuangzi* is the most philosophically challenging, and the most rich and diverse, of the early sources. Like other early Chinese works, it was edited and supplemented in the Han dynasty, but it retained a solid core of early material—presumably by Zhuangzi himself—that have come to be called the “inner chapters.” The *Zhuangzi* mentions approximately seventy-five animals, many of them mythical or unidentifiable. Like other early Chinese writers, Zhuangzi (and the other authors of the material that has accumulated around his name) were conscious of even the smallest insects. A pig louse becomes a symbol of foolish security, and insect transformations are recorded in exquisite, if biologically inaccurate, detail.²

Animals in Early Daoist Thought

Animals appear in many contexts in these writings. First, their practical value is immediately obvious. They provided food, clothing, and medicine. Meat, leather, silk, wool, and animal-derived medications are very frequently mentioned. In the early Daoist texts there is no indication that such uses were considered immoral. Excessive consumption of meat was identified with luxury and disparaged for that reason, but the general tendency of animals to eat each other was frequently and explicitly mentioned as a natural process, in harmony with Dao.

The horse probably is the most often mentioned animal in early Chinese texts. It was identified with wealth, power, and worldly glory, and it was an important source of energy for the elites. One of the most striking passages in the *Zhuangzi* attacks worldly power by contrasting the happiness and freedom of wild horses with the misery and bad behavior of captive ones:

When they live out on the plains they eat grass and drink the water, when pleased they cross their necks and stroke each other, when angry swing round and kick at each other. . . . If you put yokes on their necks and hold them level with a crossbar, the horses will know how to smash the crossbar, wriggle out of the yokes, butt the carriage hood.³

Daoist texts also describe and depict human figures mounted on cranes, dragons, phoenixes, and other creatures.⁴

Second, animals were sacrificed to gods and ancestors, as they still are in traditional Chinese communities. Archaeologists have traced this practice back to highest antiquity. Among the animals mentioned are dogs, chickens, turtles, oxen, and sheep. There is little textual evidence that Daoists protested these practices. In one apocryphal anecdote, Zhuangzi, when asked to be minister of state, declined by comparing himself to a sacrificial tortoise, or ox, making the

point that it is better to be a tortoise dragging its tail in the mud, free, safe, and unhonored than to live the stiff, artificial, and highly uncertain life of a courtier. In some cases, straw and pottery models were often substituted for the real animals, thus saving the latter. "Straw dogs" were also used as a metaphor for humans in the face of Heaven, which treats humans with the calm indifference of ritualists disposing of sacrificial straw dogs after the ceremony.

Finally, animals were also used as models for how to move in powerful, natural, spontaneous, and healthy ways. In a section of the *Zhuangzi* that probably dates from the Han dynasty, the anonymous commentator is a bit sarcastic about those who "huff and puff, exhale and inhale, . . . do the 'bear-hang' and the 'bird-stretch.'"⁵ As all of us know who have any acquaintance with Chinese martial arts and sexual yoga, the ways of the bear are still with us, along with the ways of the monkey, the crane, the snake, and many other animals whose motions offer salutary examples of how to move.

What Animals Did

Animals were not viewed simply as useful things. They had varying degrees of spiritual or numinous power. The most numinous were usually the most far from everyday experience—the dragons, phoenixes, and unicorns—but ordinary animals such as tortoises and snakes were also given numinous attributes. Cranes in particular were associated with magical and mystical experiences, and the image of a Daoist riding through the heavens on a crane eventually became an artistic cliché. Real-world Daoists kept tame cranes, until, alas, the birds became too rare to be available.⁶ The crane retains its sacred status in Korea and Japan, where the few survivors are venerated and protected. However, significantly, the early Chinese texts devote very little attention to animal magic, except for purely imaginary creatures like dragons.

Real-world animals almost never have magical or spirit powers. This is in marked contrast to the shamanistic societies of North and Central Asia, whose animal cults were (and still are) spectacularly rich and complex.⁷

From the foregoing, it should already be clear that Daoist writers found animals especially important as a source of metaphors, similes, and subjects of teaching stories. However, we should not fall into the modern habit of reducing them to mere figures of speech. Zhuangzi's wild horses are not simply metaphors of freedom; real horses, like people, want freedom and do best when free. Zhuangzi presumably thought that the tortoise and ox really did appreciate their lives and really preferred them to an honored death. In perhaps the most famous animal story in Chinese literature, Zhuangzi dreams he is a butterfly, and wakes up uncertain whether he is a butterfly dreaming of being Zhuang Zhou.⁸ A striking poetic image at the very least, it may also relate to shamanistic traditions in which the soul is a butterfly.⁹ Similarly, the deer dream story in the later Daoist text *Liezi*, in which real and dreamed deer become one, has thought-provoking similarities to beliefs about deer as magical or spiritual quarry among the Mongols of north China.¹⁰ These stories reflect a numinous aspect of the human-animal interface.

Analogy due to real homology is explicit in another famous Zhuangzi story, the happiness of fish. Standing on a bridge with his skeptical debate partner Huizi, Zhuangzi praises the free and easy action of the minnows. Huizi asks: "You are not a fish. Whence do you know that the fish are happy?" Zhuangzi replies that: "You aren't me, whence do you know that I don't know the fish are happy?" and adds that "you asked me the question already knowing that I knew."¹¹ Zhuangzi is saying that one intuitively knows the pleasure of fish. He implies that people and fish share enough basic similarity that humans can understand them.¹²

These stories often emphasize that animals live spontaneously and act according to their

natures. This spontaneity and naturalness is also considered an ideal for human conduct. According to a comment in the wild-horses story: "In the age when Power [*de*, spiritual power or virtue] was at its utmost, men lived in sameness with the birds and animals, side by side as fellow clansmen with the myriad creatures."¹³ Today, it adds, humans have lost the Way. They subject themselves to lords, to artificial habits, and to gratuitous and limiting mental constructs. There are countless variations on this theme—even individual thinkers like Zhuangzi were not always consistent. The question of whether (or how far) Zhuangzi and similarly minded Daoist philosophers were cultural relativists remains controversial. It does seem clear that the early Daoists criticized conventional ethical schemas of Benevolence, Duty, Ritual, and so forth, and their power to interfere with all the spontaneity and naturalness in life. Watching animals could help teach humans what really is and is not important and worthwhile. Some texts portray animals as able to detect humans. The *Liezi* describes how gulls came to play with a man but fled when he wanted to capture them.¹⁴ (This became a poetic cliché in later dynasties, even more in Korea than in China.) Here again, freedom is seen as a basic desideratum for people and animals alike.

These texts also addressed cases where it was necessary to capture animals and remove them from their wild state; they make it clear that there was a right Way even to do that. These texts show how to focus on animals, understand exactly how they live and move, and enter into such harmony with them as to achieve anything. A fisherman catches a whale-sized fish with a single silk thread for a line and a wheat awn for a hook.¹⁵ A cicada-catcher succeeds by concentrating his mind so much that there is nothing in all the universe for him except the cicada's wings.¹⁶ The point of the story, of course, is to teach us how to live, not how to catch cicadas!

The early Daoists also recognized the importance of the food chain, and they had no illusions about that side of animal life. A beautiful

teaching story, used today in many an ecology class, finds Zhuangzi in a game park, trying to poach a bit of dinner. He trains his bow on a strange bird that is itself about to eat a mantis about to eat a cicada. He becomes so absorbed in this instructive tableau that he himself is almost caught by the warden.¹⁷ This is said to be the incident that turned his mind to Daoist philosophy—as well it might!

Transformation is another important aspect of animal life. The Chinese knew that caterpillars transformed into butterflies, grubs into wasps, and so forth. Zhuangzi provides a long string of transformations: the germ in a seed becomes the water-plantain, which turns into other plants and then to insects; eventually the horse is produced, and from the horse is born the human—a strange and still unexplained idea.¹⁸ Liezi considerably expands this account, adding several truly uncanny transformations: “Sheep’s liver changes into the goblin sheep underground. The blood of horses and men become[s] the will-o’-the-wisp.”¹⁹ Such change and evolution is part of nature. Everything changes; one can only resign oneself to the natural flow of things.

More seriously philosophical comments on death echo this account. A dying sage says his body may become a chariot and his spirit its horses.²⁰ Such passages say something real about the world. Even when animals are used for purely literary purposes, we are never far from actual comments on nature. Swallows symbolize humble domesticity because they nest under eaves. Lao Dan (the apocryphal Laozi) is a dragon in Zhuangzi’s metaphor.²¹ Daoist religious traditions developed moral charges that protected animal life, sometimes adopted verbatim from Confucian and Buddhist works.²² The foundational Daoist texts are notably silent on these topics, beyond a general charter to leave animals in as natural a state as possible. The Daoists seem not to have conceived of a world in which animals were not used for food, clothing, traction, and medicine. They saw eating animals as a natural thing, and therefore appropriate for

humans. Tigers, and even mosquitoes, eat humans; why should not humans eat other animals? Moreover, sacrifice was and still is critically important to Daoist ritual. Today, Daoist ceremonies observed by E. N. Anderson involve sacrifice and consumption of chickens and pigs, and sometimes other animals. It is thus clear that Daoists differ from Buddhists in their tolerance of slaughter and consumption of animals.

The Zhuangzi and Animal Minds

The *Zhuangzi* uses animals in a new set of ways that reflect both observation of (and interest in) their actual behavior, and a keen sense of metaphor.

The first representation of the “great knowledge” (*da zhi* 大智) that preoccupies the Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi* is as an animal, or rather the transformation with which the work begins: the transformation of the Kun fish into the Peng bird in the first chapter of the *Zhuangzi*. It is the Peng bird, neither a human or a divinity, that first represents the greater perspective. The distinction between large and small perspective is elaborated first in the contrast between the perspectives of the Peng Bird and the turtledove that hops from branch to branch. That distinction is elaborated in human terms in the “Qiwu lun” chapter of Book 2. In these passages, the *Zhuangzi* uses a mélange of real and imaginary animals to comment on, and recommend, human choices.²³ Animal minds demonstrate the desirable attitudes of great perspective and detachment. This kind of metaphor extends to the political. In “Autumn Floods” (*Zhuangzi* 17), Zhuangzi himself uses the rhetorical example of the “turtle dragging its tail in the mud” to emphasize the priority of a natural and livable life over the demands and dangers of court life and high office.

The *Zhuangzi* also uses animal minds to show the limitations of attachment and loss of perspective. Zhuangzi’s quarry in the hunting park (see above) is a “strange magpie” whose wings

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are huge but get it nowhere, and whose eyes are huge, but don't see. For all its "uselessness"—a theme of considerable importance in the *Zhuangzi*—it escapes his attentions, because he is distracted by the sight of the cicada stalked by the mantis stalked by the magpie stalked by Zhuangzi himself in *Zhuangzi* 20.

Animals, Gender, and Morality

The uses of animals in the arguments of the two "Classical Daoist" texts and in early medical literature is even more striking if we contrast the use of "birds and beasts" in the arguments of other Warring States thinkers, sometimes classed as "Huang-Lao" Daoism. The *Guanzi* contrasts animals negatively with the prehuman state before civilization. In this and other texts, the distinction between men and women (*nannü zhi bie* 男女之別) is taken as the defining feature of human, as opposed to animal, society. They ascribe the incorrect mingling of the sexes, among other things, to the prehuman behavior of animals and to the quasi-bestial practices of primitive society before the civilizing influence of the sage-kings.²⁴ According to the *Guanzi*, if ministers are allowed to indulge themselves,

they will follow their desires and behave with reckless abandon. Men and women will not be kept separate, but revert to being animals. Consequently the rules of propriety, righteous conduct, integrity and a sense of shame will not be established and the prince of men will have nothing with which to protect himself.²⁵

Part of the "protection" of the ruler is the order of human, as opposed to animal, society. The distinction between men and women is one of the defining features of human society. Beasts, by contrast, do not segregate males and females.²⁶

The Shamanic Connection

An earlier generation of Sinologists often saw connections between Daoism and shamanism.²⁷ Shamanism, a form of religious and curing activity widespread in Asia, involves shamans who send their souls to other realms in order to search out the cause and cure of personal and social ills and misfortunes. There is every reason to pursue the issue, for the Han Chinese world is surrounded by shamanistic societies. The English word "shaman" is borrowed from the Tungus languages. Many Tungus groups live in China. One of the Tungus languages, Manchu, was the language of two Chinese dynasties (the Jin and Qing, both ruled by Tungus conquerors). It would be inconceivable that China would not be influenced by shamanism. Indeed, the Chinese word *wu* 巫, which now covers a range of spirit mediums, once clearly applied to shamans very similar in their practices to the Tungus and Mongol ones.²⁸ *Wu* and Daoist adepts could both send their souls to the heavens and to the lands of the immortals, as is clearly seen in the *Songs of the South* and in many later Daoist writings.²⁹ Daoist adepts live in a universe of meditation and inner travel, similar to the shamanic one.

A clear link with shamanic animal lore is the concern with transformations. The general texts on transformation, noted above, presaged a flood of animal tales in later literature. These often turn on the proneness of animals to take human shape, or vice versa; sometimes the transformation becomes complete, but at other times we are dealing with were-creatures. Statements in Daoist texts about the flux and transformation of all things may have roots in shamanistic traditions as well as Chinese cosmological knowledge and belief.

Another link between shamanism and Chinese folk religion is the concern with sacrifices, and sacrificial animals. In modern Daoist practice, elaborate sacrifices involve special preparation and treatment of the animals; each cere-

mony has its own patterns, which vary from place to place. This is similar to the complex logic and structuring of sacrifice among the Daurians.³⁰ However, the shamanistic bond with animals is not very visible in the Daoist writings surveyed here. Animals are not the sources of spiritual power, nor are they companions or guides in supernatural travel, as they are in shamanism.³¹ The nearest we come are the dragons and cranes used as mounts for travel to empyrean realms. This is, indeed, no doubt connected with shamanism; shamans ride spirit horses, and sometimes birds. But the connection is not obviously close. The whole complex of animal religion that reaches such incredible heights in central Asia seems absent from Daoism, except in so far as it is related to general Chinese beliefs about sacrifice and about the magical significance of dragons, turtles, and the like.³² Even the tiger, so universally revered in folk cults throughout its range, gets no special treatment in Daoist texts. Nor does the fox, though we know that the incredibly rich folklore about foxes and fox spirits was already well established.³³ The huge, uncanny, and imaginary animals of Zhuangzi's and Liezi's stories, with their strange powers, might hark back a visionary shamanistic cosmology, but they give no obvious evidence of it. Conversely, the bizarre imaginary animals of the *Shan Hai Jing* ("Classic of Mountains and Seas") are almost certainly the visionary experiences of shamans traveling to the unreal "mountains and seas" in question, but the *Shan Hai Jing* never became a canonical Daoist text.

Most particularly, the early Daoist sources seem completely lacking in the strong moral component so prominent in shamanistic lore about hunting. Throughout most of northeast Asia and all of North America, myths, tales, and shamanic lore encode a very strong moral injunction not to take too many animals—usually, no more than one's family immediately needs. This view, shored up by spiritual beliefs about the animals themselves, is well docu-

mented for Altaic peoples on China's fringe.³⁴ Animals and animal parts are to be treated with reverence. This view may well be latent behind Liezi's deer story and several other Daoist stories, but it is not made explicit, nor do any such moral teachings occur in Daoist writings. Early Daoist teachings move us away from explicit moral rules, toward a meditative and aware state in which we can naturally act in an appropriate manner. Even shamanic moral rules may have smacked too much of propriety and self-righteousness for the early Daoists. Later Daoist religious communities adopted a variety of moral codes, including the animal-related ones noted above; but they came from Confucian and Buddhist teachings, not from shamanism.³⁵

These texts contain an implicit and sometimes explicitly moral view of animals. Animals have their own natures, their own *dao*, and humans should not interfere unless necessary. Such an attitude contains an implicit conservation ethic; obviously, Daoists do not like to see lavish and conspicuous consumption, nor do they like to see animals used for any purpose unless real necessity is involved. Destructive uses clearly violate the animals' *dao*. Animals are spontaneous, able to live their good lives without worry about rites and ceremonies, morals and duties. They do all that they need to do, without thinking, and nothing more. We are better advised to learn from them than to kill or abuse them.

The Uses of Animals In Early Daoist Texts

THE WARRING STATES

Warring States quasi-Daoist accounts of animals vary widely, and they may contain a few surprises. Animals are almost completely absent from the *Dao de jing*, but, as we have seen, appear frequently in the *Zhuangzi*, as well as in the political rhetoric of the *Guanzi* and other Warring States texts associated with Huang-Lao

Daoism. In addition, they appear in recently excavated texts in contexts that range from recipes used to treat animal-inflicted injuries to metaphors for body movement in sexual arts literature.

DAO AS INANIMATE IN THE *DAO DE JING*

Animals are conspicuously absent from the many descriptions of *dao* in the *Dao de jing*. Its metaphors for *dao* are inanimate (water, the valley, the uncarved block) or not quite human (the unformed infant), and conspicuously do not include animals, either singly or collectively.

Animals are not used as positive metaphors for *dao*. Indeed, they are used as illustrations of the kind of negative happenstance that Daoist self-cultivation protects against. Verse 55 begins:

One who embraces the fullness of Virtue
Can be compared to a newborn babe.
Wasps and scorpions, snakes and vipers do
not sting him,
Birds of prey and fierce beasts do not seize
him.³⁶

Here, animals are clearly viewed as sources of harm and injury. Early medical texts found in the same tomb as the oldest extant version of the *Dao de jing* "flesh out" this concern, and they also present a more positive and imaginative depiction of animals in metaphors for body movement.

Cures for Animal-inflicted Injuries

Before the second century, prevailing views (and methods of treatment) of disease treated illness as the invasive influence of external forces, including natural forces (wind, heat, cold), demonic entities and magical influence, and animal-inflicted injuries, including bites and the effects of parasites and insects.³⁷ Recent excavations of tombs from Mawangdui and elsewhere have yielded valuable medical documents that

provide new information about early Chinese medical theories. The premier medical document found at Mawangdui is the *Recipes for Fifty-two Ailments* (*Wushier bingfang* 吾十二病方). This late-third-century compendium is the oldest extant exemplar of a medical recipe manual, one of the oldest genres of medical literature. Its recipes are listed in fifty-two categories, which form the organizing principle of the text (each category contains up to thirty recipes). Animal bites and related injuries are included in several of these: recipes for mad dog bites (category 6), dog bites (category 7), crow's beak poisoning (category 10), scorpions (category 11), leech bites (category 12), lizards (category 13), grain borer ailment (category 18), maggots (category 19), chewing by bugs (category 46), and *gu* poisoning (category 49).³⁸

ANIMALS AS METAPHORS FOR WHOLE-BODY MOVEMENT

The Mawangdui texts also present us with an equally early, and much friendlier, view of animals: the use of animal movements as metaphors to describe whole-body movements that do not otherwise lend themselves to clear description. The same kinds of metaphors appear in the later literature of Daoist-inspired martial arts, where the modes of movement of cranes, mantises, and other creatures are taken as models for the defense and attack of martial artists. These late examples of the use of the movements of animals may be the Chinese "animal" imagery most familiar to the nonspecialist.

The first known uses of these metaphors are in Daoist sexual technique literature, of which the earliest examples extant come from the tomb excavations at Mawangdui and Jiangjiashan.³⁹ The Mawangdui texts "Uniting Yin and Yang" (*He yin yang* 和陰陽) and "Discussion of the Dao of Heaven" (*Tianxia zhi dao tan* 天下之道談) each contains a section that refer to the movements and postures of animals as whole-body metaphors for sexual techniques and postures:

一曰虎游，二曰蟬附，三曰尺蠖，四曰困桷，
五曰蝗磔，六曰爰[猿]據，七曰詹諸，八曰兔
驚，九曰蜻蛉，十曰魚噉

The first is called roaming tiger, the second cicada clinging, the third inchworm, the fourth roe deer butting, the fifth locust spreading, the sixth monkey squat, the seventh toad in the moon, the eighth rabbit startled, the ninth dragonflies and the tenth fish gobbling.⁴⁰

Similar exercises described in the "Pulling Book" (*Yinshu shiwen* 引書釋文), a text found at Zhangjiashan in Jiangling, describes exercises that refer to or are named after animals, including: inchworms, snakes, mantises, wild ducks, owls, tigers, chickens, bears, frogs, deer, and dragons.⁴¹

Six Dynasties Daoism

Now let us turn to a few examples of the use of animals in Six Dynasties and Tang Daoist texts.

HUMAN-ANIMAL INTERACTIONS IN DAOIST HAGIOGRAPHIES

The Daoist hagiographies of the Six Dynasties are equally sparing in their use of animals. What marks the sages of the *Liexianzhuan* (列仙傳) are interactions with immortals, longevity, immortality, distinct dietary habits, and receipt of secret texts and techniques. In a few cases, the remarkable qualities of the sage are shown by visitation by animals. Every morning, yellow birds would appear at the door of the Jin recluse Jie Zitui (介子推) (*LXZ* 19). Zhu Qiweng (祝雞翁) raised chickens and fish (*LXZ* 36); the gardener Yuan Ke (公園客) was visited by five colored butterflies (*LXZ* 47).

Some do interact, in various ways, with the animal associated with immortality: the dragon. Ma Shihuang (馬師皇) (Horse Master Huang), the veterinarian of Huang Di, once cured a dragon who took him away on its back (*LXZ* 3).

Shi Men (師門) lived on flowers, fish, and leaves, and was a master of dragons (*LXZ* 14). In two of these accounts, the human transforms into one of the immortal animals. Huang Di (黃帝) is described as "having the form of a dragon" (有龍形, *LXZ* 5).⁴² In other accounts, the appearance of the dragon is heralded by a more ordinary animal. A red bird appears over the forge of the blacksmith Tao Angong (陶安公) to tell him that a red dragon would come for him and carry him away on its back (*LXZ* 60). In a similar story, Zi Ying (子英) catches a carp and feeds it. It grows horns and wings; he mounts its back and flies away (*LXZ* 55).

Even the story of Mao Nü (毛女), who grows animal-like hair, involves no extended human-animal interaction. Seen by hunters over several generations, the "Furry Woman" fled the palace of Qin Shi Huang Di at the end of the Qin dynasty. According to the hagiography, she was taught by a Daoist to live on pine nuts, and spontaneously grew a coat of hair (*LXZ* 54).

In summary, on the basis of this evidence, we can make a few speculative observations about the presence and absence of animals in so-called Lao-Zhuang and Six Dynasties Daoist texts.

Despite the considerable prevalence of animals (like plants) in early Chinese texts, special interactions with animals are not an ingredient of the hagiographies of the *Liexianzhuan*—the topos of the lifesaving nurture of abandoned or refugee infants, children, or women by wild animals. Even the "Furry Woman" of the *Liexianzhuan* learns to survive by the instruction of a Daoist, not by imitating wild beasts. Animals do appear in these stories as vehicles for humans who cross the boundary between Heaven and Earth, mortality and immortality, usually by mounting to heaven on the back of a dragon. But, as in earlier texts, animals seem largely to be used as examples of living naturally.

"STRANGE" ANIMALS IN THE
ZHIGUAI GENRE

Several texts within the genre of *zhiguai* (志怪), or "anomaly" literature, contain extensive accounts of animal anomalies, as well as contrasting accounts of animal "norms."⁴³ The *Bowuzhi* (博物志) or Treatise on Curiosities of Zhang Hua (張華) (232–300) is organized by thirty-nine subject headings, of which four concern animal anomalies. These are: Marvelous beasts (異獸 *yi shou*), Marvelous birds (異鳥 *yi niao*), Marvelous insects (異蟲 *yi chong*), and Marvelous fish (異魚 *yi yu*).

The *Soushen ji* (搜神記) or *Records of an Inquest in to the Spirit Realm* by Gan Bao 干寶 (335–349) also contains five very different chapters that bear on animals: monstrous creatures, transformation of humans into plants and animals, spirits of mammals, snake and fish spirits, and accounts of rewards and retribution by animals. The third juan of the *Yi Yuan* (異苑) or *Garden of Marvels* by Liu Jingshu (敬叔) (fl. early 5c) is devoted to fifty-seven items of anomalies involving animals: birds (1–12), tigers (13–17), dragons and snakes (33–47), turtles and fish (48–52), and shellfish and insects (53–57). The *Soushen houji* (搜神後記), or *Further Records of an Inquest in to the Spirit Realm* (late Song or early Qi), contains a section (10) of tales involving dragons, krakens, and large snakes. Of these, we explore the account in the *Soushen ji* at some length.

EXPLANATION FOR POSSESSIONS
AND ANOMALIES

As Rob Campany as pointed out in his study of anomaly literature, the animal anomaly stories in the *Soushen ji* portray several different modes of anomaly, of which most involve crossing the animal-human boundary. These include: a variety of human-animal hybrids and a range of transformations among individual species, genders within species, humans, animals, and spirits, both human and animal.⁴⁴

The sixth chapter of the *Soushen ji* begins by explaining the occurrence of possessions and anomalies:

Possessions and anomalies (*yao guai*) prevail over a thing's essential qi (*jing qi*) and reconfigure it (妖怪者，蓋精氣之依物者也). Internally the qi is disordered; externally the thing is transformed. . . if we rely on prognostication of good and malauspice (休咎之徵), in all these cases, it is possible to delimit and discuss them.⁴⁵

Some cases are partial transformations, where an animal or human grows an extra or inappropriate body parts: a tortoise growing hair and a hare horns,⁴⁶ cows, horses or birds with extra legs,⁴⁷ and horses, dogs, and men growing horns.⁴⁸ In other cases the transformation is complete, and an animal (or human) changes entirely into another, for example, a horse to a fox,⁴⁹ or bears offspring of another species. Cases of cross-species matings and anomalous births include: a horse bearing a human child,⁵⁰ a dog mating with a pig,⁵¹ swallows hatching sparrows,⁵² falcons,⁵³ and the birth of two-headed children.⁵⁴ In one case, a cow bears a chicken with four feet.⁵⁵ Sometimes the transformation is of gender: a woman turning into a man, marrying and siring children,⁵⁶ a man turning into a woman, marrying and bearing children,⁵⁷ and a hen becoming a cock.⁵⁸ All these anomalies are ascribed to rulers of the Han and Later Han dynasties and the Three Kingdoms period. Again, the fascination with the bizarre and surreal continues from Warring States times and traditions. It and the longevity cult rather undercut the naturalistic side of Daoism, a point noted by Chinese scholars as well as modern readers.

NATURAL AND ANOMALOUS
ANIMAL TRANSFORMATIONS

The nineteen items of Book 12 of the *Soushen ji* describe both "natural" and anomalous transformations of animals. The first item in Book 12 ex-

plains how the myriad creatures (*wan wu*) were formed from the five *qi* of heaven (wood, fire, metal, water and earth). Its premise is that animals made of one kind of *qi* will display similar forms and similar natures. Thus: eaters of grain (human society) have intelligence and culture; eaters of grass have great strength and little mind; creatures that eat mulberry leaves produce silk and become caterpillars; eaters of meat are courageous, fierce, and high-spirited; things that eat mud lack mind and breath. Now the passage returns to human beings; those that feed on primal energies become sages and enjoy long lives; those that do not eat at all do not die and become numinous immortals (*shen*).⁵⁹

It goes on to classify the "natures" of animals in several other ways. One is "cock and hen mode" (雌雄 *ci xiong*), that is, to classify them by their "male" and "female" characteristics.⁶⁰ Creatures that lack "cock mode" must mate with other creatures to reproduce; creatures that lack "hen mode" need the nurturing of other creatures to reproduce. It proceeds to an account of how animals of one kind naturally transform one into another; the principle of these transformations is that "creatures of the heavenly sort have upward affinities; those with earthly origins list downwards. Each thing follows its kind" (各從其類也).⁶¹

The text goes on to explain that transformations within category are normal and "too many to be counted."

The movement of things in response to change follows constant ways, and it is only when things take a wrong direction that injurious anomalies appear. . . . If a human gives birth to a beast (*shou*) or a beast to a human it is case of *qi* in disorder (氣之亂者). When a man becomes a woman or a woman becomes a man, it is a case of transposition of *qi*.⁶²

Other chapters go on to record animal and other anomalies without further explanation, including: transformations of humans into plants and animals (*SSJ* 14), accounts of the spirits

of mammals (*SSJ* 18), accounts of snake and fish spirits (*SSJ* 19) and accounts of reward and retribution by animals (*SSJ* 20). These human-animal transformations include: a horse into a silkworm,⁶³ women to birds,⁶⁴ and women into turtles (3 cases).⁶⁵ In the first of the seven fox or fox spirit stories in the eighteenth chapter of the *Soushen ji*, a man turns to a fox in the presence of the Han dynasty Confucian philosopher and anomaly specialist Dong Zhongshu.⁶⁶ Other stories in this chapter involve deer, sow, and dog spirits, and a rat. Chapter 19 contains six stories of snake, fish, and turtle spirits.

Chapter 20 presents a different kind of animal account, sixteen stories of rewards and retribution involving animals. In some cases, humans extend "human" compassion to animals, and are rewarded. Several of these stories specifically involve medical knowledge. One Sun Deng of Wei perceived that a dragon was ill; it transformed into a man, he cured it, and it rewarded the district with rains.⁶⁷ In another story, a tiger abducts a midwife named Su Yi to its lair, where she delivers the tigress of a breach birth. The tiger returns her home, and rewards her with gifts of game.⁶⁸ In other cases, a black crane, an oriole, a serpent, and a turtle return and reward the humans that cure and free them.⁶⁹ In other stories, humans show compassion to fish, ants, and a snake.⁷⁰ In one, a man is saved from false imprisonment and death by a mole cricket he feeds.⁷¹ In these cases, humans extend the benefits of "human" morality to animals, who react in kind. In other cases, animals spontaneously act with human qualities. Two such stories involve dogs.⁷² Other stories involve misbehaving humans and animals who act "humanely." A mother gibbon suicides when a man catches, and then kills, her baby.⁷³ A (talking) deer and a serpent bring retribution in the form of sudden illness on hunters who kill them.⁷⁴

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marrying and bearing
offspring a cock.⁵⁸ All
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States; and the longevity
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anomalous transfor-
mation in Book 12 ex-

inction between men and women also occurs at *Guanzi* XI 31:1a (Rickett, *Guanzi*, p. 412).

27. For example, see Arthur Waley, *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1955).

28. See, e.g., *ibid.*

29. See: David Hawkes, Ch'u Tz'u, *The Songs of the South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959); Waley, *Nine Songs*; Schafer, *Pacing the Void*.

30. Humphrey, *Shamans*.

31. Mongush B. Kenin-Lopsan, *Shamanic Songs and Myths of Tuva*. (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1997), Roux, *Faune*; and S.M. Shirokogoroff, *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* (London: Kegan Paul, 1935), and Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1986), 2nd. ed. Judging from Blacker's work, Japanese shamanism is less concerned with animals than the Chinese texts considered here.

32. Roux, *Faune*, *passim*.

33. Han texts tell us, for instance, of the nine-tailed fox, a frightening supernatural being. In Chinese popular and literary traditions, fox spirits are often malevolent and inauspicious.

34. See, for instance, Kenin-Lopsan, *Shamanic Songs*; and also the famous tale of the Nisan Shaman; the conservation message is latent in the well-known Nowak and Durrant version (Margaret Nowak and Stephen Durrant, *The Tale of the Nisan Shamaness: A Manchu Folk Epic*, [Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977]), but explicit in a version recorded by Caroline Humphrey (*Shamans*, p. 306). Still further is the complete prohibition on killing animals, at least in sacred localities, that characterizes Buddhism. Such prohibition came to China and added itself to mountain cults, as in Tibet (Toni Huber, *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

35. E. N. Anderson, "Flowering Apricot: Environment, Practice, Folk Religion and Taoism," in *Daoism and Ecology*, eds. N.J. Girardot, James Miller, and Liu Xiaogan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press for Center for the study of World Religions, 2001), pp. 157-84.

36. *Laozi dao de jing* 老子道德經 (Zhuzi jicheng edition), trans. Robert Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching: a New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Ma-wang-tui Texts* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989).

37. The Mawangdui medical corpus consists of eleven medical manuscripts written on three sheets of silk, recovered from Mawangdui Tomb 3 in 1973, a burial dating from 168 BCE. The individual manuscripts are untitled, but have been assigned titles by Chinese scholars on the basis of their contents. For discussion of the Mawangdui medical manuscripts see Donald Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 22-30; for more general relevant discussions, Paul Unschuld, *Medicine in China: A History of Pharmaceuticals. Comparative Studies of Health Systems and Medical Care* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Douglas Wile, *The Art of the Bedchamber: The Chinese Sexual Yoga Classics Including Women's Solo Meditation Techniques* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992).

38. Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature*, pp. 221-22. Gu 蠱 poisoning, an affliction of demonic origins, was sometimes attributed to the pernicious activities of women, who were believed to cultivate gu, and pass it down for generations.

39. *Mawangdui hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu* 馬王堆漢墓帛書正理小組 [The Official Editorial Board of the Silk Manuscripts of Mawangdui], *Mawangdui hanmu boshu* (BS) 馬王堆漢墓帛書 [The Han-Dynasty Silk Manuscripts of Mawangdui], (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980, 1983), vols. 1-4.

40. *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu*, 4:155, 165; cf. Wile, *Art of the Bedchamber*, pp. 78-81. The differences in terminology between the two sections are minor. (This version is the *He Yin Yang*.) For discussion see Vivienne Lo, "Crossing the 'Inner Pass': An 'Inner/Outer' Distinction in Early Chinese Medicine." *East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine* 17 (2000): 15-65.

41. *Maishu shiwen* 脈書釋文 [Channel book], *Yinshu shiwen* 引書釋文 [Pulling book]. Reported in *Zhangjiashan Hanmu zhujian zhengli xiaozu*, *Jiangling Zhangjiashan Hanjian gaishu* 江陵張家山漢簡

老子道德經 (Zhuzi jicheng
Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao*
2 *Based on the Recently Dis-*
covered (New York: Ballantine

medical corpus consists of
texts written on three sheets
of Wangdui Tomb 3 in 1973,
p. 2E. The individual manu-
scripts have been assigned titles
on the basis of their contents.
See Wangdui medical manu-
scripts; *Early Chinese Medical*
Literature, p. 17. Columbia
University Press, 1985.
See also general relevant discus-
sions in *China: A His-*
torical and Narrative Studies of Health
Care (Berkeley: University of
California Press, 1985).
See also Wile, *The Art of*
Sexual Yoga Classics In-
terpreted in Techniques (Albany:

Medical Literature, pp. 17-18.
The affliction of demonic
spirits is attributed to the pernicious
influences believed to cultivate
these entities.

馬王堆漢墓竹簡編輯小組, *馬王堆漢墓竹簡*
[The Han-Mawangdui], (Bei-
jing: 1983), vols. 1-4.
See also *hu*, 4:155, 165; cf.
178-81. The differ-
ences between the two sections are
discussed in *Yang*. For discus-
sion of the 'Inner Pass': An
Early Chinese Medi-
cine and Medicine 17

[Channel book],
p. 106]. Reported in
馬王堆漢墓竹簡
I 陵張家山漢簡

概述 Wenwu 1 (1985): 9-16. Transcribed in *Zhang-*
jiashan Hanjian zhengli zu, Zhangjiashan Hanjian
yinshu shiwen 張家山漢簡引書釋文, *Wenwu* 10
(1990): 82-86; analysis by Peng Hao 彭浩, *Zhang-*
jiashan Hanjian yinshu chutan 張家山漢簡引書初
探, *Wenwu* 10 (1990): 87-91.

42. In a similar story about the phoenix, Xiao
Shi could imitate the sound of the phoenix with
his flute. He married a princess, and later, with
her, transformed into twin phoenixes and flew away
(LXZ 35). Liu Xiang (attrib.), *Liexian zhuan* 列仙
傳 [Collected Life Stories of Immortals], in *Dao zang*
["Treasury of Daoist Writings"—the complete en-
cyclopedic collection], 138.

43. This literature is not specifically Daoist, but
overlapped with the Daoist hagiographies described
above, specifically in its treatment of animals. For
a useful survey see Robert Ford Campany, *Strange*
Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China
(Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), pp. 52-79, especially
52, 58-59 and 79. References to what follows are
from Gan Bao 干寶 (335-349), *Soushen ji* 搜神記
(SSJ) [Records of an Inquest in to the Spirit Realm],
Congshu jicheng v. 2692-4. See also Tao Qian 陶潛
(Tao Yuanming 陶元明 365-427, attrib.), *Soushen*
houji 搜神後記 [Further Records of an Inquest in to
the Spirit Realm], *Congshu jicheng* v. 2695; *Zhangjia-*
shan Hanmu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 張家山漢墓竹
簡正理小組, ed. 1985-90.

44. Campany, *Strange Writing*, pp. 247-53.

45. SSJ 6:37.

46. SSJ 6:38.

47. SSJ 6:39, 40, 43 and 44.

48. SSJ 6:39-40 and 43.

49. SSJ 6:38.

50. SSJ 6:39.

51. SSJ 6:40.

52. SSJ 6:43.

53. SSJ 6:48.

54. SSJ 6:46 and 47.

55. SSJ 6:45.

56. SSJ 6:39.

57. SSJ 6:43.

58. SSJ 6:41 and 46.

59. SSJ 12:81 cf. Kenneth J. DeWoskin and J.I.

Crump, Jr. (ed. and trans.), *In Search of the Super-*
natural: The Written Record (Stanford: Stanford Uni-
versity Press, 1996), pp. 142-44.

60. Somewhat misleadingly described by De-
woskin and Crump as "virility" and "mothering
spirit." For more on cock and hen, see Raphals,
Sharing the Light, ch. 6.

61. SSJ juan 12 p. 81.

62. SSJ juan 12 p. 81.

63. SSJ 14:93.

64. SSJ 14:94.

65. SSJ 14:94-95.

66. SSJ 18:121.

67. SSJ 20:133.

68. SSJ 20:133.

69. SSJ 20:133-34.

70. SSJ 20:134 and 136.

71. SSJ 20:135.

72. SSJ 20:134-35.

73. SSJ 20:135-36.

74. SSJ 20:136. For further discussion see Cam-
pany, *Strange Writings*, pp. 384-93.

75. The *Baopuzi neipian* [Esoteric Chapters of the
Book of the Preservation-of-Solidity Master] Ge Hong
describes the preparation of alchemical elixirs; the
Daoist scholar Tao Hongjing also authored the *Shen*
Nong bencao [Collected Commentaries on Shen Nong's
Classic of Materia Medica]; the *Taiqing danjing yao-*
jue [Taiqing Elixir Classic Oral Digest] of Sun Simiao
contains elixir recipes.

76. For example, one recipe for lizard bites in-
cludes the instruction to "Seal it with one yang sheaf
of jin. Then incinerate deer antler. Drink it with
urine." Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature*,
p. 54.

77. In fact, taboos and restrictions, so charac-
teristic of many religions, were and are sparse in
Daoism. Unlike Judaism and Islam, it provides no
list of taboo animals and animal uses (though some
Daoist sects do have taboos). Unlike Hinduism and
Buddhism, it does not enjoin nonviolence (though,
again, some Daoist sects do, having probably picked
up the idea from Buddhism). Unlike many religions
(including early Judaism, most "animistic" tradi-
tions, and even Confucianism), it did not origi-

nally provide specific directions for animal conservation. Still less were animals worshiped as gods (as in Egypt) or as persons who were human in mythic time and still have human and divine attributes (as in most of Native America). Joseph Needham saw Daoism as the key ideology underlying early science in China, but only in medicine does Daoism

take a scientific attitude toward animals, and here animals are considered only as sources for drugs. The animal management conspicuous in early Confucian and syncretist texts (Anderson, "Flowering Apricot"), based on empirical observation, finds no echo in Daoism (except in obvious borrowings).