



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

A stairway to heaven : Daoist self-cultivation in early modern China

Enckevort, P.G.G. van

Citation

Enckevort, P. G. G. van. (2020, June 3). *A stairway to heaven : Daoist self-cultivation in early modern China*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/92368>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/92368>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/92368> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Enkevort, P.G.G.

Title: A stairway to heaven : Daoist self-cultivation in early modern China

Issue Date: 2020-06-03

2

Writing and Publishing

In this chapter, we examine Wu Shouyang's writings, the different editions, and their history of writing publication. There are three sections. In the first section, I introduce the editions. We look at the extant editions, the non-extant editions, and other titles associated with Wu. In the second section, I examine these editions in more detail, comparing them to sort out the different arrangements of textual units and pointing out a few issues. In the third section, I briefly summarize the writing and publication history.

Editions

There are six extant editions of Wu Shouyang's writings, three non-extant writings, and one title attributed to Wu as a product of spirit writing.²³⁴ The *Tianxian zhengli zhilun* (edition 1 below) and the *Tianxian zhengli zhilun zengzhu* (edition 2 below) were the only texts written by Wu that were immediately published in printed form and intended for general circulation. Between 1613 and 1641, however, Wu wrote a variety of other texts, including dialogues with disciples, various verses and jottings, and Wu's autobiography. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, these texts have apparently only circulated in manuscript form. There are four editions (edition 3 to 6 below).

Extant Editions

(1) *Tianxian zhengli zhilun* 天仙正理直論, (1622/1842)

In the *Jiyi zhi zhengdao mishu shiqi zhong* 濟一子證道秘書十七種, a collection of texts edited by Fu Jinquan 傅金綰 (1765–1844) and first published in 1842, we can find the *Tianxian zhilun changsheng dusi neilian jindanjue xinfa* 天仙直論長生度世內煉金丹訣心法.²³⁵ This text appears to reproduce the *Tianxian zhengli zhilun*, written by Wu Shouyang and first published in 1622.²³⁶ This is the only known edition of this text and without other editions it is impossible to establish the extent of any, if any, editorial interventions by Fu or others between 1622 and 1842.

(2) *Tianxian zhengli zhilun zengzhu* 天仙正理直論增註, (1639/1764)

In 1639, Wu himself published a substantially revised edition of the *Tianxian zhengli zhilun* titled the *Tianxian zhengli zhilun zengzhu*. He revised the text, added his own annotations, and let his cousin Wu Shouxu add his annotations as well. He further added the *Daoyuan qianshuo* 道原淺說, the *Benxu* 本序, the *Zhilun qiyou* 直論起由, the *Houba* 後跋, and the *Zengzhu shuo* 增註說. Wu's preface, the *Benxu* 本序, is dated to the autumn of 1639.²³⁷ According to Shen Zhaoding, who arranged the third reprint, this first printing was arranged by a disciple from Suzhou named Wu Chengchuan 吳澄川, with the (financial) help of Ji Huiji 齊惠吉 from Nanjing and Tu Zhifen 涂之芬 from Nanchang.²³⁸ The blocks were stored in Wu's studio in Nanjing. A copy of this first edition is not available in any public collection. The earliest edition in a public collection is the third reprint arranged by Shen Zhaoding in 1764.²³⁹

(3) *Xianfo bezong yulu* 仙佛合宗語錄 & *Dandao jiupian* 丹道九篇, (1640/1805–1816)

In the “old” *Daozang jiyao*, edited between 1805 and 1816 by Jiang Yuanting 蔣元庭 (1755–1819; Yupu 予蒲), we can find the *Xianfo bezong yulu* 仙佛合宗語錄 (JY 231) and the *Wu zhenren dandao jiupian* 伍真人丹道九篇 (JY 235).²⁴⁰

(A) The *Wu zhenren Dandao jiupian* consists of nine dialogues with the Prince of Ji (in edition 4, this text is titled *Xianfo bezong yulu*).

(B) The *Xianfo bezong yulu* consists of the collection of dialogues with Wu's other students and Wu's

²³⁴ In a bibliography of Wu Shouyang's writings in the appendices, the reader can find a list of all editions of Wu's works. That list includes all “editions” in a bibliographical sense; that is to say, all published titles, extant and non-extant, including reeditions and reprints. Here, I begin with specifying the extant editions in a philological sense. That is to say, those texts that—in terms of form and content—represent one “edition.”

²³⁵ This text is referred to with a variety of titles, see the bibliography.

²³⁶ The existence of this text is mentioned in the *Tianxian zhengli zhilun zengzhu* published in 1639. The *Tianxian zhilun changsheng dusi neilian jindanjue xinfa* includes a preface by Wu dated 1622. A note at the end of the text also states that the completion of this text took place in 1622.

²³⁷ *Tianxian zhengli zhixu, biji*, 4.11, 7548: “autumn of the *jimao* year, the twelfth year of the Chongzhen reign 崇禎十二年己卯秋.”

²³⁸ Wu Chengchuan is also named by Wu himself in the postscript to the *Xianfo bezong yulu*.

²³⁹ One copy of what appears to be this first edition has surfaced on the public radar through its trade on the online platform kongfz.com. On this copy, see “Research Note Copy 1” in the appendices.

²⁴⁰ I refer to the *Daozang jiyao* edited by Jiang Yuanting as the “old” *Daozang jiyao*. When I mention the *Daozang jiyao* without any further qualifiers, I mean to refer to the *Chongkan Daozang jiyao* 重刊道藏輯要 which was edited by He Longxiang 賀龍驤 and Peng Hanran 彭瀚然 and published in 1906. For more information on the history of these collections, see, especially, Esposito, “The Discovery of Jiang Yuanting's *Daozang jiyao* in Jiangnan” and “The Invention of a Quanzhen Canon” and the forthcoming results of the Daozang Jiyao Project.

autobiography, the *Wu zhenren Xiuxiange* 伍真人修仙歌.

(4) *Xianfo bezong yulu* 仙佛合宗語錄, (1640/1829)

This is the earliest printed stand-alone edition of the *Xianfo bezong yulu* and it is a different text than the *Daozang jiyao* edition of the *Xianfo bezong yulu*. The earliest copy I have been able to identify was published in 1829 by the Chunhe tang 春和堂.²⁴¹ This clearly appears to be the edition that would later be included in the *Wu-Liu xianzong* anthology. That edition consists of the nine chapters of dialogues with the Prince of Ji and two collections of dialogues (*Menren wenda* 門人問答 and *Pinggu lei* 評古類) referred to as appendix.

(5) *Tianxian lunyu xianfo bezong* 天仙論語仙佛合宗, (1847)

The *Tianxian lunyu xianfo bezong* 天仙論語仙佛合宗 was published by the Gonghui tang 恭惠堂. There is a preface dated 1847, written by Zhu Zhongtang 朱仲棠 (fl. 1847; *hao* Qianyangzi 潛陽子) from Macheng 麻城 (Hubei). Zhu was a student of Fu Jinqian. The text body consists of six chapters with a short table of contents titled *Tianxian lunyu liulei* 天仙論語六類: (1) *Shoushou lei* 授受類; (2) *San wenda lei* 散問答類; (3) *Pinggu lei* 評古類; (4) *Za wenda lei* 雜問答類; (5) *Benxingji lei* 本行紀類; (6) *Zayong lei* 雜詠類. It is not clear whether this edition contained any original prefaces; the facsimile edition in the *Zangvai daoshu* only includes Zhu Zhongtang's preface.

(6) *Tianxian zhengli bing Xianfo bezong yulu quanshu zhushi* 天仙正理並仙佛合宗語錄全書註釋, (1641/1882)

The *Tianxian zhengli bing Xianfo bezong yulu quanshu zhushi* is the title of a manuscript anthology of the *Tianxian zhengli* and the *Xianfo bezong yulu*.²⁴² The latest dated preface is dated 1641. The manuscript itself is dated 1882 (Guangxu *ba'nian* 光緒八年). Thus, it appears that this manuscript from 1882 claims to reproduce an earlier manuscript that was produced by Wu Shouyang in 1641. The title *Xianfo bezong yulu* refers here to three texts: (1) the *Tianxian lunyu zengzhu* 天仙論語增註; (2) the *Xifang dongtu chansui zengzhu* 西方東土禪髓增註; and (3) the *Dushi yuanshu yugao* 度世緣疏語稿. The extant manuscript only contains the *Tianxian lunyu* while the other two texts appear to be lost. The specified table of contents of the *Tianxian lunyu* lists the following sections: (1) *Shoushoulei* 授受類; (2) *San wenda lei* 散問答類; (3) *Benxingji lei* 本行紀類; (4) *Pinggu lei* 評古類; (5) *Za yuda lei* 雜語答類; and (6) *Zayong lei* 雜詠類.

Non-Extant Editions

Some of Wu's writings can at present not be found in any public collection. These now non-extant writings are indicated by their titles and descriptions in Wu's other works. We can identify three such lost writings: (1) *Xifang dongtu chansui zengzhu* 西方東土禪髓增註; (2) *Dushi yuanshu yugao* 度世緣疏語稿; and (3) *Shendan lilun jiu Zhang* 神丹理論九章. According to Wu Shouxi's preface for edition 6, Wu Shouyang explains in the *Xifang dongtu chansui* why Daoist scriptures contain Buddhist principles and why the Buddha made use of Daoist principles. According to descriptions of the *Dushi yuanshu yugao*, it included two further texts titled *Daiseng huayuan shuyu* 代僧化緣疏語 and the *Daidao huayuan shuyu* 代道化緣疏語. Unfortunately, no further information can be found on these texts. In one of the dialogues with his disciples, it is suggested that Wu authored a text on alchemy titled *Shendan lilun jiu Zhang* 神丹理論九章.²⁴³ This title is mentioned only once in Wu's works and no such text is currently extant.

Other

Fu Jinqian's collected works also contain the *Tianxian zhengli dufa dianjing* 天仙正理讀法點睛. There is a preface dated 1820, signed at the Heyang danshi 合陽丹室 and an undated postscript signed Jiyi daoren 濟一道人, that is, Fu himself.²⁴⁴ This text is a commentary by Fu on the *Tianxian zhengli*. The Heyang danshi is the name of an altar near Chongqing where this text was received by Fu through spirit writing. The

²⁴¹ See "Research Note Copy 4" in the appendices.

²⁴² See "Research Note Copy 3" in the appendices.

²⁴³ *Xianfo bezong yulu*, *biji*, 2.84a, 7506.

²⁴⁴ See the annotated bibliography in the appendices. Also see Valussi, "Printing and Religion."

postscript mentions that Fu wrote this text after a request from his disciple Yao Yizhi 姚一智 to clarify the meaning of the *Tianxian zhenli*. This work could be considered an additional edition of the *Tianxian zhenli*, but I treat it here as an independent title.

Several studies credit Wu Shouyang with writing a text titled *Jindan yaojue*. This *Jindan yaojue* 金丹要訣 first appears in the “old” *Daozang jiyao* which was edited between 1805 and 1816. The heading clarifies that this text was not actually written by Wu Shouyang himself but a product of spirit writing, recorded by Zhao Zhixin 趙執信. The *Jindan yaojue* was also included in the *Chongkan daozeang jiyao* from 1906 and its various reprints. In the *Daozeang jinghua lu* we can find an edition edited by Ding Fubao.²⁴⁵ This edition includes Ding’s punctuation but lacks prefaces or postscripts and the heading from the *Daozeang jiyao* edition, referring to Zhao Zhixin’s authorship, is completely missing. There is only a heading simply attributing this text to Wu Shouyang directly. This may have played a role in the fact that several later reference works have presented this title as Wu’s writing.²⁴⁶ These two texts bear testimony to the fact that, in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century, there were at least two groups involved in spirit writing producing texts inspired by Wu Shouyang.

Comparing the Editions

The history of the *Tianxian zhenli zhilun zengzhu* is relatively clear. First printed in 1639, the extant editions can be traced with reasonable certainty to this first edition. As a matter of fact, a copy of the first edition appears to circulate in private collections and it may be a matter of time before this or another copy of the first edition will become publicly available.²⁴⁷ The history of the rest of Wu’s writings is much less clear. Of his first publication—the *Tianxian zhenli zhilun* that was published in 1622—we only have one edition that was published in 1842. Of the dialogues with the prince, the dialogues with other disciples, the autobiography, and the verses, we have four different editions. These editions have different titles for the same texts and sometimes the same titles referring to different texts. Selections and arrangements of texts differ and there are also variations in the textual units themselves. These writings circulated in at least four different manuscript editions until they were first printed in the early nineteenth century. In what follows, I will briefly summarize the main conclusions of my research on these editions.

Four editions of the Dialogues, Verses, and Autobiography

Between 1613 and 1641, Wu wrote dialogues, verses, and an autobiography that were not published for general circulation until almost two centuries later. These texts only circulated in manuscript form until the first half of the nineteenth century. We now have four different editions of these texts, three in print and one manuscript. Counting the two *Daozeang jiyao* texts as one edition, these four editions are:²⁴⁸

1. 1805–1816: *Daozeang jiyao* edition
 - a. *Xianfo bezong yulu* 仙佛合宗語錄 (JY 231); (1640/1805–1816)
 - b. *Wu zhenren dandao jiu pian* 伍真人丹道九篇 (JY 235); (1640/1805–1816)
2. 1829: *Xianfo bezong yulu* 仙佛合宗語錄; Chunhe tang
3. 1847: *Tianxian lunyu xianfo bezong* 天仙論語仙佛合宗; Gonghui tang
4. 1882: *Tianxian zhenli bing Xianfo bezong yulu quanshu zhusi* 天仙正理並仙佛合宗語錄全書註釋; (preface 1641)

The two editions of the *Tianxian lunyu liulei*

Edition 4, the manuscript of the *Tianxian zhenli bing Xianfo bezong yulu quanshu zhusi*, is not available in a public collection. We only have a few pictures, descriptions, as well as transcriptions of the prefaces.²⁴⁹ Hence, it is impossible at this point to discuss the contents of this work in any detail. We can, however, note

²⁴⁵ In the margin of this text we can read “revised edition from master Shouyi 守一子校正本,” referring to the editor Ding Fubao (master Shouyi).

²⁴⁶ For further information on this text, see the entry in the *Daozeang Jiyao Project* (forthcoming).

²⁴⁷ See “Research Note Copy 1” in the appendices.

²⁴⁸ Note that these are the last four editions of the six extant editions discussed above.

²⁴⁹ See “Research Note Copy 3” in the appendices.

a few similarities and differences with edition 3, the *Tianxian lunyu xianfo bezong* that can be found in the *Zangwai daoshu*. First, they share the title *Tianxian lunyu* 天仙論語 that is not found in editions 1 and 2 and that is never referred to by Wu in any of his other writings. Second, they both arrange the textual units in six sets named *Tianxian lunyu liulei* 天仙論語六類.²⁵⁰ There are also differences. First, judging from the table of contents, the actual dialogues included in the six sets appear to be not completely identical.²⁵¹ Second, the prefaces and table of content of the manuscript reveal the existence of the *Xifang dongtu chansui* 西方東土禪髓 and the *Dushi yuan shuyu gao* 度世緣疏語稿. Unfortunately, the manuscript lacks the actual texts and these titles do not appear at all in edition 3. Third, the manuscript includes prefaces otherwise unavailable, transcriptions of which are available in a public source.²⁵² Since edition 4 is not available in a public collection, we cannot examine it here in any further detail but since edition 4 and 3 clearly seem to be two witnesses of a common archetype, I will treat them here as one and the same edition called *Tianxian lunyu liulei* 天仙論語六類.

Comparing the three editions

In “table 1” in the appendix, these three editions are compared in terms of the textual units they contain. Here, I summarize the main conclusions. In table 2 below, the reader sees the three different arrangements of the textual units. The first column combines the two texts from the *Daozang jiyao*; the *Dandao jiapian* in the first row and the sections from the *Xianfo bezong yulu* in the other rows. I refer to the Chunhe tang edition of the *Xianfo bezong yulu* as the *Wu-Liu xianzong* edition, in the second column. The third column represents the *Tianxian lunyu liulei* edition (edition 3 and 4 in the list above).

Table 2: Editions of dialogues

1. <i>Daozang jiyao</i>	2. <i>Wu-Liu xianzong</i>	3. <i>Tianxian lunyu liulei</i>
<i>Dandao jiapian</i> (Nine Chapters)	<i>Xianfo bezong yulu</i> (Nine Chapters)	
no heading	<i>Menren wenda</i>	<i>Shoushou lei</i>
no heading		<i>San wenda lei</i>
<i>Huowen shisiantiao</i>	<i>Pinggu lei</i>	<i>Pinggu lei</i>
<i>Za wenda santiao</i>		<i>Za wenda lei</i>
		<i>Zayong lei</i>
<i>Xinxiang</i>		<i>Wangu Xinxiang</i>
		original prefaces

In what follows, I refer to these three arrangements as the *Daozang jiyao* edition, the *Wu-Liu xianzong* edition, and the *Tianxian lunyu liulei* edition. As the table indicates, none of these editions contains all the texts. Furthermore, there are differences in the texts themselves. The *Daozang jiyao* edition misses the verses (*Zayong lei*). The *Tianxian lunyu liulei* edition misses the *Nine Chapters*. The *Wu-Liu xianzong* edition contains the *Nine Chapters* and only a limited selection from the dialogues.

Authorship

The only important question about Wu’s authorship concerns the degree of involvement of his cousin Wu Shouyu. In both main editions of the *Tianxian zhengli zhibilun zengzhu*, Wu Shouyang is presented as author and annotator while Wu Shouxu is presented as additional annotator. For the *Recorded Sayings*, the situation differs per edition. The Chunhe tang edition, that leads to the edition that was incorporated in the well-known *Wu-Liu xianzong*, does not contain annotations and the authorship is simply attributed to Wu Shouyang. The heading of the *Daozang jiyao* edition of the *Recorded Sayings* suggests that Wu Shouyang only wrote the main text while only Wu Shouxu was responsible for the annotations. The *Tianxian lunyu xianfo bezong* finally suggests that, as with the *Tianxian zhengli zhibilun zengzhu*, Wu wrote the text and the first layer of annotations and Wu Shouxu added his annotations. Wu also suggests in a note that both texts were provided with annotations by himself as well as his cousin.²⁵³ The text of the annotations is inconclusive about the authorship. Some passages are introduced with the name of the author but there is no way of determining

²⁵⁰ See above, extant editions 5 and 6, for the titles of these six sets and note that the sequence in the two editions is different.

²⁵¹ The pictures of the table of content of the manuscript misses the dialogues with Li Xiren, Zhu Xingyuan, and Wu Shouxu where one would expect them on the basis of the other edition.

²⁵² Jingxuzi, *Wu-Liu tianxian jama*. Rev. ed., 2012.

²⁵³ See the *Zengzhu shuo* 增註說 in the *Tianxian zhengli zhibilun zengzhu*.

if this was done systematically. In conclusion, both Wu Shouyang and Wu Shouxu added annotations to all of the writings but, with the exception of a few passages, it is impossible to distinguish systematically between the annotations of these two authors.²⁵⁴ I will therefore treat the whole as Wu Shouyang's work in all intents and purposes.

Internal References

We can find a few passages in Wu's writings in which he describes his own writings or in which, within the text of one writing, he refers to his other writings by using their title. From these "internal references" we can gather how he thought about his own writings. Of particular importance here are those instances in which Wu refers to the *Tianxian zhenli zhilun* from 1622 and instances that show how he referred to his collections of dialogues, verses, and autobiography because these are the writings with an unclear publishing history. From these internal references we can draw the following conclusions. First, the 1622 edition of the *Straightforward Essays* is mentioned in the 1639 annotated edition as well as in the *Recorded Sayings*, attesting to the existence of this edition otherwise only known in the 1842 reprint. Second, Wu himself used the title *Xianfo bezong yulu* to refer to the nine dialogues with the Prince of Ji. These were most probably at some point taken out of a larger collection of dialogues with this prince, reworked in more formalized form around specific topics, and each supplied with a final paragraph that makes a comparison between Daoist and Buddhist terminology; hence the title.²⁵⁵ Third, cross-references in the 1622 edition of the *Straightforward Essays* and the 1640 *Recorded Sayings* suggests that early versions of these texts circulated among Wu's students before their final editions were completed.

External References

From external references to Wu's works in early sources we can conclude a few things. When the *Recorded Sayings* first appear on the radar, in an 1820 preface by Fu Jinquan, Wu Shouyang's writings are described as consisting of the (1) *Tianxian zhenli*, the (2) *Xianfo bezong lunyu* (the dialogues), and the (3) *Xianfo bezong yulu* (the nine dialogues with the Prince of Ji). By 1842, the text of the 1622 *Straightforward Essays* manuscript is printed in Fu Jinquan's edition *Tianxian zhilun changsheng dushi neilian jindanjue xinfa*. In 1847, Fu's disciple Zhu Zhongtang refers to this text as the *Neilian xinfa* and, together with the three titles mentioned by Fu, he lists these four titles as the writings of Wu Shouyang.²⁵⁶ Fu's lineage is responsible for the transmission of the *Tianxian zhenli zhilun* and the *Tianxian lunyu xianfo bezong*.

In 1829, the *Xianfo bezong* was printed as a stand-alone edition. In 1830, scholar-official and literary figure Chen Wenshu 陳文述 (1771–1843), who was also a disciple of the famous Longmen master Min Yide, mentioned obtaining a copy from a monk in Yangzhou.²⁵⁷ This clearly suggests that a stand-alone edition, perhaps the Chunhe tang edition from 1829, circulated among literati circles in Jiangnan, among Buddhist monks, and presumably among disciples of Min Yide.²⁵⁸

The Nineteen Questions of the Prince

According to the heading above the dialogues with the Prince of Ji in the *Daozang jiyao* edition of the *Xianfo bezong yulu*, there should be nineteen dialogues. But the text actually only consists of ten dialogues. At the same time, the *Nine Chapters* consists of nine dialogues with Zhu. Although Wu Shouyang does not explicitly describe this editing process, the logical conclusion appears to be that there were originally nineteen dialogues with Zhu and nine of them were at some point extracted from this larger collection to be reworked into the *Nine Chapters*.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁴ These introductory phrases only appear in the first few chapters, suggesting that the two authors perhaps started out to introduce each of their respective commentaries with these phrases but gave up on this procedure after a few chapters. Alternatively, Wu Shouxu may only have added his comments to the first chapters.

²⁵⁵ The chapters end with the phrase "What the lineage of buddhas calls ... accords with this lineage 佛宗云: ... 合此宗也."

²⁵⁶ This reference can be found in the preface of the *Tianxian lunyu xianfo bezong*.

²⁵⁷ Chen Wenshu, "Lundao shishou shi zhi Sun Baoqi" in *Yidaotang shixuan*, 30.

²⁵⁸ Further, we can note that Chen, in contrast with the other titles he refers to, refers in the main text only to a "secret book" or "book of secrets" (*miji* 秘笈). Perhaps this was just a fanciful reference, but it might also suggest that at this point in time the *Xianfo bezong* was still considered an esoteric text only allowed to be transmitted to the initiated.

²⁵⁹ Ding Changchun has also noted that the "nineteen" questions actually just contain ten questions, but he suggests that the other nine questions were probably lost. See Ding Chanchun, *Wu Shouyang neidan sixiang yanjiu*, 31.

Wu's Autobiography

The *Daozang jiyao* edition of the *Xianfo bezong yulu* includes an edition of Wu's autobiography which is titled *Wu zhenren Xianxiange* 伍真人修仙歌. It is classified there as an appendix (*fulu* 附錄) to the dialogues of the *Xianfo bezong yulu*. The two editions of the *Tianxian lunyu liulei* contain the subheading *Benxingji lei* 本行紀類 which consist of the *Wangu Xianxiange* 萬古修仙歌. The manuscript appears to be missing the actual text. The edition in the *Daozang jiyao* and the *Tianxian lunyu liulei* are basically identical, apart from an occasional different character. This is Wu Shouyang's autobiography, written in heptasyllabic verse and provided with a commentary. The last date clearly mentioned is 1640 or 1641, when Wu's mother passed away.

The Miscellaneous Verses

The table of contents of the two editions of the *Tianxian lunyu liulei* include one section titled "Miscellaneous Verses" (*Zayong lei* 雜咏類). This section appears to be missing from the incomplete manuscript and thus the only edition we have at this moment is the version in the *Tianxian lunyu xianfo bezong* in the *Zangwai daoshu*. This section of verses includes twenty-one verses of which the last one is missing.²⁶⁰

Writing and Publication History

Writing History

The earliest dated text originates from 1613, the year after Wu ended his instruction with Cao. After presenting five verses dedicated to the Prince of Ji, Wu mentions "The above five verses were all composed in the *guichou* year during the Wanli reign."²⁶¹ It is precisely from this short note that it is concluded that in 1613 Wu resided in Changsha where he had started to instruct the Prince of Ji.²⁶² The next dated text, the *Huobou lun* 火候論, was written in 1615. We can find this text in the *Tianxian zhibilun changsheng dusi neilian jindanjue xinfa*, which is in all probability the text from the *Tianxian zhengli zhibilun* from 1622. Here, this chapter is not dated. In the final edition of the *Tianxian zhengli zhibilun zengzhu*, published in 1639, this revised chapter is now titled the *Huobou jing* 火候經.²⁶³ In that later version, we can find a signature and the last part of it reads:

...written in the bright era [or in the Ming period?], 1242 years [after] the prophetic record of Jingyang in the spring of the *yimao* year (1615) during the Wanli reign. This the first time I started to write this by assembling these answers to Taihe, the Prince of Ji's questions.

...書於旌陽識記、千二百四十二年之明時，萬曆乙卯春日云。集此答吉王太和之問，最初發筆作此起。²⁶⁴

Hence, we know that Wu started his first essays in 1615. Seven years later, in 1622, Wu had finished the

²⁶⁰ Unfortunately, the text in the *Zangwai daoshu* facsimile is hardly readable. The text is included in Jingxuzi, *Wu-Liu tianxian famai*. Rev. ed., 2012.

²⁶¹ *Tianxian lunyu xianfo bezong*, 4.44b, in ZW 24:451: "以上五首皆萬曆癸丑稿。"

²⁶² These five verses, as they can be found in the *Tianxian lunyu xianfo bezong*, are placed under the somewhat random headings: (1) *He da Jiwang Zhu Taihe* 和答吉王朱太和, one verse; (2) *Yoube da Jiwang Taihe yun* 又和答吉王太和韻, two verses; (3) *Youda Jiwang Taihe* 又答吉王太和, one verse; and (4) *Youda Jiwang Zhu Taihe* 又答吉王朱太和, one verse. The term "harmony" (*he* 和) here refers to the practice of writing a poem in reply using the same rhyme sequence as the original poem to which one replies. The date appears in the segment immediately following, with the heading *He Jiwang Zhu Taihe yunda suowen* 和吉王朱太和韻答所問. Different versions of these same five verses can be found in the dialogues with Zhu Taihe in the *Recorded Sayings* (dialogues 3, 4 and 6), in an appendix titled 附錄和吉王朱太和詩二首 and in the second chapter of the *Nine Chapters*.

²⁶³ Concerning the title, Wu says: "That all the [other] chapters are [called] 'essays' and only this one is called 'scripture' [is because it contains] the truly constant and unchanging scriptural language that is transmitted by the highest perfected and holy ones throughout the eternal kalpas. 諸篇皆論此獨名曰經者皆古高真上聖傳於永劫真常不易之經語也。" (*Tianxian zhengli zhibilun, biji*, 4.20b, 7558). We are told in the *Nine Chapters* that Wu transmitted the first oral formula to the Prince of Ji in 1615. In the beginning of the chapter it is remarked: "Taihe the Prince of Ji repeatedly asked about the fire phasing, so Master Chongxu collected various discussions from the saints and perfected ones to form this scripture. 吉王太和重問火候冲虛子集聖真諸言而為此經。" (*Tianxian zhengli zhibilun, biji*, 4.21a, 7559).

²⁶⁴ *Tianxian zhengli zhibilun, biji*, 4.52b, 7574.

first edition of the *Straightforward Essays*, the *Tianxian zhengli zhilun*. In the last lines of the final chapter we read:

This manuscript was finished in the *renxu* year (1622) of the Tianqi reign period. I actually wanted to keep it private for the students of my school but, then again, that would not be thinking of saving all beings; to focus on oneself and not also [focus] on all [beings], is certainly not the idea of sharing goodness with the people.²⁶⁵ Therefore, I annotated this collection so as to pass it on to the generations to come. [In this way, I hope to] let those who see to their inner nature and lifespan and attend to the Dao and its Virtue, and who are fated to encounter a teacher who [is willing to] transmit the oral formulae, obtain this book in order to verify [the instructions of their teacher], thus spontaneously coming to an understanding. Just like the moon revealing itself when the clouds open up, or like the mirror brightening up while the dust settles. Embracing all illusions and restoring them to perfection, subsuming the myriad methods and restoring them to unity. The Three Origins proceed inwards and the spirit will spontaneously have an audience with the Origins. When you practice according to this and refine your thoughts without neglect, riding a white cloud and returning to your native place begins here.

此書稿成於天啟壬戌歲，實欲藏之為門下學者，又非普度眾生之心，專於己而不兼乎眾，並非善與人同之意。故此集註，以傳後來。使世之留心性命、專心道德者，有緣遇師，傳之口訣，得此書印証，自有悟入。如雲開月皎，塵靜鑒明，包諸幻以歸真，總萬法而歸一。三元循於內，神自朝元。依此而行，精思不怠。乘白雲而歸故里，端從此始矣。²⁶⁶

In 1639, Wu re-edited these *Straightforward Essays*, adding his own annotations and then letting his cousin Wu Shouxu add his annotations as well, to complete the *Tianxian zhengli zhilun zengzhu*. At the same place in this text where we found the above passage in the earlier edition of this text from 1622, we now read:

This manuscript was finished in the *renxu* year of the Tianqi reign (1622). I actually wanted keep it private for the privileged viewing by students from my school but unexpectedly it was stolen by someone. But when scholars steel immortality books [it signifies that] their feelings of admiration have prevailed and one can blame them or one can empathize with them. [The manuscript] was lost because of friend Luo 駱 and therefore Luo conveyed the idea of having it printed, but it was not without some minor omissions. Now, in the autumn of the *jimao* year (1639) during the Chongzhen reign, I examined the old manuscripts and added annotations. Virtuous Daoist friends had it printed again to deliver lots of people. They all wished to let it circulate until the end of Heaven and Earth! Therefore, I added this note.

此書稿成於天啟壬戌歲，實欲藏之為門下學者便心目，不意被人盜去。但儒者竊取仙書，愛慕之心勝，可怪又可憐也！由駱友而失，駱故想像而梓，不無疏略。今崇禎己卯秋，查舊稿，加註。賢道友復梓之，以廣度人，流行於天地之終，皆所願也！故附識。²⁶⁷

In a later postscript, we can read that the final edition was finished during Double Seven festival and that these “Daoist friends” responsible for the first printing were Wu Chengchuan 吳澄川 from Suzhou, Ji Huiji 齊惠吉 from Nanjing, and Tu Zhifen 涂之芬 from Nanchang. The printing blocks were stored in Wu’s studio.²⁶⁸

The text I refer to as the *Nine Chapters*, is dated to the spring of 1640. That is the collection of nine chapters of dialogues with the Prince of Ji, alternatively known as the *Xianfo bezong yulu* or as the *Dandao jiu pian*. In an accompanying note, we are told the story of the four transmissions to this prince, which supposedly formed the origin of this text:

Master Chongxu first transmitted the oral formulas for Hundred Days Refining Essence to Taihe, the Prince of Ji in the *jimao* year (1615) during the Wanli reign. More than seven years later, in the *renxu* year (1622) during the Tianqi reign, he transmitted the oral formulas to gather the great medicine. Again six years later, in the *nuchen* year (1628) during the Chongzhen reign, he transmitted for a third time, this time the oral formulas for the Five Dragons bearing aloft the Saint. [The prince] then asked to be transmitted the complete directions to the common lineage of the immortals and buddhas but it was refused. It was not until more than four years later, in the *renshen* year (1632), that it was allowed to transmit it. [Wu] then completely revealed the complete directions to the mysterious wonders of the common lineage of the immortals and buddhas in

²⁶⁵ Wu is here literally citing part of a preface written in 1599 by Zhuang Guanghuan 莊廣還 for his compilation *Jingtu ziliang quanji*.

²⁶⁶ *Neilian jindan xinfa*, 61b-62a, in ZW 11:280–281.

²⁶⁷ *Tianxian zhengli zhilun, biji*, 4.78b, 7587.

²⁶⁸ This we are told by Shen Zhaoding, who presumably based himself on one of the earlier prefaces he discarded to replace with his own.

an instruction. He furthermore transmitted the talisman of the orthodox transmission of students of patriarch Qiu. Because of the thoroughness of his questions and the detailedness of the answers, they were collected in nine chapters, and it was advised: “This truly discloses the most valuable treasures of the august heaven. It can only be transmitted when you encounter persons of the same morality and the same aspiration, as well as having worthy ancestors. Be careful not to recklessly transmit to crooks.” Signed by Chongxu Wu Shouyang, eighth-generation disciple of the school of patriarch Qiu with talisman, in the spring of the *gengchen* year (1640), the thirteenth year of the Chongzhen reign of the great Ming.

冲虚子於萬曆乙卯，初傳吉王太和殿下百日煉精口訣。越七載，至天啟壬戌，再傳以採大藥口訣。又六年，至崇禎戊辰，三傳之以五龍捧聖口訣。復求傳仙佛合宗全旨，未允。越四載，至壬申，始允度之。遂將仙佛合宗玄妙全旨，盡泄於示諭之間。更將邱祖門下正傳符節，亦傳付之。因其問之審而答之詳，集成九章，乃囑之曰：此實宣揚皇天之至寶，必遇同德、同志及祖父仁賢之輩，方可度之，慎勿妄傳匪人也！時大明崇禎十三年庚辰春，邱祖門下第八派分符領節弟子，冲虚伍守陽識。²⁶⁹

Wu’s autobiography must have been finished in late 1640 or early 1641 at the earliest. The text mentions the death of Wu’s mother, which took place in the eleventh month of the thirteenth year of the reign of Chongzhen, in the Gregorian calendar either late 1640 or early 1641.

Finally, we can find the latest dated texts in the manuscript titled *Tianxian zhengli bing Xianfo bezong yulu quanshu* 天仙正理並仙佛合宗語錄全書. This text contains several prefaces, including a preface by Wu Shouyang dated autumn 1641.²⁷⁰ As the title indicates, this is an anthology of the *Tianxian zhengli zhibun* and the *Xianfo bezong yulu*, whereby this latter title refers to the *Tianxian lunyu liulei*, the collection of dialogues, verses (*Zayong lei* 雜詠類), and the autobiography.

The writing history of the *Straightforward Essays* is clear. The writing began in 1615, when Wu was tutor to the Prince of Ji in Changsha, with the essay on fire phasing. Around 1622, Wu had finished nine such essays. This manuscript was intended for private circulation, but after a copy was stolen it was printed in 1622 as the *Tianxian zhengli zhibun*. The only edition of this text can be found in the *Zangwai daoshu* version of the *Tianxian zhibun changsheng dushi neilian jindanjue xinfa*. In 1639, a heavily revised version of this text was published as the *Tianxian zhengli zhibun zengzhu*. At the same time, since 1613, Wu had been working on other texts. In 1613, he wrote the first verses. Before 1622, there must also have been some version of the dialogues, because they are mentioned in the *Tianxian zhengli zhibun*. By 1640, nine dialogues with the Prince of Ji were reworked into the *Nine Chapters*. The autobiography was finished in 1641. Finally, the *Tianxian zhengli zhibun zengzhu*, the dialogues, the verses, and the autobiography were combined in a manuscript intended for private circulation and finished in late 1641.

Publishing History

Wu’s first title, the 1622 *Tianxian zhengli zhibun*, has been printed in one edition in 1842 by Fu Jinquan. All other editions of this text—facsimile reproductions and new typesettings—are derived from this edition. The publication history of the 1639 *Tianxian zhengli zhibun zengzhu* is a bit more complex. The reader can find it illustrated in figure 1. We can distinguish four extant editions. First is the Shen Zhaoding edition from 1764 of which copies are accessible in public collections. Second is the Li Chunyi edition, the original edition of 1804 non-extant, but transmitted in the *Wu-Liu xianzong* edition. Third is the *Daozang jiyao* edition, which must have been based on both Shen Zhaoding’s as well as the earlier Xie Sifang edition.²⁷¹ Fourth is the 1855 Yihua tang edition, which also shows elements of both Shen Zhaoding’s and Xie Sifang’s edition, but is different from the *Daozang jiyao* edition. Except for one facsimile reprint of the Yihua tang edition, all modern editions are based on the *Wu-Liu xianzong* or the *Daozang jiyao* edition.²⁷²

The publication history of Wu’s remaining texts is again more complicated. A simplified illustration can be found in figure 2. These texts were not intended for a general audience and were first printed in the early nineteenth century. Until then, they only circulated as manuscripts. Furthermore, the extant editions show that there were three arrangements of the textual units: the *Daozang jiyao* edition, the *Wu-Liu xianzong*

²⁶⁹ *Dandao jianpian yuanyi, biji*, 6.20a, 7630.

²⁷⁰ See “Research Note Copy 3” in the appendices.

²⁷¹ There is, to my knowledge, no copy of this Xie Sifang edition in a public collection, but “Research Note Copy 2” in the appendices shows that copies of this edition circulate in private collections. The same seems to be the case for the first edition from 1639 (see “Research Note Copy 1 in the appendices).

²⁷² Details about all these editions can be found in the annotated bibliography in the appendices.

edition, and the *Tianxian lunyu* edition. There appear to have been two early manuscript versions but there might have been more. The first would be the *Dandao jiu pian* in the *Daozang jiyao* which has a preface dated 1640 and which according to internal references should have been titled *Xianfo bezong yulu*. The second is the *Tianxian lunyu* or *Tianxian lunyu lilei* 天仙論語六類, with a preface dated 1641. The *Daozang jiyao* edition combined the first manuscript with the second but misses the verses. The *Wu-Liu xianzong* edition combines the first manuscript with a selection of the dialogues from the second manuscript. It misses many dialogues, the verses, and the autobiography. The *Tianxian lunyu* edition, finally, is presumably based on the *Tianxian lunyu* manuscript and has all the textual units, except for the nine chapters of the *Xianfo bezong yulu*/*Dandao jiu pian*. All modern editions are derived from these three editions.

Figure 1: Timeline *Tianxian zhengli zhilun zengzhu* editions

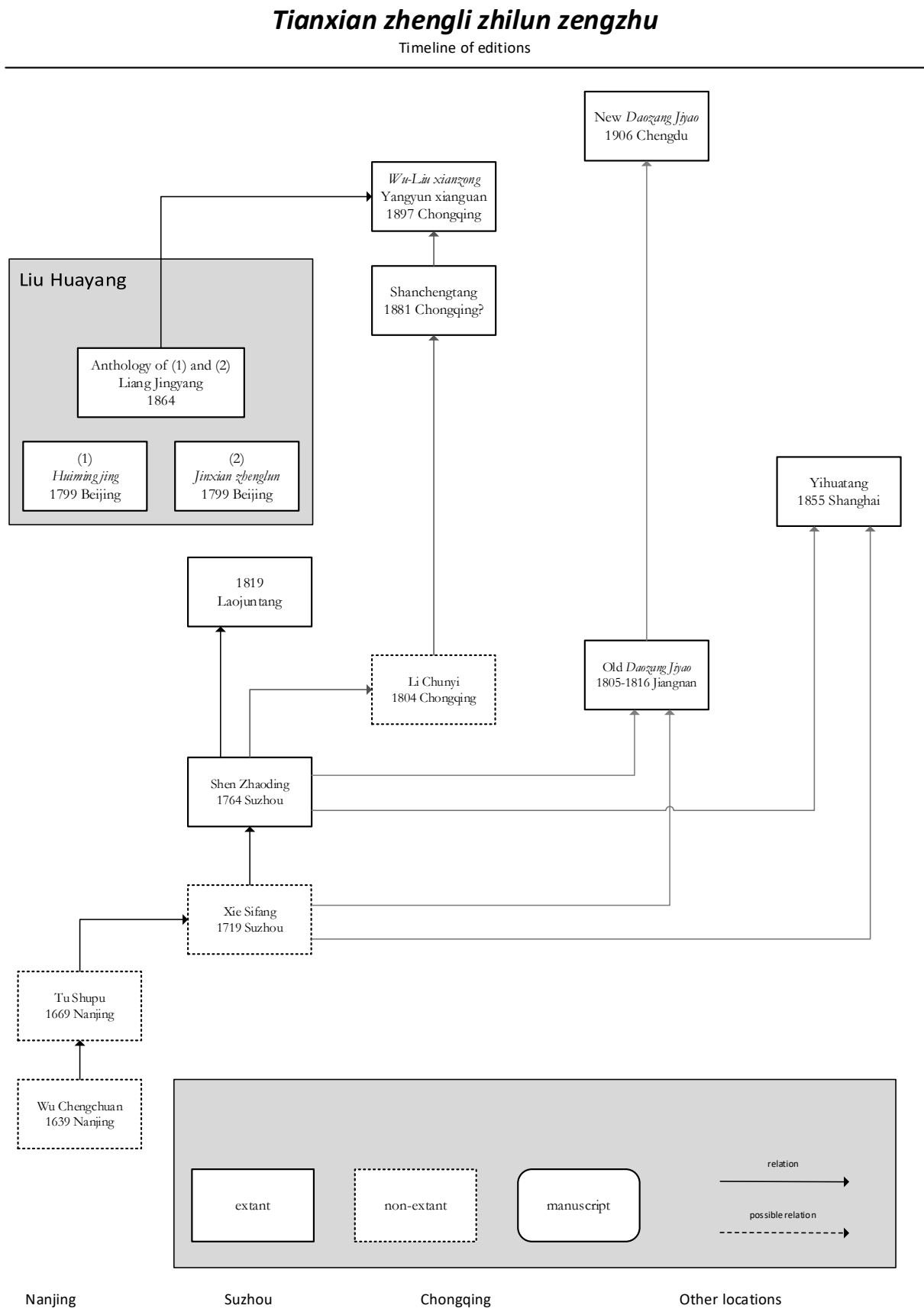


Figure 2: Timeline other titles editions

