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## Getting It for Oneself: An Analysis of Chao Jiong's Conception of the Three Teachings and His Method of Self-Cultivation

After retiring from office in 1026, the Northern Song literatus Chao Jiong 晁迥 (951–1034) chose to devote the remaining years of his life to reading, contemplation, and self-cultivation. Isolating himself within his family compound in the capital, Chao engaged in rigorous textual study, gymnastic exercises, and various forms of meditation that were designed to prolong his life, calm his mind, and facilitate his realization of the *Dao*. Chao eschewed rigid sectarianism and he utilized the teachings and practices of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism to help him realize these objectives. Furthermore, he wrote about his post-retirement activities in detail, penning three separate texts in which he recorded his observations on the Three Teachings, the term traditionally used to refer to those three major practices, and their utility in furthering his efforts to cultivate the self. Chao's texts – *Zhaode xinbian* 昭德新編 (*New Compilation from Zhaode*), *Fazang suijin lu* 法藏碎金錄 (*Record of Golden Fragments from the Buddhist Canon*), and *Daoyuan ji* 道院集 (*The Daoist Cloister Collection*) – contain a wealth of material on his conception of the Three Teachings and their methods of practice. As the most detailed and comprehensive literati statement on these matters surviving from the early Song, Chao's works constitute an invaluable source for understanding early-Song approaches to the Three Teachings and self-cultivation.

Yet, despite the intrinsic interest of these works and their potential to shed light on the early Song intellectual milieu, they have not attracted much scholarly attention. The few studies that do exist,

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moreover, have by and large failed to provide a thorough analysis of Chao's views; instead, they have sought to determine Chao's influence over the development of Song-dynasty Confucian thought and practice. One of the first scholars to assess Chao Jiong's intellectual legacy was the famous historian Deng Guangming. In his *Lüetan Songxue* 略談宋學, Deng argued that Chao was a pivotal figure in the development of Song intellectual trends.<sup>1</sup> He asserted that Chao played an instrumental role in freeing Confucianism from the strictures imposed by the Han and Tang commentarial traditions, and in introducing Buddhist and Daoist doctrines into elite discourse. In a second article on Wang Anshi's intellectual import, Deng described the nature of Chao's influence over Song Confucian thought in more detail.<sup>2</sup> He identified Chao as a loyal Confucian, and argued that Chao's engagement with Buddhist and Daoist theories of the mind, Nature, and Principle was intended to both strengthen the Confucian tradition and recover the abstract moral principles contained within its foundational texts.

The brief discussion of Chao's thought found in these two studies influenced the interpretive frameworks employed by later scholars, particularly within China. With very few exceptions, analyses of Chao's intellectual views have endorsed Deng's picture of Chao as a trailblazing Confucian thinker who availed himself of Daoist and Buddhist theory in order to reinvigorate Confucianism. Building upon Deng's insights, Qi Xia and Liu Huanyang, for example, attempted to delineate Chao's contribution to, and influence over, Song learning, particularly regarding the development of Neo-Confucianism (*daoxue* 道學). Both scholars contend that Chao was the first intellectual in the Song to write extensively on self-cultivation, and they credit Chao with the creation of a conceptual vocabulary that guided the efforts of later Confucian thinkers in this regard.<sup>3</sup>

Even scholars seeking to revise aspects of Deng's thesis have for the most part accepted his claims regarding Chao's motives and intellectual influence. For example, in an article devoted to Chao's concep-

<sup>1</sup> Deng Guangming 鄧廣銘, "Lüetan Songxue" 略談宋學, in *Deng Guangming zhishi cong-gao* 鄧廣銘治史叢稿 (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 1997), pp. 163-76.

<sup>2</sup> Deng, "Wang Anshi zai Bei Song rujia xuepai zhong de diwei: fushuo lixuejia de kaishan zu wenti" 王安石在北宋儒家學派中的地位, 附說理學家的開山祖問題, in *Deng Guangming zhishi cong-gao*, pp. 177-92.

<sup>3</sup> Qi Xia 漆俠, "Chao Jiong yu Songxue: rufo sixiang de shentou yu Songxue de xingcheng" 晁迥與宋學, 儒佛思想的滲透與宋學的形成, *Hebei daxue xuebao* 河北大學學報 (1996.3), pp. 3-9; and Liu Huanyang 劉煥陽, "Bei Song chu Chao Jiong zai wenxue yu lixue fazhan zhong de diwei" 北宋初晁迥在文學與理學發展中的地位, *Yantai shifan xueyuan xuebao* (*zhexue shehui kexueban*) 煙台師範學院學報 (哲學社會科學版) 21.2 (2004), pp. 48-52.

tion of the Three Teachings, He Xinsuo questioned Deng's claim that Chao's thought was premised in Confucianism, asserting instead that it was grounded in Buddhist doctrine. In He's view, Chao's discussions of Confucianism and Daoism were aimed at identifying concepts and practices that matched with Buddhist ideas on the Nature, the mind, and self-cultivation. Despite this different starting point, however, He conceded that Chao's primary motive was the revitalization of the Confucian tradition.<sup>4</sup>

In this article, I set aside the assumptions informing the above studies – namely, that Chao was a proponent of Confucianism and that his thought influenced the development of Song Confucian discourse – and instead attempt to look at Chao's writings in a fresh light. In contrast to the standard interpretation of Chao found in recent scholarship, I argue that he is better understood as a thinker without sectarian allegiance who viewed the Three Teachings in an impartial manner. As Chao stated repeatedly in his writings, the primary objective of his practice was self-realization, and he interpreted the doctrines of the Three Teachings as conceptual and practical resources that could help him accomplish this goal. As I demonstrate below, this personal orientation, this effort to get it for oneself, is the key to understanding Chao's thought; his discussions of the Three Teachings are inextricably tied to his efforts to cultivate the self and comprehend the human condition. The historical significance of his writings lay not in the influence they exerted over the development of Song thought, but rather in how they illuminate a general stance towards the Three Teachings and self-cultivation that was shared by many literati during the early Song.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> He Xinsuo 何新所, "Wenyuan xinfa: Chao Jiong sanjiao sixiang yanjiu" 文元心法, 晁迥三教思想研究, *Gansu shehui kexue* 甘肅社會科學 (2006.3), pp. 71–73. A similar position is advanced in Zhang Jian 張劍, "Chao Jiong ji qi wenhua yiyi" 晁迥及其文化意義, *Huanan shifan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 華南師範大學學報 (社會科學版) 5 (2005), pp. 97–104. A rare exception to this stance can be found in Yamada Takashi 山田俊, *Sōdai dōka shisōshi kenkyū* 宋代道家思想史研究 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 2012), pp. 95–126. While noting Chao's engagement with the Three Teachings, Yamada focuses his analysis on Chao's conception of Daoist doctrine and practice.

<sup>5</sup> Although ecumenical stances towards the Three Teachings were common during the early Song, I do not want to claim that Chao's interpretation of the Three Teachings was representative of elite opinion. There were in fact a variety of different positions that the literati of the time adopted regarding the relationship between Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. That being said, Chao's works are the most comprehensive texts that survive from this period on this matter, and they constitute a valuable resource for understanding how early Song intellectuals conceived of the Three Teachings and their relevance to self-cultivation.

## CHAO'S LIFE AND WRITINGS

Chao Jiong was a member of the Chanzhou Chaos 澶州晁氏, long recognized as one of the most successful literati families of the Song. Jiong was the first individual in his family to pass the *jinshi* 進士 examination, and following his rise to high office, the Chao clan succeeded in placing a large number of their sons in government posts over the course of the dynasty. The unusual political success of the Chaos, together with the high degree of cohesiveness found among different branches of the family, has attracted the attention of historians such as Peter Bol, Wang Deyi, Liu Huanyang, and Zhang Jian, who have shed light on questions regarding the clan's genealogy, its success in attaining political office, and the means through which it maintained its status as a prominent literati family over successive generations.<sup>6</sup>

Members of the Chao clan, as well as several of their contemporaries, identified Jiong as the individual responsible for establishing the foundations of the family's political success. Following his reception of the *jinshi* degree in 980, Jiong spent the first two decades of his official career moving between several low-ranking provincial positions, and it was not until the reign of emperor Zhenzong that his political fortunes began to take a more favorable turn. In 1001, he was appointed as a drafting official (*zhizhigao* 知制告), and thereafter proceeded to advance through a series of increasingly important capital posts in the Censorate, the Hanlin Academy, the Ministry of Rites, and the Academy of Scholarly Worthies.<sup>7</sup> In recognition of his long and distinguished service to the dynasty, emperor Renzong awarded him the rank of junior guardian of the heir-apparent (*taizi shaobao* 太子少保) upon his retirement in 1026.

From the beginnings of his official career, Chao became well known for his literary ability, particularly his poetry, and he befriended several of the most important literary intellectuals of his era. As Li Chaojun has demonstrated, Chao was neither a literary pioneer nor a doctrinaire stylist, but rather changed his poetic style to conform to contemporary trends.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Peter Bol, *This Culture of Ours: Intellectual Transitions in Tang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1992), pp. 58–75; Wang Deyi 王德毅, “Songdai Chanzhou Chaoshi zuxikao” 宋代澶州晁氏族系考, in Ryū Shiken hakushi shōju kinen Sōshi kenkyū ronshū kankō kaihen 劉子健博士頌壽紀念宋史研究論集刊行會編, ed., *Ryū Shiken hakushi shōju kinen Sōshi kenkyū ronshū* 劉子健博士頌壽紀念宋史研究論集 (Dōbōsha, 1994), pp. 21–28; Liu Huanyang 劉煥陽, *Songdai Chaoshi jiazū ji qi wenxian yanjiu* 宋代晁氏家族及其文獻研究 (Jinan: Jilu shushe, 2004); Zhang Jian 張劍, *Chao Yuezhi yanjiu* 晁說之研究 (Beijing: Xueyuan, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed discussion of Chao Jiong's political career, see Zhang, “Chao Jiong ji qi wenhua yiyi.” Zhang attributes Chao's political rise in part to Zhenzong's fondness for literature.

<sup>8</sup> See Li Chaojun 李朝軍, “Chao Jiong yu Songchu wenxue” 晁迥與宋初文學, *Sichuan daxue xuebao* (*zhexue shehui kexue ban*) 四川大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) 138 (2005), pp. 98–104.

During his early career, Chao composed poetry modeled on that of Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), which reflected the predilections of his close friend Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 (954–1001), as well as that of high-ranking court officials such as Li Fang 李昉 (925–996) and Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (916–991).<sup>9</sup> Yet, as was the case with his intellectual interests, Chao did not adhere rigidly to a specific literary style, and he remained open to experimenting with different types of poetic composition. After being appointed as a drafting official at Zhenzong's court, he befriended Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020), and despite being twenty-three years Yang's senior, he fell under the sway of Yang's literary influence. Chao participated in Yang's *xikun* 西崑 literary group, and began to write in the highly refined *xikun* style, which, being modeled on the allusive and highly ornate poetry of Li Shangyin 李商隱 (ca. 813–858), represented a departure from the more direct and unornamented poetic tradition of Bai Juyi.<sup>10</sup>

Chao's literary collection, titled *Hanlin ji* 翰林集 (*Collection from the Forest of Literature*), is unfortunately no longer extant, and apart from a handful of poems and essays, Chao's early writings have not survived to the present. While a few scholars have initiated studies of Chao's surviving poetry and literary prose,<sup>11</sup> scholarly attention has focused to a greater degree on Chao's thought, particularly the views expressed in the three works (introduced above) that he composed in the years following his retirement – *Zhaode xinbian*, *Fazang sui jin lu*, and *Daoyuan ji*, the latter having survived in a later recension titled *Daoyuan jiyao* 道院集要 (*Essentials of the Daoist Cloister Collection*).<sup>12</sup> These works contain Chao's musings on self-cultivation, literature, the classics, and the relationship between Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism.

Among the three surviving texts penned by Chao, *Daoyuan jiyao* stands apart for its thematic arrangement and its focus on specific methods of practice.<sup>13</sup> *Zhaode xinbian* and *Fazang sui jin lu*, by contrast,

<sup>9</sup> On Bai Juyi's reception during the Song dynasty, see Shang Yongliang 尚永亮, "Lun Songchu shiren dui Bai Juyi de zhuyimu yu jieshou" 論宋初詩人對白居易的追摹與接受, *Zhongguo kexue jikan* 中國科學輯刊 183 (2009.4), pp. 158–64. For an analysis of the influence Bai exerted over Chao Jiong's poetry, see Zhao Yanxi 趙艷喜, "Lun Bei Song Chao Jiong dui Bai Juyi de jieshou" 論北宋晁迥對白居易的接受, *Guangxi daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 廣西大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) 30 (2008.3), pp. 103–7.

<sup>10</sup> See Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊, *Lun xikun ti* 論西崑體 (Gaoxiong: Liwen wenhua, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> See Zhao, "Lun Bei Song Chao Jiong dui Bai Juyi de jieshou"; Li, "Chao Jiong yu Songchu wenxue"; and Ikezawa Shigeo 池澤滋子, "Chao Jiong yanjiu" 晁迥研究, *Songdai wenhua yanjiu* 宋代文化研究 16 (2009), pp. 280–308.

<sup>12</sup> *Daoyuan jiyao* 道院集要 was compiled in the Yuanyou reign-period by Wang Gu 王古 (n.d.).

<sup>13</sup> Wang Gu states in his preface to *Daoyuan jiyao* that he excised repeated passages and classified Chao's best entries under different categories. The thematic arrangement of the

are not organized in a topical or thematic fashion, but rather seem to present a free-ranging account of Chao's thoughts on whatever he was contemplating at the moment of composition.<sup>14</sup> The unstructured, somewhat random arrangement of these texts has led some scholars to classify them under the genre of "recorded conversations" (*yulu* 語錄).<sup>15</sup> Yet, as Zhang Jian has argued, even a cursory glance at their content reveals this not to be the case. Zhang maintained that these works are more accurately classified as "miscellaneous occasional jottings" (*suibi zaji* 隨筆雜記), written in Chao's own hand, and not by any disciples or students under his tutelage.

The prefaces Chao composed for *Fazang sui jin lu*, *Zhaode xinbian*, as well as for a shorter work contained within *Zhaode xinbian* titled *Xinxin lishuo* 新新理說 (*New Discourse on Principle*) corroborate Zhang's contention that Chao personally wrote these texts. In the preface to the *Xinxin lishuo*, Chao described his writing process as follows:

I write when the impulse hits and stop when it is exhausted.<sup>16</sup> [These initial compositions are] sloppy, poorly conceived, and they do not exhibit talent. Following critical thought and deep reflection, I sometimes attain new insights, which in my view should be established as a matter of course.<sup>17</sup> 乘興而書，興盡而止。潦倒疏濶，不切才情。銳思鉤深，時得新意，意之所立，獨謂當然。

The phrases "when the impulse hits" (*chengxing* 乘興) and "attaining new insights" (*de xinyi* 得新意) found in this passage nicely encapsulate the style and content of Chao's extant works. His surviving texts bear a strong resemblance to journals or practice logs in which he recorded the revelations he experienced during daily reading and cultivation.<sup>18</sup>

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work was thus more than likely a product of Wang's editing, and not a feature of Chao's original text, which is no longer extant. See Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 and Liu Lin 劉琳, eds., *Quan Songwen* 全宋文 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu, 2006) 2213, p. 307.

<sup>14</sup> The preface to *Fazang sui jin lu* (SKQS; Wenyuange Sikuquanshu 文淵閣四庫全書 [Taipei: Taiwan shangwu, 1983 edn.], vol. 1052) indicates that while Chao did select passages for inclusion into the text, he did not arrange them according to any set order. See *Quan Songwen* 137, pp. 146–47. However, Chao noted his age several times in the text, and the steady increase of his age throughout the work indicates that it was organized chronologically.

<sup>15</sup> For scholars making this classification, see, e.g., Liu, "Bei Song chu Chao Jiong zai wenxue yu lixue fazhan zhong de diwei" and Qj, "Chao Jiong yu Songxue: rufo sixiang de shentou yu Songxue de dingcheng."

<sup>16</sup> Chao also used the phrase "when the impulse hits" (*chengxing* 乘興) to describe his method of composition of *Wensi sanfa zixiu ji* 聞思三法資修記. See *Quan Songwen* 137, p. 148.

<sup>17</sup> *Quan Songwen* 137, p. 146.

<sup>18</sup> Although Chao did not organize his entries thematically, he did put a great deal of thought into their content. He maintained that he put pen to paper only after he had realized the intent or meaning of a given work or practice. See, for example, *Fazang sui jin lu*, pp. 569, 575–76, 585.

The individual entries he composed were succinct, and they for the most part focused on issues related to self-cultivation and the Three Teachings.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the fact that the entries found in Chao's extant works overwhelmingly depict his personal views and experiences, he felt they had the potential to help others who were interested in learning about the *Dao* and the teachings of the sages.<sup>20</sup> Chao in fact compared the *Fazang suijin lu* to an apothecary that housed a variety of prescriptions designed to cure different illnesses.<sup>21</sup> He expressed confidence that his writings could teach others the meaning of the classics, and demonstrate that the words of the sages had a foundation in truth.<sup>22</sup> He moreover hoped that his views would reach a wide audience, and he was certain that they would prove useful to others with similar intellectual concerns.<sup>23</sup> Chao thus wanted his writings to be consequential, and he clearly desired for them to shape the manner in which his fellow literati interpreted the three traditions and practiced self-cultivation.

#### MAKING CONNECTIONS – CHAO'S CONCEPTION OF THE THREE TEACHINGS

Chao's basic stance towards the Three Teachings was grounded in two key assertions. First, he contended that the Three Teachings were derived from a common foundation, which he identified variously as the *Dao* or Principle (*li* 理). Second, he maintained that the manner in which adherents of the Three Teachings understood and described this common foundation differed. Chao called attention to these differences by highlighting the varying methodologies, purports, and doctrines espoused within Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. However, he also asserted that, despite such differences, the Three Teachings could be practiced together, and he delighted in pointing out areas of overlap

<sup>19</sup> In this sense, Zhang's classification of these works as "miscellaneous occasional jottings" is somewhat misleading. While Chao's works were not topically organized, they were also not miscellaneous but rather highly focused on issues related to Chao's efforts to cultivate himself. Perhaps the closest analogue to these works found in the Chinese tradition is Wu Yubi's 吳與弼 (1391–1469) journal (*rilu* 日錄), found in his literary collection titled *Kangzhai wenji* 康齋文集.

<sup>20</sup> In the preface to *Zhaode xinbian*, Chao expressed confidence that his writings could instruct others: "The knowledge of an old horse can still lead people the way home. How can the words of an old man not be able to illuminate people regarding proper knowledge? 老馬之識猶可使導人以歸路, 老人之語豈不能曉人以知方?" (*Quan Songwen* 137, pp. 145–46).

<sup>21</sup> See Chao Jiong, *Fazang suijin lu*, p. 507.

<sup>22</sup> See *Fazang suijin lu*, pp. 440–41.

<sup>23</sup> See *Fazang suijin lu*, p. 557.

between them, particularly regarding the task of self-cultivation. As we shall see, one of the primary objectives of Chao's writings was to identify affinities between the Three Teachings that his contemporaries had failed to notice. To this end, he promoted the adoption of a specific hermeneutics that was designed to shed light on how the different conceptual terminology employed by the sages of the three traditions was derived from a single, shared *Dao*.

Scholars of Chinese religion and philosophy have sometimes used the term syncretism to describe the thought of intellectuals like Chao who sought to combine different aspects of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism in their writings.<sup>24</sup> While recognizing that there are different degrees and types of syncretism, I believe that the application of this term, with its strong associations of systematization and unification, to Chao's writings obfuscates his reasons for incorporating elements from each of the Three Teachings into his thought.<sup>25</sup> As I describe in more detail below, Chao's engagement with these teachings was personal and idiosyncratic. He was not a systematic thinker, but rather more of an intellectual dilettante, who searched out passages from each of the traditions that were meaningful to him and which he felt could further his own self-realization.

During the early Song, the view that the Three Teachings were compatible was not uncommon. Chao served the Song court at a time when the political elite attached little stigma to following Buddhist and Daoist teachings. Indeed, emperors Taizong and Zhenzong, under whom Chao spent the bulk of his official career, not only threw imperial support behind Buddhism and Daoism, they also promoted the view that the Three Teachings were fundamentally equal. As is well known, Taizong expressed a personal interest in Daoist and Buddhist teachings, and moreover commissioned the publication of scholarly compendia

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Judith Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1980); Edward T. Ch'ien, *Chiao Hung and the Restructuring of Neo-Confucianism in the Late Ming* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1986); and Huang Chi-chuang, "Experiment in Syncretism: Ch'i-sung (1007-1072) and Eleventh Century Chinese Buddhism," Ph.D. diss. (University of Arizona, 1986). For a critique of the applicability of this term to Chinese religion, see Timothy Brook, "Rethinking Syncretism: The Unity of the Three Teachings and Their Joint Worship in Late Imperial China," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 21 (1993), pp. 13-44. For an insightful discussion of issues related to combining the Three Teachings, see Jennifer Eichman, "Intertextual Alliances: Huang Hui's Synthesis of Confucian and Buddhist Paths to Liberation," *TP* 100 (2014), pp. 120-63.

<sup>25</sup> I also feel that the terms eclecticism and compartmentalism, which have sometimes been used instead of syncretism to describe combinations of the Three Teachings, fail to adequately explain the nature and purport of Chao's engagement with Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism.



on the history of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Zhenzong, despite being remembered for patronizing Daoism following his reception of the “Heavenly Texts” (*tianshu* 天書), went to great lengths to show his support for each of the Three Teachings.<sup>27</sup>

This general stance towards Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, which did not require exclusive allegiance to any one teaching, and which in fact encouraged intellectual or religious engagement with other traditions, was also held by many prominent literati of the period. Several of the highest-ranking officials of the early Song, such as Wang Dan 王旦 (957–1017), Wang Sui 王隨 (ca. 975–1033), Su Yijian 蘇易簡 (958–996), Xiang Minzhong 向敏中 (949–1020), Li Hang 李沆 (947–1004), Li Wei 李維 (985 *jinshi*), and Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962–1025), were followers of Buddhism and/or Daoism.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the *xikun* literary circle (mentioned above) in which Chao participated included many devout Buddhists such as Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020), Qian Weiyan 錢惟演 (962–1034), and Liu Jun 劉筠 (971–1031).<sup>29</sup> In addition to the ecumenical viewpoints adopted by these literati, two prominent early-Song monks, Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001) and Zhiyuan 智圓 (976–1022), advanced a series of sophisticated arguments contending that there was no inherent conflict among Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> In addition to works that dealt with Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism individually, Taizong ordered a compilation concerning the sages and worthies of the three traditions, entitled *Sanjiao shengxian shiji* 三教聖賢事迹; compiled by Zanning 贊寧, Su Yijian 蘇易簡, and Han Dechun 韓德純. It is no longer extant.

<sup>27</sup> On Taizong's and Zhenzong's support of Buddhism and Daoism, see Wang Shengduo 汪聖鐸, *Songdai zhengjiao guanxi yanjiu* 宋代政教關係研究 (Beijing: Renmin, 2010), chaps. 1–2; and Qing Xitai 卿希泰, *Zhongguo Daojiaoshi* 中國道教史 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin, 1996) 2, pp. 531–75. In *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀, Zhipan claims that Chao was one of several prominent Song officials that supported Zhezong's stance towards the Three Teachings. See Wang, *Songdai zhengjiao guanxi yanjiu*, p. 72.

<sup>28</sup> Several of these individuals (Wang Dan, Su Yijian, Xiang Minzhong) participated in the Pure Conduct Society established by the monk Shengchang 省常 (959–1020) in the closing decade of the tenth century. See Zhu Shangshu 祝尙書, “Songchu Xihu Bailianshe kaolun” 宋初西湖白蓮社考論, *Wenxian* 文獻 3 (1995), pp. 83–93. In *Fazang suijin lu* (p. 500), Chao quotes a letter he received from Li Wei, who was the brother of the prime minister, Li Hang, which asked Chao about matters related to Daoist and Buddhist cultivation.

<sup>29</sup> Although he was not a member of the *xikun* group, Li Zunxu 李遵勗 (d. 1038), an imperial prince by marriage and friend to both Yang Yi and Chao, was another important adherent of Buddhism. He wrote a postface to Chao's *Zhaode xinbian* in which he praised the work and compared Chao to the Tang literatus Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772–842), who was also interested in finding areas of resonance between Buddhism and Confucianism. On Li Zunxu's Buddhist thought, see Yang Zengwen 楊曾文, *Song Yuan chanzongshi* 宋元禪宗史 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 2006), pp. 536–48.

<sup>30</sup> The best analyses of Zanning's conception of the Three Teachings are found in Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, “Sannei to sono jidai” 贊寧とその時代, in idem, *Chūgoku Bukkyōshi kenkyū* 中国仏教史研究 (Tokyo: Daitō, 1984) 2, pp. 111–45, and Albert A. Dalia, “The ‘Political Career’ of the Buddhist Historian Tsan-ning,” in David W. Chappell, ed., *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society* (Honolulu: U. Hawaii P., 1987), pp. 146–80. On Zhiyuan's

Both monks maintained that each of the teachings promoted socio-political order, and they further asserted that members of the Buddhist clergy could benefit from the study of Daoist and Confucian texts.

However, despite the latitudinarian stance towards the Three Teachings that prevailed at court, Chao found that a number of his peers continued to cling to the belief that one particular tradition was inherently superior to the others. In his surviving works, Chao highlighted the error of such sectarianism, arguing that it amounted to being straightjacketed by a single teaching's doctrines.<sup>31</sup> To counter this narrow outlook, Chao advocated the adoption of a particular hermeneutic stance, the clearest expression of which is found in the opening lines of his *Wensi sanfa zixiu ji* 聞思三法資修記 (*Inscription on [How] Listening, Thinking, and the Three Dharmas Assist Cultivation*):

Throughout my years, outside of using Ru learning to advance in government service, I have had my sights set on the *Dao* for a long time. In this I cannot be accused of distinguishing between names and appearances or of having prejudicial views; rather, I have impartially observed the tripartite teachings in order to find areas of convergence. I selected and recorded [the teachings] according to my inclinations, and in practice these became my mental guides.<sup>32</sup> I knew that while they together returned to goodness, in their language and examples, the works of the three sages had distinctions of refinement and simplicity, obscurity and transparency, detail and vagueness, as well as depth and shallowness... The benefits of ancient writings are extremely far reaching, but they are dispersed within the classics and discourses. Who can match them together and elucidate them? I am fond of reading broadly and citing evidence, making inferences and expanding upon them. I do not apply [these inferences] towards improper ends.<sup>33</sup>

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position, see Douglas Skonicki, "Viewing the Two Teachings as Distinct Yet Complementary: Gushan Zhiyuan's Use of Parallelisms to Demonstrate the Compatibility of Buddhism and Ancient-style Learning," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 38 (2010), pp. 1-35.

<sup>31</sup> Chao frequently used the phrase *shujiao* 束教 to denote this condition. He argued that people advocated the teachings of one particular tradition, and denounced the others, based on their personal proclivities. See *Fazang suijin lu*, p. 585. In the *Historical Digest of the Buddhist Order* (*Sengshilüe* 僧史略), Zanning also attributed rivalry among the proponents of the Three Teachings to similar motivations.

<sup>32</sup> Chao employed the terms "mental guides/purports" (*xinyao* 心要) and "methods of mental cultivation" (*xinfa* 心法) with some regularity in his surviving works; this is discussed, below.

<sup>33</sup> *Quan Songwen* 137, p. 147. For a similar discussion, see *Fazang suijin lu*, p. 465.

予自少及老，以儒學求仕進之外，而志于道也久矣。非謂分別名相，有所偏局，但汎觀鼎峙之教，歸趣符合者，隨意采錄，實爲心要。蓋知同歸于善，而三聖之書以其方言類例，各有文質隱顯，詳略深淺耳... 古先章句，其利極博，而散在經綸，孰能和會而發明哉？自好涉獵援據，推而廣之，別致曲成之用。

Chao here outlines a hermeneutic approach that seeks to discover and “match together” (*hehui* 和會) points of commonality between Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. His approach is rooted in two key claims concerning the relationship formed by the Three Teachings. First, he asserts that there exist critical distinctions between Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism that need to be recognized and preserved. Second, he maintains that despite the presence of such distinctions, the teachings share a common ground, they all “return to goodness,” and for this reason they can be practiced together. In other passages, Chao identified this common ground as Principle (*li* 理) or the *Dao*,<sup>34</sup> and he asserted that there was no fundamental conflict among the various doctrinal tenets.

With regards to the first claim, the most basic distinctions that Chao employed to denote the differences were those of “other worldly” (*chushijian fa* 出世間法) and “this worldly” (*shijian fa* 世間法),<sup>35</sup> and internal and external (*neiwai* 內外), with the former terms in these pairs referring to Buddhism and the latter to Confucianism and Daoism.<sup>36</sup> In addition, Chao also proposed a more narrow set of divisions grounded in the purports (*zong* 宗, *zongzhi* 宗旨), methods (*fa* 法), and essentials (*yao* 要). According to Chao, each of the teachings had a number of these that embodied a teaching’s particular strengths. Within this inventory, Chao most frequently identified Confucianism with moral education, virtue (*de* 德), and reputation (*ming* 名), Daoism with different types of physical and spiritual refinement (*yangsheng* 養生 and *yangshen* 養神), and Buddhism with cultivating the mind (*xiuxin* 修心) and recovering the Nature (*fuxing* 復性).<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> In *Zhaode xinbian*, Chao states: “Although the Three Teachings clearly differ in how they establish appearances, in reality they are all *Dao* 今之三教，雖分明立相有所不同，其實都是道也”；*Zhaode xinbian* (SKQS edn., vol. 849), p. 257. See also, *Fazang sui jin lu*, pp. 528–29, 551–52, 584–85.

<sup>35</sup> Chao also used the terms “teaching within the bounds” (*fangnei jiao* 方內教) and “teaching outside the bounds” (*fangwai jiao* 方外教) to denote this distinction.

<sup>36</sup> Chao explicitly identifies Daoism as an external and “this worldly” teaching in *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 483.

<sup>37</sup> Chao also described the different purports and methods of the Three Teachings in *Fazang sui jin lu*, pp. 555, 558, 560, 567, 604.

A typical example of how Chao employed this more narrow set of divisions in his discussions of the Three Teachings, can be seen in the following passage from the *Zhaode xinbian*:

I have on my own attained three complete [understandings of] the Three Teachings. The doctrine of the three completions is [as follows]: the foundational method of Confucianism exerts effort in words and deeds; these are combined in order to complete one's reputation. The foundational method of Daoism exerts effort in the spirit and *qi*; these are combined in order to complete one's form. The foundational method of Buddhism exerts effort in Principle and the Nature; these are combined in order to complete one's inner spirit.<sup>38</sup> They are more or less like this; what harm is there in listing them together?<sup>39</sup> 愚於三教自得三全。三全之說：儒教本法務在言行，相合以全其名；道教本法務在神氣，相合以全其形；釋教本法務在理性，相合以全其靈。大率如此，無煩具陳。

Chao's discussion of these methods explicitly acknowledges that the three traditions focused on different areas of human experience. However, in his view, the key to self-fulfillment lay in recognizing that, despite such differences, Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist teachings were complementary and mutually practicable.<sup>40</sup> He champions a combined use in the following passage:

I attained one method from the works of each of the three traditions. The method of Confucians uses illumined wisdom to preserve virtue;<sup>41</sup> the method of immortals (Daoists) uses peaceful quiescence to attain eternal life; and the method of Chanists (Buddhists) uses subtle clarity to rectify the Nature. When these three are employed together, the results are outstanding and unparalleled.<sup>42</sup> 予於三家之書各得一法：儒家之法用明智以保慶，仙家之法用靜安以永命，禪家之法用清微以正性；三者並用，卓然殊勝。

It was in fact the different foci of these traditions that made each one indispensable.

<sup>38</sup> The term *ling* 靈 is notoriously difficult to translate. In Buddhist discourse, it denoted the innermost essence of a person or the most refined aspect of consciousness.

<sup>39</sup> *Zhaode xinbian*, p. 265.

<sup>40</sup> Despite this, Chao still asserted that Buddhist teachings contained the most complete description of the human condition. See *Fazang suijin lu*, pp. 485, 566, 579.

<sup>41</sup> Here, interpreting *qing* 慶 on the basis of its meaning in the "Lüxing" 呂刑 chapter of the *Book of Documents*.

<sup>42</sup> *Fazang suijin lu*, p. 548.

Loyalty and kindness are the purports of Confucius' teaching; the *Dao* and virtue are the purports of Laozi's teaching; realization and benefit are the purports of the Buddha's teaching... Internal and external assist one another; eliminating any one [of the Three Teachings] is impermissible.<sup>43</sup> 孔氏之教以忠恕爲宗, 老氏之教以道德爲宗, 釋氏之教以覺利爲宗... 內外同濟, 闕一不可。

In passages such as this, Chao advanced the view that each teaching had an important role to play in the intellectual life of the elite. He moreover asserted that those who developed the ability to employ the three together could accomplish great things.<sup>44</sup>

The second claim underlying Chao's view of the Three Teachings was that Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism were grounded in a common Principle or *Dao*. This position can be seen in the following passage from *Fazang sui jin lu*:

From the Confucian's "stillness without movement,"<sup>45</sup> the Daoist's "returning to the root is called quiescence,"<sup>46</sup> and the Buddhist's "cease conditions and engage in self-reflection,"<sup>47</sup> people can deeply realize that the words of the three traditions return to the same one, true Principle. We should regard these sayings as the wisdom that combines the three (teachings) and returns them to their unitary origin.<sup>48</sup> 儒家之言云 "寂然不動", 道家之言云 "歸根曰靜", 禪家之言云 "息緣反照", 人能洞曉三家之言同歸一真之理, 吾當目之爲會三歸一之智。

As this passage indicates, Chao maintained that the Three Teachings used different terminology to describe similar phenomena or experiences. He moreover asserted that despite such differences in nomenclature, the concepts so named were derived from a single Principle.<sup>49</sup> Throughout his writings, Chao described Principle as the ultimate foun-

<sup>43</sup> *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 579. For similar statements regarding the compatibility and indispensability of the Three Teachings, see *Fazang sui jin lu*, pp. 515, 557-58, 560, 573.

<sup>44</sup> *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 483.

<sup>45</sup> This quotation is from the "Appended Statements" chapter of the *Yijing*.

<sup>46</sup> This quotation is from chapter sixteen of the *Daode jing*.

<sup>47</sup> This line is found in Guifeng Zongmi's preface to *Chanyuan zhuquan ji* 禪源諸詮集. For a translation and analysis of this text, see Jeffrey L. Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan* (New York: Columbia U.P., 2009).

<sup>48</sup> *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 546.

<sup>49</sup> In *Fazang sui jin lu*, e.g., Chao states: "Buddhists elucidate the fact that the sublime Nature is not an illusion; Daoists illuminate faith in the true essence. Although their words differ, their Principle is the same. Why is it that some recklessly make divisions and are unable to establish a great convergence 釋氏所明妙性非幻, 老氏所明真精有信, 其言雖異其理則同, 云何妄分別不能大和會" (*Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 593).

dation of the cosmos; it denoted the reality of existence that informed the basic teachings of not only Buddhism, but Confucianism and Daoism as well.<sup>50</sup>

On the basis of the above two claims regarding the relationship among the teachings, Chao attempted to elucidate their common foundation and show how the different terminology they employed often pointed to a common phenomenon or practice. Chao frequently used the terms *hehui* 和會 (matching [concepts or practices] to one another) and *weibian suoshi* 唯變所適 to describe this project of finding affinities between Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism.<sup>51</sup> In its original context in the *Book of Change*, the latter phrase prescribed shifting or changing as the only appropriate means of responding to the world. Chao applied this concept to the act of textual interpretation, and he used it to validate his practice of finding points of affinity between the ideas and practices found in the three traditions.<sup>52</sup> A clear example of this usage, as well as Chao's general hermeneutic approach, can be seen in the following passage:

Crooked scholars constrained by their teachings are unable to achieve broad learning. I am fond of matching [different concepts and practices] together to elucidate [their meanings], and through such practice I frequently attain insights. According to the *Lankāvatāra sūtra's* description, the three methods of practice are called abiding by the precepts, meditation and wisdom. From the Confucian *Book of Change* I have taken one line that resembles the principles of, and is no different from, each of these [three methods]. I now take one four-character line from the *sun* hexagram which states: "Punish anger and suppress desire," and use it as a means of abiding by the precepts. I also take one four-

<sup>50</sup> This position is evident in Chao's claim that according with Principle was the key determinant of success in both the "this worldly" and "other worldly" teachings. See *Zhaode xinbian*, p. 264.

<sup>51</sup> Chao's intent in matching together concepts and practices differed from the traditional understanding of *geyi* 格義 advanced in much modern scholarship. This traditional interpretation maintains that early monks matched foreign Buddhist terms to indigenous ones in an effort to better understand them. What Chao was doing was quite different. His matching of concepts was not aimed at facilitating comprehension, but rather at proving that the Three Teachings shared a common *Dao*. Moreover, it is important to point out that recent scholarship has questioned the accuracy of this traditional view of *geyi*, asserting that it played a very limited role in Six Dynasties intellectual discourse. See Victor H. Mair, "What is *Geyi*, After All?," *China Report* 48 (2012), pp. 29–59.

<sup>52</sup> For example, in *Fazang sui jin lu*, he writes: "In perusing the works of the two teachings, where there are suitable [connections], I can change [meanings] in appropriate ways in order to promote and expand them" 予覽二教之書，有所愜當而能，唯變所適推而廣之 (*Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 452).

character line from the “Appended Statements” chapter which states: “Quiescent and without motion,” and use it as a means of meditation. I also take a seven-character line from the “Appended Statements” chapter which states: “The refined essence enters the spiritual in order to be useful,” and use it as means of [defining] wisdom. “It is only change that is appropriate” – how could this be impermissible?<sup>53</sup> 夫曲士束教，不能宏達，予好和會敷演，庶有開悟焉。據佛書楞嚴經說三無漏學，謂戒定慧也。予於儒書周易中各取一句，則象其理，亦無差別。今取 損卦 之文一句四字云：“懲忿窒欲”，用之以為戒；又取繫辭一句四字云：“寂然不動”，用之以為定；又取繫辭一句七字云：“精義入神以致用”，用之以為慧。“唯變所適”，有何不可？

Chao thus sought to establish connections among the teachings by looking for concepts, phrases, and ideas that resonated with one another.<sup>54</sup> However, at times his standard of “appropriateness” did not rise to high levels of precision, and he frequently matched together concepts that had different meanings and functions in their original doctrinal contexts.<sup>55</sup>

Chao’s hermeneutic approach and practice of “matching concepts” provides a window into his thought process and his method of interpreting texts. Although the entries where he employs this technique are relatively few in number, they nonetheless show that Chao was keenly interested in making such connections and in applying the lessons found in canonical texts to his own self-cultivation. They moreover demonstrate that Chao’s approach to the Three Teachings was guided by a reductionist methodology, which left the doctrinal context and original meaning of the above passages unexplained. The assumption underlying this methodology was that, despite their use of different terms and concepts, the Three Teachings had various points of convergence, and that uncovering these was a worthwhile undertaking. One of Chao’s objectives in writing down his thoughts on the Three Teachings was to show others how to find these affinities and incorporate them into their practice.

<sup>53</sup> *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 514.

<sup>54</sup> Additional examples of Chao relating concepts from different traditions to one another can be found in his *Wensi sanfa zixiu ji*, and the *Fazang sui jin lu*, pp. 478, 484, 567, 570.

<sup>55</sup> Moreover, Chao on occasion employed the logic underlying this approach to rewrite classical passages from one tradition from the perspective of another. See, e.g., *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 456, 487-488.

GETTING IT FOR ONESELF – CHAO'S  
CONCEPTION OF READING AND CULTIVATION

Chao was one of the first literati in the Northern Song to write extensively on the practices he used in order to cultivate himself. While several early-Song intellectuals took an interest in self-cultivation, unlike Chao they by and large did not leave behind detailed descriptions of their practices or discussions of how they selected and utilized different methods and techniques. Indeed, Chao's extant works contain a veritable trove of information on the mental and physical practices, as well as reading techniques, that he employed to realize the *Dao*.<sup>56</sup> The attainment of this realization was the central problem he grappled with late in life, and his discussions of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism took place within this contextual framework.

Chao claimed that he did not begin to seriously cultivate himself until after he retired from government service. Following his retirement, he remained in the capital, but isolated himself from the social and political circles there, choosing instead to live a life of relative seclusion focused on reading, writing, and self-cultivation.<sup>57</sup> His *Fazang suijin lu* contains the record of a dialogue in which an interlocutor asks Chao why he has chosen a life of withdrawal, and declined to accompany his friends on sight-seeing excursions. In his reply, Chao explains his refusal to participate in such idle pursuits by stating that since his retirement he has decided to devote himself completely to self-cultivation and study.<sup>58</sup> In a separate passage, he asserts that a further reason for his reclusion was that he no longer shared anything in common with

<sup>56</sup> In *Fazang suijin lu*, Chao associates reading, mental cultivation, and physical exercises with Buddhist wisdom, meditation and abiding by the precepts. He concludes the passage by stating: "if these three are not abandoned, it is possible to enter *Dao*" 三者不廢，可以入道 (*Fazang suijin lu*, p. 506).

<sup>57</sup> Chao's seclusion should be distinguished from both the more austere eremitic practices that were popular throughout Chinese history, as well as the tradition of refusing to serve the state for political reasons. While there are differences between their views, Chao's choice of reclusive lifestyle shares much in common with the "intermediate seclusion" (*zhongyin* 中隱) advocated by Bai Juyi, in which one pursued study and self-cultivation without foregoing employment or material comfort. In his extant works, Chao repeatedly noted that his personal circumstances were comfortable (even if he no longer coveted material wealth), and that he engaged in self-cultivation because it gave him pleasure. This comports with Bai's insistence that seclusion did not require living a life of poverty and destitution. For an analysis of Bai's position, and its relation to the eremitic practices in the Tang, see Li Hongxia 李紅霞, "Tangdai shiren de shehui xintai yu yinyi de shanbian" 唐代士人的社會心態與隱逸的嬗變, *Beijing daxue xuebao* (*zhexue shehui kexue ban*) 北京大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) 41.3 (2004), pp. 114–20.

<sup>58</sup> *Fazang suijin lu*, p. 434.



his old associates, who, he claimed, valued the material life over the pursuit of the *Dao*.<sup>59</sup>

In his writings, Chao emphasized that his decision to record the insights he achieved through practice was motivated by the purest of intentions and not by any desire to attain fame.<sup>60</sup> He frequently used the term “getting it for oneself” (*zide* 自得) to both describe and defend his post-retirement activities. This term carried two slightly different connotations in Chao’s thought. First, it denoted something achieved, or attained, in private without others knowing. Although Chao shared his intellectual progress, and views regarding self-cultivation, through the written record he left behind, he stressed that his personal sense of fulfillment did not depend on the approbation of others. For example, in a passage describing his retirement from office and subsequent return to his old dwelling at Zhaode, Chao wrote:

I read books because it gives me pleasure, and absolutely not from a mind seeking honor or profit. I deeply investigate the true and correct *Dao*. This is simply getting it for oneself; what need is there for others to know?<sup>61</sup> 讀書自娛，絕無榮利之心。洞究正真之道，此為自得，何必人知。

Second, Chao employed the phrase “getting it for oneself” to describe the insights he attained through his study and practice.

When I first read the book of Zhuangzi, I accorded with the principle of equalizing things and got for myself (*zide* 自得) one method called “the contemplation of being unrestrained in great similitude;” I then [realized] that there was not a single affair that could be disputed.<sup>62</sup> I later read the texts of the Western Sage (the Buddha) and on the basis of the principle of no self, I further attained a method called “the contemplation of equality in great emptiness;” I then [understood] that there was not a single thing that could be equalized.<sup>63</sup> From this I knew that my learning had increased, and that the works of the two schools had [distinctions of] shallow and deep.<sup>64</sup> 予初讀南華真人之書，因齊物之理，自得一法，目之曰逍遙大同

<sup>59</sup> *Fazang suijin lu*, pp. 571–72.

<sup>60</sup> *Fazang suijin lu*, p. 555.

<sup>61</sup> *Fazang suijin lu*, p. 554. See also *Fazang suijin lu*, pp. 565, 588.

<sup>62</sup> Referencing the “Free and Easy Wandering” (“Xiaoyao you” 逍遙游) chapter of the *Zhuangzi*.

<sup>63</sup> The terms “no self” (*wuwo* 無我) and “equality” (*pingdeng* 平等) occur throughout the text of *Vimalakirti sūtra*.

<sup>64</sup> *Fazang suijin lu*, p. 436.

觀,且無一事可爭。後讀西方聖人之書,因無我之理又得一法,目之曰平等大空觀,兼無一物可齊。由是省己之所學有增長,二家之書有淺深矣。

Chao here claims to have achieved new methods of contemplation from his reading of *Zhuangzi* and the *Vimalakīrti sūtra*. He uses the term *zide* to emphasize that he achieved this insight on his own, and not via the instruction of a teacher.

The practices that Chao employed to “get it for himself” consisted primarily of reading and various mental and physical self-cultivation techniques. Throughout his surviving works, Chao associated mental contemplation with stillness, and the practices of reading and physical exercises with movement.<sup>65</sup> As we shall see, both Chao’s reading as well as his methods of mental and physical cultivation were informed by doctrines from Buddhism, Daoism, and, on occasion, Confucianism. He did not adopt rigid standards or restrict himself to the resources of any one teaching, but rather sampled from each in an effort to find points of intersection that could facilitate his progress in attaining realization. It is to Chao’s specific views on reading and cultivation that I now turn.

#### *Reading as a Means of Attainment*

Chao’s surviving works contain a large number of passages that discuss the method, purpose, and function of reading. He was at the forefront of a larger intellectual trend during the Song which not only questioned the authority of the inherited textual tradition, but which also sought to give the individual a greater voice in determining the meaning of specific texts. Discussions of how and what to read would become increasingly popular during the latter half of the eleventh century, when Wang Anshi and the early Neo-Confucians gave it a prominent place in their approaches to learning. Like Wang, but unlike the Neo-Confucians, Chao endorsed a broad view of texts worthy of study, asserting that it was important to read works from different traditions and genres.<sup>66</sup> The stress he placed on reading derived from his belief that, when carried out with diligence and seriousness,<sup>67</sup> it

<sup>65</sup> Chao also describes his method of practice as being divided between movement and quiescence in *Fazang sui jin lun*, pp. 431, 529, 537; and *Zhaode xinbian*, p. 269.

<sup>66</sup> As the preceding analysis shows, Chao cited a wide variety of texts from all three traditions in his extant works. From the Confucian tradition, the works that appear most frequently are the *Analects*, *Mencius*, *Yijing*, and dynastic histories; from the Daoist tradition, the *Daode jing*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Liezi*; and from the Buddhist tradition, *Lengyan jing*, *Baoji jing*, *Vimalakīrti sūtra*, *Lotus Sūtra*, and the works of Guifeng Zongmi.

<sup>67</sup> Chao in fact reproached influential literary figures from the past such as Tao Yuanming and Bai Juyi for failing to imbue the act of reading with the degree of seriousness he felt it deserved. See *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 492.

facilitated one's understanding of the *Dao* and furthered one's degree of cultivation.

Reading thus occupied a fundamental place in Chao's daily practice,<sup>68</sup> and, like many of his contemporaries, Chao maintained that it enabled one to thoroughly comprehend the views held by important figures from the past:

In reading the books of the ancients, one shares in their language. Although one is unable to see their visages, one can perceive their minds. In comparison, engaging in dissolute and frivolous talk cannot be placed in the same league.<sup>69</sup> 讀古人書，共古人語，雖不見古人面而却見古人心。比夫交雜妄談戲談，不可相參。

Chao here contends that it is possible to attain a glimpse of the author's mind and intent through careful reading. His position was grounded in the assumption that the written word, when read correctly, accurately imparted both authorial intent and information about the nature of reality.<sup>70</sup>

In addition, Chao maintained that reading, like other forms of practice, had the capacity to affect one's worldview:

Mencius said: "Confucius ascended the Eastern Mount and Lu seemed diminished; he ascended Mount Tai and heaven seemed reduced."<sup>71</sup> In my twilight years, my aim has been to thoroughly read the sages' writings, and [I found that] all elucidate Principle and the Nature. Among these works, there are those that are both wide-ranging and refined, and written with the utmost clarity. Reading them causes one's breast to become expansive and to regard with contempt the abstruse discussions [found in] the insig-

<sup>68</sup> *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 565.

<sup>69</sup> *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 584. For another statement on how one can "perceive [the ancient sages'] intent and know their *Dao*" 見其意，知其道 through reading, see *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 573.

<sup>70</sup> The notion that it was possible to ascertain the purport of the sages through texts resonates with *guwen* claims about reading. On Han Yu's conception of this issue, which heavily influenced Song proponents of *guwen*, see Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, pp. 131-40. It is also important to note that during the early Song, the relationship between language and the *Dao* became a topic of dispute in Buddhist circles, particularly between the adherents of Tiantai and Chan Buddhism. In opposition to the Chan claim that language could not adequately convey Buddhist truth, the proponents of Tiantai argued that writing could indeed transmit the *Dao*, and that one could understand the teachings of the Buddha through a close reading of texts. Chao's stance on this matter was clearly closer to the Tiantai position. For a discussion of this debate, see T. Griffith Foulk, "Sung Controversies Concerning the 'Separate Transmission' of Ch'an," in Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr., eds., *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: U. Hawaii P., 1999), pp. 220-94; and Skonicki, "Viewing the Two Teachings as Distinct Yet Complementary," pp. 27-30.

<sup>71</sup> The original passage from *Mencius* states that Confucius "ascended Mt. Tai and all under heaven seemed reduced" 登泰山而小天下. See *Mencius* VIIA.24.

nificant learning of the various philosophers of old. [One wonders] why they got bogged down in such inconsequential details.<sup>72</sup>

孟子曰：孔子登東山而小魯，登泰山而小天。愚晚年歸趣好讀聖人述作，該明理性之書，其有廣大精微，條暢臻極者。讀之令人胸中廓然，下視舊百家秘物之言，一何叢脞哉！

Chao here compares the insight attained from reading to Confucius' experience following his ascent of the Eastern Mount and Mount Tai. The implication is that reading, when directed at the right texts and done in the correct manner, produces profound revelations that alter the way one perceives the world.

Chao's method of reading focused on apprehending Principle; his project of finding points of intersection among the Three Teachings was grounded in the belief that it was possible to discern the principle that underlay the different conceptual vocabularies used in them. His faith in the ability to grasp Principle in the written word is evidenced by the following passage from *Zhaode xinbian*:

Today, I selected two passages of four characters each from the Confucian classics and histories, which [depict] a method of refined cultivation and superior advancement. From the *Yijing*, I chose the four-character line: "Prevent evil by preserving sincerity;"<sup>73</sup> and from the *Latter Han History*, I chose the four-character line: "Clarify the mind and free oneself from attachments." It is sufficient to rely on words to enter Principle.<sup>74</sup>

愚今於儒書經史中，兩處各取四字一句，以為精修勝進之法。周易文字中取“閑邪存誠”四字；後漢書文字中取“清心釋累”四字。依言入理可以足用矣。

In addition to facilitating the comprehension of Principle, Chao in this passage suggests that reading could help individuals understand proper methods of practice.<sup>75</sup> Following his retirement, Chao engaged in self-cultivation on his own, without the assistance of a teacher. He thus re-

<sup>72</sup> *Zhaode xinbian*, p. 271.

<sup>73</sup> This is a paraphrase from the "Wenyan" 文言 section of the *Yijing* concerning the *qian* 乾 hexagram.

<sup>74</sup> *Zhaode xinbian*, p. 265. Chao makes a similar claim in *Fazang sui jin lu*, where he states: "In perusing texts, I not only direct my effort at the wording, but place greater value on seeking Principle 予於觀書非止務乎屬辭，而切貴乎求理矣" (p. 537).

<sup>75</sup> An important example of Chao's contention that reading facilitated practice can be found in the first chapter of *Zhaode xinbian*, where, after quoting four separate passages from the "Appended Statements" chapter of the *Yijing*, *Daode jing*, and Cao Zhi's "Qiqi" 七啓, Chao wrote: "These four are complete and I unite them on a single thread. This is [an example of] consulting various texts in order to assist the cultivation of good practice 四者備矣，一以貫之此參用諸書助修善行" (*Zhaode xinbian*, p. 269).

lied upon the descriptions of mental and physical cultivation exercises found in texts to guide his practice. In his extant works, he often indicated that he “attained” (*de* 得) a method of cultivation, or an insight into the *Dao*, from reading a particular text or a specific passage.<sup>76</sup>

In Chao's view, Buddhist, Daoist, and also Confucian works had teachings and doctrines that illuminated the proper way to cultivate the self. As we shall see, Chao took particular interest in various types of mental and physical exercises, and as such, he primarily utilized Buddhist and Daoist cultivation techniques. Some of the practices he championed were already well established; however, others were the product of his own personal reflection and invention. Chao's adoption of a wide array of techniques reveals that he was something of a dabbler; he was interested in sampling different methods in an effort to find practices that worked for him. In what follows, I will not attempt to provide a comprehensive catalogue of the numerous different techniques listed within Chao's extant works, but rather discuss the basic methods he employed to cultivate himself.

#### *Chao's Practice of Mental and Physical Self-cultivation*

The majority of self-cultivation practices that Chao engaged in were directed at two key goals: the purification of the body and the cultivation of the mind. During Chao's lifetime, these two areas of cultivation were the purview of Daoists and Buddhists, respectively. Chao contended that there was significant overlap among the various methods espoused within not only Buddhism and Daoism, but also, on rare occasions, Confucianism.<sup>77</sup> In this section, I examine several of these overlapping areas in an effort to clarify how the Three Teachings informed Chao's regimen of self-cultivation. As we shall see, Chao's practice primarily utilized the teachings of Buddhism and Daoism; his occasional efforts to associate Confucian concepts with the methods employed by these two schools were largely superficial, and did not extend beyond the establishment of conceptual parallels.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>76</sup> See, e.g., *Fazang sui jin lu*, pp. 436, 543.

<sup>77</sup> Chao asserted that all Three Teachings proposed “key methods of cultivation 修行要法,” which only the most accomplished individuals could completely master (*Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 515). He also maintained that the principle underlying certain cultivation methods found in the Three Teachings was the same: “Confucians speak of according with the Nature; Daoists speak of nourishing the spirit, and Chanists speak of cultivating the mind. Their Principle is one. Why bother to engage in dispute? 儒家之言率性，道家之言養神，禪家之言修心，其理一也。何煩諍論?” (*Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 552).

<sup>78</sup> This interpretation finds support in *Fazang sui jin lu*, where Chao asserts that Confucian texts only speak of worldly affairs, and do not shed light on the principles of the mind and body. See *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 490.

Chao's engagement in self-cultivation was not unique: the historical record indicates that many early Song literati took an interest in Buddhist and Daoist methods of cultivating the self.<sup>79</sup> Yang Yi, for example, espoused an approach to self-cultivation which resonated with the one advocated by Chao. While Yang, unlike Chao, did not vigorously promote the mutual compatibility of the Three Teachings, several of his writings reveal that he practiced Buddhist meditation and Daoist longevity techniques.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, later figures such as the Chan monk Qisong 契嵩 (1007–1072) and the Daoist adept Zhang Boduan 張伯端 (d. 1082) attempted to incorporate elements from the Three Teachings into their methods of self-cultivation.<sup>81</sup> The prevalence of Daoist and Buddhist practices among eleventh-century literati is also noted in the writings and recorded conversations of the early Neo-Confucians, who disparaged such techniques in their efforts to convince their peers to embrace Confucian methods of cultivating the self.<sup>82</sup>

The occasional nature of Chao's surviving writings render any attempt to precisely adumbrate the content of his actual practice difficult. In his extant works, he did not lay out a defined schedule, or provide a systematic account, of the techniques he used to cultivate himself on a daily basis. Yet, despite this, there are certain methods that he mentioned with some regularity when describing his mental and physical cultivation, in particular "cessation and contemplation 止觀" and "guiding and pulling 導引" exercises. Chao divided these two forms of practice between internal and external, arguing that together they facilitated the cultivation of the mind and body.

In my later years I used the following two methods in conjunction with one another to cultivate myself: cessation and contemplation;

<sup>79</sup> An important example that illustrates the interest that early Song officials had in Daoist techniques of self-cultivation involves the famous Daoist hermit, Chen Tuan 陳搏. During Chen's visits to Taizong's court in the late-tenth century, Song Qi 宋琪 (d. 996) and other high-ranking officials asked him whether he could teach them his techniques for cultivating the self. See Wang, *Songdai zhengjiao guanxi yanjiu*, pp. 25–30.

<sup>80</sup> See for example, Yang's "Reply to Exhorter Cha of the Historiography Institute" ("Da shiguan chazhengyan shu" 答史館查正言書), "Letter Thanking Prime Minister Li" ("Xie menxia Li xianggong qi" 謝門下李相公啓), and his "Preface for a Poem Sent to the Monk Jin on his Return Home" ("Song Jindaoren gui gushan shixu" 送觀道人歸故山詩序). This interest in self-cultivation is also noted in Yang's official biography in the *Song History*. See Tuo Tuo 脫脫, *Songshi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1977) 305, p. 10083.

<sup>81</sup> For Qisong's views, see Douglas Skonicki, "Cosmos, State and Society: Song Dynasty Arguments concerning the Creation of Political Order," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 2007), chap. 4. On Zhang Boduan, see Azuma Juji 吾妻重二, "'Goshinhen' no naitan shisō" 悟真篇の内丹思想, in Sakade Yoshinobu 坂出祥伸, ed., *Chūgoku kodai yōsei shisō no sōgōteki kenkyū* 中國古代養生思想総合的研究 (rpt. Tokyo: Hirakawa, 1992), pp. 600–27.

<sup>82</sup> For an analysis of their critiques of literati engagement with Buddhist practices, see Skonicki, "Cosmos, State and Society," pp. 543–54.

and guiding and pulling (exercises). [In the former method], one ceases thoughts and causes them to be still; contemplates Principle and causes it to be illumined. When thoughts are still and Principle is illumined, there is no arousal [of thoughts] that can attain completion. [In the latter method], one guides *qi* and causes it to be harmonious; directs the body and causes it to become supple. When *qi* is harmonious and the body is supple, extended life can be sought. It is through these two methods that the internal and external assist one another.<sup>83</sup> 予晚歲自修協用二法，止觀也，導引也。止念令靜，觀理令明；念靜理明，無生可成。導氣令和，引體令柔，氣和體柔，長生可求。此二法，內外相資之法也。

Chao here describes the goals of the techniques as the attainment of a refined condition in which the mind becomes still and illuminates Principle, and the body achieves the harmonious circulation of *qi* that he felt was a precondition for achieving long life. He furthermore emphasizes their interdependency, noting that these physical and mental techniques were mutually supportive. In order to gain a deeper understanding of Chao's practice, in what follows, I first describe his general view of cessation and contemplation, before turning to a discussion of his corporeal cultivation and use of breathing exercises.

Although Chao maintained that his method of mental practice (*xinfa* 心法) was derived from each of the Three Teachings,<sup>84</sup> a perusal of his works reveals that he was much more interested in Buddhist and Daoist meditative techniques, in particular cessation and contemplation.<sup>85</sup> Despite differences in how Buddhists and Daoists conceived of, and practiced, cessation and contemplation, both traditions required that the practitioner cease the arousal of deluded thoughts, and focus the mind on a particular object of contemplation. In order to facilitate the achievement of these tasks, the practitioner was instructed to pay close attention to the body, particularly his or her posture and breathing.

The influence of Buddhist and Daoist doctrines on Chao's conception of cessation and contemplation is evidenced by the following passage from *Daoyuan jiyao*:

<sup>83</sup> *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 438. Chao also describes this twofold method of cultivation in *Fazang sui jin lu*, pp. 439, 571; and *Zhaode xinbian*, p. 267.

<sup>84</sup> Chao makes this claim in his *Wensi sanfa zixiu ji* as well as at various points within *Zhaode xinbian* and *Fazang sui jin lu*.

<sup>85</sup> Chao seems to have preferred Buddhist forms of meditation, and his discussions of Buddhist mental practices outnumber those from the Daoist tradition. In addition, Chao described a variety of different forms of meditation in his works; however, due to spatial considerations, I confine my discussion here to his views on cessation and contemplation.

Guifeng [Zongmi's] [*Yao*] *lu* states: "When you realize that all marks are empty, the mind will be of itself without thought; as soon as thoughts arise one realizes it. Once one realizes it, they disappear. The cultivation and practice of the marvelous teaching lies only in this." These are the key points to the method of contemplation. *Zuowang lun* [states]: "suppress [thoughts] whenever they arise, and exert effort to prevent [the mind] from moving." These are the key points to the method of cessation. What need is there to [compile] so many recorded remarks?<sup>86</sup> 圭峯後錄云: 覺諸相空, 心自無念, 念起即覺, 覺之即無, 修行妙門, 惟在此也。此觀法之綱要。坐忘論隨起隨制, 務令不動, 此止法之綱要。悠悠語錄, 安用多爲?

Chao here cites two important Tang-era Buddhist and Daoist works, Zongmi's *Yaolu* 要錄 and Sima Chengzhen's 司馬承真 (647–735) *Zuowang lun* 坐忘論 (*Sitting in Oblivion*), to describe the key points to his method of cessation and contemplation, asserting that Zongmi's work elucidated the meaning of contemplation, whereas Sima's text encapsulated the purport of cessation.<sup>87</sup> As this passage demonstrates, Chao's mental practice was directed at stilling the mind and ceasing the arousal of deluded thoughts. In his extant works, Chao elaborated at length on this basic definition, describing how different authoritative texts from the Buddhist and Daoist traditions shed light on this method of meditation.

With regards to physical cultivation, Chao held that the mind was the root of the body,<sup>88</sup> and the corporeal techniques he employed were designed to complement his mental practice.<sup>89</sup> Although there is

<sup>86</sup> *Daoyuan jiyao* (SKQS edn., vol. 1052), p. 617.

<sup>87</sup> The *Siku quanshu* version of the text lists the source of Zongmi's quote as *Houlu* 後錄; however, I think this may be a misprint for *Yaolu* 要錄, which could refer to *Dasheng chanmen yaolu* 大乘禪門要錄, a text found at Dunhuang that contains portions of Zongmi's *Chan Preface* (*Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu* 禪源諸詮集都序). The quoted line is in fact found in his *Chan Preface*. For a brief discussion of this text and its relationship to the *Chan Preface*, see Peter N. Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Hawaii: U. Hawaii P., 2002), pp. 315–16. For a translation and analysis of Sima Chengzhen's *Sitting in Oblivion*, see Livia Kohn, *Sitting in Oblivion: The Heart of Daoist Meditation* (Dunedin, Fl.: Three Pines, 2010).

<sup>88</sup> See *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 459. Chao also asserted that the mind controlled the *qi* of the body and that one's state of mind directly affected the condition of one's *qi*. See *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 474. For an analysis of how Chinese thinkers conceived of the physical relationship between mind and body, see Hidema Ishida, "Body and Mind: The Chinese Perspective," in Livia Kohn, ed., *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques* (Ann Arbor: Center For Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1989), pp. 41–71.

<sup>89</sup> This claim was also advanced in Daoism, where "guiding and pulling" was oftentimes meant to accompany "visualization and meditation" (*cunsi* 存思). Chao regarded the cultivation of the body as an integral part of his practice. He argued that Buddhist teachings concerning the body as an external thing were not intended to make light of the body, but rather were designed to prevent individuals from becoming attached to it. See *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 541.



one passage in his extant works which asserts that Confucian texts had teachings that were useful for “preserving the body” (*baoshen* 保身),<sup>90</sup> as was the case with mental cultivation, the majority of his discussions concerned Buddhist and Daoist techniques, particularly Daoist “guiding and pulling” exercises as well as Daoist and Buddhist breathing techniques. Whereas Chao’s objective in practicing mental cultivation was to still the mind and realize Principle, his goal in engaging in physical cultivation was the attainment of corporeal well-being and an extended lifespan.

In Daoism, “guiding and pulling” exercises took many different forms, but they shared the goals of circulating the *qi* throughout the body, purging disease, and facilitating the attainment of long life.<sup>91</sup> They moreover were often performed together with meditation,<sup>92</sup> and, as noted above, Chao clearly viewed the cultivation of the body and mind as interdependent. This is evidenced by the fact that each mention of Daoist “guiding and pulling” in his surviving works is followed by the claim that he practiced it together with meditation.<sup>93</sup>

As was the case with “guiding and pulling,” Chao viewed exercises designed to regulate and harmonize breathing and *qi* as essential complements to meditation. In the preface to his “Slogan on the Merits of Together [Using] Chan and Daoist Methods of Cultivation” (*Chan Dao tonggong xiuyang jue* 禪道同功修養訣), for example, Chao asserted that Buddhist and Daoist cultivation exercises enabled individuals to achieve a magnificent state of mental calm and attain an extended lifespan. Chao succinctly described the results of using Chan and Daoist techniques as follows:

心息相依	The mind and breath are mutually dependent;
息調心靜[淨]	The breath is regulated and the mind is pure. <sup>94</sup>
靜[淨]調久久	Being pure and regulated for a long period;

<sup>90</sup> *Zhaode xinbian*, p. 260.

<sup>91</sup> Unfortunately, in his extant works Chao neglected to explain what his practice of “guiding and pulling” entailed in any detail. In contrast to his discussions of mental cultivation, he did not cite the texts that his practice was based upon; instead, he simply noted that it involved the vigorous and extended movement of the body.

<sup>92</sup> On Daoist “guiding and pulling,” see Catherine Despeux, “Gymnastics: The Ancient Tradition,” in Kohn, ed., *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques*, pp. 225–61; Xiao Dengfu 蕭登福, “Shilun daoyin yu cunsi bingzhong de Daojiao jingzuo famen” 試論導引與存思並重的道教靜坐法門, in Yang Rubin 楊儒賓 et al., eds., *Dongya de jingzuo chuantong* 東亞的靜坐傳統 (Taipei: Taiwan daxue, 2012), pp. 321–69; and Li Ling 李零, ed., *Zhongguo fangshu gaiguan: daoyin xingqi juan* 中國方術概觀, 導引行氣卷 (Beijing: Renmin zhongguo, 1993).

<sup>93</sup> See *Fazang sui jin lu*, pp. 438–439, 571, 603; and *Zhaode xinbian*, p. 267.

<sup>94</sup> This line is from Guifeng Zongmi’s commentary on *Yuanjue jing* titled *Dafang guang Yuan-jue jing dashu* 大方廣圓覺經大疏. Chao also discusses this line in *Daoyuan jiyao*, p. 625.

可成勝定	It is possible to give rise to superior calming. <sup>95</sup>
神氣相合	The spirit and <i>qi</i> fuse together;
氣和神清	The <i>qi</i> is harmonious and the spirit is clear.
清和久久	Being harmonious and clear for a long period;
可致長生	It is possible to attain long life. <sup>96</sup>

Although Chao here associates techniques aimed at stilling the mind and breath with Buddhism, and those directed at purifying the *qi* and spirit with Daoism, in keeping with his general approach, he also made an effort to collapse this division. In both teachings, he asserted that meditators were instructed to focus the mind on their breathing, albeit for different reasons. Whereas Daoist meditation required the practitioner to use the mind to direct the circulation of the *qi* throughout the body, in Buddhism individuals were instructed to regulate breathing to facilitate the achievement of a calm mental state. There was thus a strong connection between the mental and the physical in each tradition's meditative practice, which Chao viewed as an important point of intersection between them.

In the following entry from *Fazang sui jin lu*, Chao argued that the above two methods were in fact fundamentally similar:

Shi Jianwu's *Sanzhu mingxu* (*Preface to the Inscription on the Three Dwellings*) states:<sup>97</sup> "When the mind controls the *qi*, the *qi* and spirit merge." The commentary to the chapter on perfect enlightenment in *Yuanjue jing* states: "The mind and breath are mutually dependent; the breath is regulated and the mind is pure." From contemplating these two doctrines, I have learned that the principle underlying Daoist descriptions of spiritual immortality techniques and Buddhist elucidations of meditation methods is largely the same.<sup>98</sup> 施肩吾三住銘序云：心常御氣，氣與神合。圓覺經圓覺章注

<sup>95</sup> The character *jing* 靜 (quiescent) in this line is almost certainly an error for *jing* 淨 (pure). The latter character is used in Zongmi's *Dafang guang Yuanjue jing dashu*, as well as in other passages where Chao discusses this line.

<sup>96</sup> *Daoyuan jiyao*, p. 637.

<sup>97</sup> The "three dwellings" refer to dwelling in *qi*, the spirit, and form. Shi Jianwu was a famous Daoist adept of the early-Song dynasty.

<sup>98</sup> *Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 437. Chao expresses a similar sentiment in the following passage, which focused on the clarity that resulted from both types of practice: "The practitioners of Chan have a saying: 'The mind and breath are mutually dependent; the breath is regulated and the mind is pure.' If we use the words of the Daoists to express this, then [we would say]: 'the spirit and *qi* merge; the *qi* is harmonious and the spirit is clear.' 禪家之言有云，心息相依，息調心淨，若以道家之言言之，乃是神氣交合，氣和神清" (*Fazang sui jin lu*, p. 586). Chao discussed the relationship between the mind and *qi*, as well as the proper way to control the mind and regulate the *qi*, in *Zhaode xinbian*, pp. 268–69; *Daoyuan jiyao*, pp. 624–25; and *Fazang sui jin lu*, pp. 456, 552.

云：心息相依，息調心淨。予觀兩處之說，因知道家言神仙之術、釋氏明禪那之法，其理大同矣。

Chao thus clearly felt that Buddhist and Daoist cultivation exercises had much in common. He further maintained that methods for regulating the breath and purifying the mind, which he associates with Buddhism in the above passages, also figured prominently within Daoism. In his *Daoyuan jiyao*, he wrote:

I further thought that when the mind ceases, the breath also ceases; when the mind moves, the breath also moves. When the breath ceases, the mind also ceases; when the breath moves, the mind also moves. Thus Chan Buddhists and Daoists regard only the two methods concerning mind and breath as the most essential.<sup>99</sup> 又思心住則息住，心行則息行；息住則心住，息行則心行。所以禪家道家惟以心息二法最為切要。

Chao continued the passage by citing *Zhuangzi* as well as several Buddhist texts on the importance of the mind and breathing. He concluded it by stating that through the use of these techniques, one “could nourish life and enter the *Dao*.”<sup>100</sup>

Chao discussed what nourishing life and entering the *Dao* (*rudao* 入道) meant with some regularity in his extant works. His descriptions of “nourishing life” were relatively straightforward; in them he maintained that his practice of physical cultivation gave him increased vitality and a more vibrant outward appearance.<sup>101</sup> In contrast, his discussions of “entering the *Dao*” were more varied and complicated, involving concepts and practices from each of the three traditions. Yet, despite Chao’s contention that all three contained methods and precepts that could help one “enter the *Dao*,” the majority of his comments on this issue refer to Buddhist and Daoist contexts.<sup>102</sup> Thus, although Chao asserted that the teachings of Confucianism could help one realize the *Dao*, his conception of what this realization entailed was primarily grounded in Daoist and Buddhist doctrine.

The achievement of mental and physical realization, characterized by the attainment of long life and insight into the *Dao*, was the objective of Chao’s study and practice. It was through his daily engagement with

<sup>99</sup> *Daoyuan jiyao*, pp. 624–25.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. 此可以養生，可以入道。Chao also identified cessation and contemplation as the “gate to entering the *Dao*” (*rudao zhimen* 入道之門) in *Fazang suijin lu*, p. 457.

<sup>101</sup> See, e.g., *Fazang suijin lu*, p. 446.

<sup>102</sup> See, e.g., *Daoyuan jiyao*, pp. 615–16, 622–23; *Fazang suijin lu*, pp. 429, 442, 469, 603.

the texts and cultivation techniques of the three traditions that Chao found purpose and contentment during his final years. In his surviving writings, he frequently noted that he had made a great deal of progress in this endeavor, achieving clarity in body and mind; however, he also conceded that he had yet to reach the highest stages of realization. Despite his failure in this regard, he still derived a sense of serenity and accomplishment from his activities, which, in *Zhaode xinbian*, he described as follows: “As my years increase, my visage declines; as I enter the *Dao* more deeply, my mind of *Dao* flourishes. This principle is inevitable, why go through the trouble of searching for it? I understand now that it is so; I have no worries and am happy.”<sup>103</sup>

#### CONCLUSION – CHAO’S INTELLECTUAL LEGACY

In this article, I have attempted to provide a basic description of Chao Jiong’s views regarding the relationship between the Three Teachings and the practice of self-cultivation. My analysis of Chao’s extant works demonstrates that he espoused an open attitude towards the Three Teachings, and sought to identify connections between the different doctrines contained within their foundational texts. This basic stance carried forward into Chao’s practice, which consisted of reading, physical exercises, and meditation. Chao utilized self-cultivation techniques from each of the Three Teachings, and he argued for the presence of fundamental similarities among them. Chao’s goal was not only to show that Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian teachings could be used in conjunction with one another to facilitate one’s realization of the *Dao*, but also to demonstrate that his regimen of practice enabled one to truly “get it for oneself.”

As noted above, Chao hoped that his writings would prove useful to others, and that like-minded literati would use his works to help them understand the three traditions and find resources within each that they could employ to cultivate themselves. Although Chao had friends, disciples, and family members who expressed support for his intellectual stance, contrary to the view expressed within contemporary scholarship, there is little evidence that his writings exerted a significant impact on subsequent literati thought and practice.

Put simply, in-depth discussions of Chao’s writings and methods of self-cultivation are not found in extant Song-dynasty texts. Brief ref-

<sup>103</sup> 歷年增高而年顏衰，入道彌深而道心盛。此理必爾，何煩詢求？愚今則然，勿憂有喜 (*Zhaode xinbian*, p. 268). For similar statements on the joy of cultivating himself, see *Fazang sui jin lu*, pp. 559-552, 596.

erences to “Wenyuan’s method of mental cultivation” (*Wenyuan xinfa* 文元心法 and *Wenyuan xinyao* 文元心要) occur in letters written by the Southern Song intellectuals Zhou Bida 周必大 (1126–1198) and Wang Yingchen 汪應辰 (1118–1176).<sup>104</sup> Similarly, a short description of *Fazang sui jin lu*, which notes Chao’s ecumenical stance towards the Three Teachings, appears in Sun Di’s 孫覲 (1081–1169) nineteenth “Note to Zheng Dazi” (*Yu Zheng Dazi tie* 與鄭大資帖).<sup>105</sup> The compiler of *Daoyuan jiyao*, Wang Gu, provides cursory descriptions of several of Chao’s works as well as his method of cultivation in his preface to the text.<sup>106</sup> Chen Guan 陳瓘 (1057–1122), in his *Baocheng yiji lu xu* 寶城易記錄序, mentions Chao’s *Daoyuan ji* as a model of concision that he intends to replicate in his own work. He praises Chao’s profound understanding of Buddhism and celebrates the fact that his *Daoyuan ji* was easy for students to learn and practice.<sup>107</sup> Chao’s writings and methods of meditation are also mentioned in several Daoist texts such as *Daoshu* 道樞, *Duren shangpin miaojing zhu* 度人上品妙經註, and *Zhouyi cantong qi fahui* 周易參同契發揮.<sup>108</sup> The references to Chao in the above works are for the most part superficial, and they fail to engage with his ideas in any substantial way.

The most important piece of textual evidence we have that describes how Chao’s works were read and interpreted in the Song dynasty is the “Preface Sent to Mr. Guo” (“Song Guoshi xu” 送郭氏序), which was written by Jiong’s direct descendant, Chao Yuezhi 晁說之 (1059–1129). In the first part of the preface, Chao Yuezhi described the types of individual who were attracted to Jiong’s writings:

From the beginnings of the dynasty, my illustrious ancestor Grand Master of Civil Origination (Jiong) was a well-known figure, a top-ranking official responsible for compiling writings on ritual and music. After Renzong ascended the throne, he began to attain the positions he desired, and following his retirement he wrote books into his eighties. His works, which total thirty-four chapters, have ten chapters entitled *Fazang sui jin lu*. [This work] is currently circulating; those who are willing to read it carefully and appreciate

<sup>104</sup> See *Quan Songwen* 5099, p. 264; 4774, p. 131. Zhou also composed a preface in which he briefly mentioned Chao Jiong’s *Fazang sui jin lu* and his successful official career. See *Quan Songwen* 5120, p. 181.

<sup>105</sup> *Quan Songwen* 3469, p. 212.

<sup>106</sup> *Quan Songwen* 2213, p. 307.

<sup>107</sup> Chen’s preface is found in Zongxiao 宗曉, *Lebang wenlei* 樂邦文類 (T 47), p. 174c.

<sup>108</sup> These texts all date from the Southern Song. Buddhist texts such as *Jushi fendeng lu* 居士分燈錄, *Shishi jigu lue* 釋氏稽古略, and *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 also contain brief biographical sketches of Chao, but his specific ideas and practices are not discussed in detail.

it are of two types. The first type consists of individuals for whom, during times of trouble and distress, being a Confucian does not suit their inner feelings. It also includes Chan monks who are not partial to sectarian allegiances, and Daoists who are able to move beyond the practice of inner alchemy. The second type includes successful officials who encounter setbacks midway through their careers. They thereupon [begin to] worry about wealth and status, and fear that they have no means of overcoming their distress. It also consists of those advanced in years, who, upon returning home after retirement, have yet to forget the extravagant lifestyle of the past. They then isolate themselves in order to overcome [such past practices]. [These two types of individual] are definitely fond of this work by my ancestor.<sup>109</sup>

說之高祖太師文元公，自國初爲聞人，仕宦極禮樂文章之選。逮仁宗即位，始獲如請，致仕著書於八十歲之餘。其書凡三十有四卷，而十卷名之曰：法藏碎金錄。今行於世，其肯熟讀酷好者，有二人焉。一曰：窮悴之世，爲儒不肆其胷臆，禪侶不私於宗派，道人能厭飛鍊者；其二曰：得意方顯仕，而中道逆風垂翅，乃懼富貴而恐無以勝憂患者，與夫白首謝事得歸，而未有以忘平昔之豪習，而自勝杜門者，必吾祖是書之好也。

In this passage, Chao Yuezhi identifies the primary readership of *Fazang suijinlu* as consisting of two types. The first includes adherents of the Three Teachings who have an open mind and who are not rigidly sectarian; the second is made up of former officials who either encounter obstacles during their careers or who decide to lead a simpler lifestyle following retirement. In short, the above passage indicates that individuals who were interested in Chao Jiong's writings had concerns very much like those of Chao himself.

The revitalization of Confucianism did not figure among these concerns. Neither Chao Jiong nor his works receive mention in the writings of Northern Song thinkers interested in strengthening the Confucian tradition. The anti-Buddhist proponents of the *guwen* 古文 movement as well as the founding members of Neo-Confucianism posited a hard and fast distinction between the Confucian *dao* and the heterodox *daos* of Buddhism and Daoism. They in fact criticized literati such as Chao, who saw no inherent conflict among the Three Teachings, and who dabbled in Buddhist and Daoist meditation practices in order to cultivate themselves.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>109</sup> *Quan Songwen* 3804, p. 62.

<sup>110</sup> See, e.g., Cheng Yi 程頤 and Cheng Hao 程顥, comp. Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚, *Er Chengji* 二程集 (rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2008), pp. 23–24, 38, 155–56.

Their criticisms were grounded in a fundamentally different view of the purpose behind engaging in self-cultivation. Neo-Confucian thinkers regarded the primary motive for cultivating the self identified by Chao and other likeminded literati – the attainment of personal enlightenment – as inherently selfish.<sup>111</sup> As his own writings demonstrate, Chao isolated himself from the larger world in order to fulfill his ambition; the goal of his project was completely self-centered and lacked a larger social purpose. Indeed, his conception of “entering the *Dao*” was grounded in part in Buddhist theories regarding the emptiness of things and affairs. In Chao’s view, getting it for oneself did not entail any commitment to improving government, society, or the world.

Most Confucian intellectuals, by contrast, emphasized that the objective of self-cultivation was not simply self-fulfillment, but also the education of the people and the creation of socio-political order.<sup>112</sup> They moreover denied that cutting oneself off from things and affairs was a prerequisite for engaging in a serious regimen of self-cultivation. Instead, they contended that self-cultivation depended on interaction with the things and affairs of the world, and insisted that the cultivated individual had a responsibility to educate and care for his fellow man.

The early Neo-Confucians Zhang Zai 張載 (1020–1077), Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107), and Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085) bemoaned the popularity of Buddhism and Daoism, and they castigated their fellow literati for being drawn to “heterodox” doctrines.<sup>113</sup> They focused their criticism on Buddhism, which, unlike the public spiritedness that informed the teachings of the sages, was grounded in the “partiality of the self” (*yiji zhisi* 一己之私).<sup>114</sup> The Chengs asserted that this partiality blinded Buddhists to the reality of the world, and they compared Buddhism’s limited understanding of the *Dao* to “peering at the sky through a tube” (*yiguan kuitian* 以管窺天).<sup>115</sup> Using language from the *Yijing*, Cheng Yi depicted the shortcomings of Buddhist self-cultivation as follows: “They (the Buddhists) can be reverent in order to straighten their inner selves, but they have no means of being righteous in order

<sup>111</sup> See *Er Chengji*, pp. 30, 149, 152.

<sup>112</sup> They in fact contrasted their notion of “getting it for oneself” (*zide* 自得) with that found within Buddhism. Put simply, for the Chengs, self-realization involved an active engagement with the things and affairs of the world. See *Er Cheng ji*, pp. 24, 122.

<sup>113</sup> Cheng Yi identified being deluded by heterodox teachings as one of the three main problems of contemporary students, *Er Cheng ji*, p. 187. See also Fan Yu’s 范育 preface to Zhang Zai’s *Zhengmeng* 正蒙, *Zhang Zai ji* 張載集 (Taipei: Hanjing wenhua, 2004), pp. 4–5; and Cheng Yi’s record of conduct for Cheng Hao, *Er Cheng ji*, p. 638.

<sup>114</sup> *Er Cheng ji*, p. 142.

<sup>115</sup> *Er Cheng ji*, pp. 138, 292.

to square external affairs.”<sup>116</sup> Put simply, the early Neo-Confucians maintained that Buddhists had no interest in or mechanism for dealing with the world, and thus they and their literati followers had nothing to contribute to, and in fact had purposefully turned their backs on, the establishment of a well-ordered state and society.

Although Neo-Confucians would stress certain concepts used by Chao to describe the task of cultivating the self, unlike Chao they sought to ground these concepts exclusively in the Confucian textual tradition and excise any vestigial influences derived from Buddhism and Daoism. It is also important to point out that the concepts the Neo-Confucians incorporated into their philosophical vision, such as Principle (*li* 理), the Nature (*xing* 性), and centrality (*zhong* 中), had by the middle of the eleventh century become common within literati discourse. The fact that Chao was one of the earliest Song thinkers to discuss them in detail is insufficient to establish a direct connection. This, together with the very different nature of their intellectual projects, renders the argument for any type of direct influence extremely tendentious.

That Chao did not in fact chart the course leading to the development of Neo-Confucianism in no way diminishes his historical interest, however. Chao represented and helped define an important strain within Song intellectual culture, which consisted of literati who adopted an ecumenical approach to the Three Teachings and who used doctrines from each to cultivate themselves. Like Chao, many prominent Song officials became interested in Buddhism and/or Daoism following retirement, devoting themselves to self-cultivation during their final years. As Chao Yuezhi’s “Preface Sent to Mr. Guo” suggests, it is among these types of literati, and not intellectuals committed to the revival of Confucianism, that Chao’s views most likely made a mark.

<sup>116</sup> *Er Cheng ji*, p. 24. 可以敬以直内矣，然無義以方外。Cheng concluded his remarks by stating that the Buddhists had no means of ordering the state and the world.