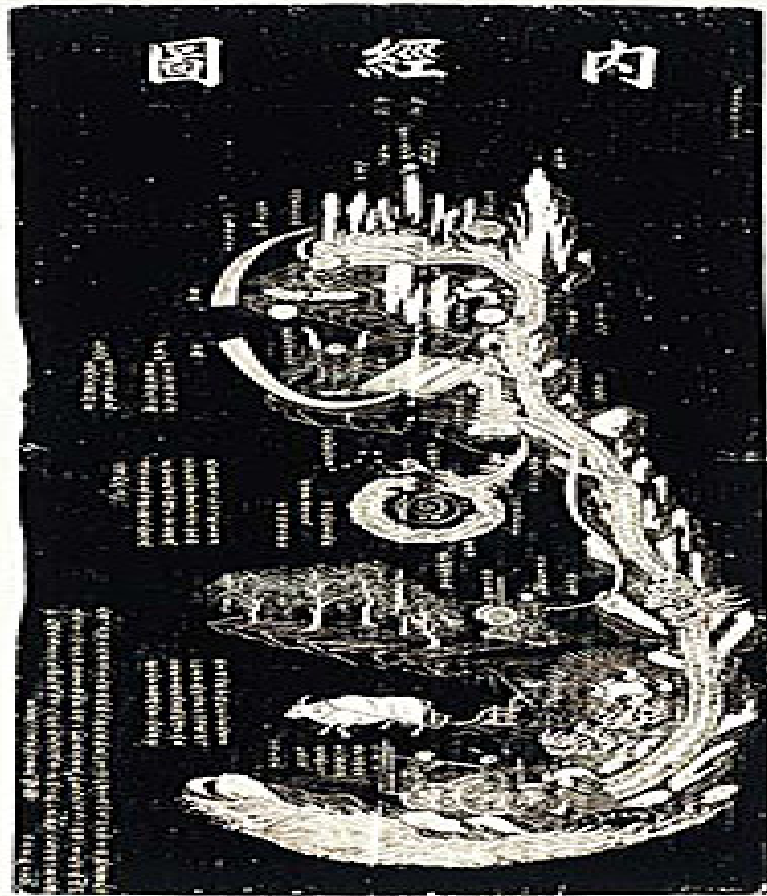


Yoked to Earth: A Treatise on Corpse-Demons and *Bigu* or “abstention from grains”  
By Frederick R. Dannaway: Delaware Tea Society Eremitic Sciences Monographs



The adept throws down the mundane plow and tills the inner soil .

This paper was written to gather, as much as possible, the scattered and often contradictory lore of an elusive practice rooted in ancient China. The materials available on the subject seem incomplete and are largely unavailable in English or online or are hidden amongst larger works on Daoism or China. I make no claim to any original scholarship , but hope that it humbly aid those interested in the subject but lacking access to certain texts. I was going to entitle to this paper with the rather “on the nose” *Against the Grain* as it subtly expresses the Daoist paradox of integrating with a higher order rather than “going with the grain” of society both in terms of food and carpentry. But there is a diet book on the subject entitled “Against the Grain” as well as well-argued books on agricultural “creation of culture of scarcity” (Manning 2005) and many articles on various subjects with that title with which I did not want to be “unequally yoked.” The Wade-Giles/Pinyin situation is usually dependant on the author cited.

Curses and Culture Bearers

“Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life”



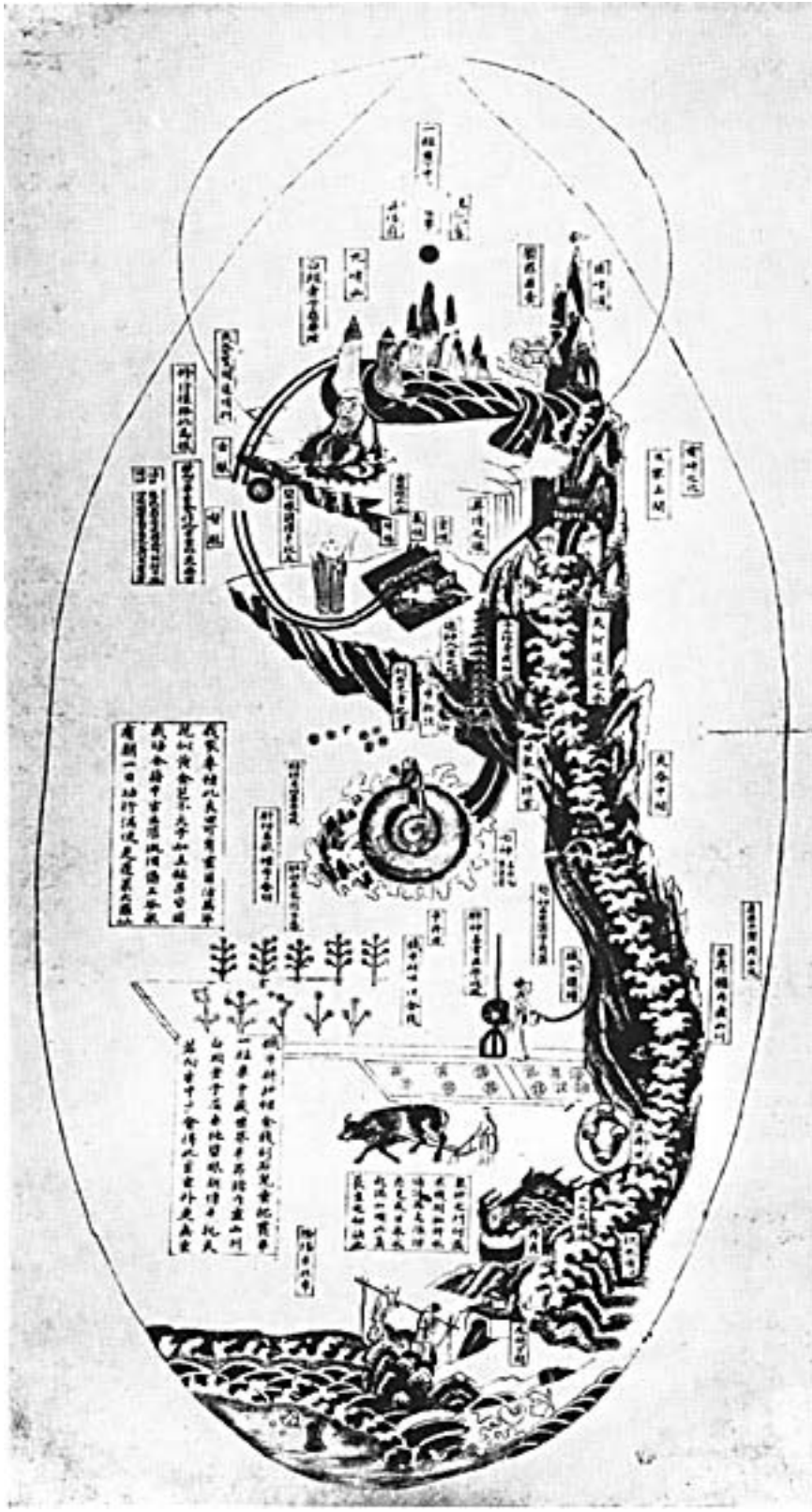
Mysticism and diet have always had a complicated relationship from ritual meals to food taboos. The shaman or priest's knowledge of stars and seasons dictated planting and harvesting as well as the precise time of hunting expeditions or nomadic wanderings. As "civilization" emerged from loose-knit horticultural hunter/gatherers to hierarchical agriculture settlements the accumulated wisdom, from plant/animal husbandry to medical knowledge, would form part of the basis for an authority literally rooted in the peasants struggle against the earth. The Daoist Immortals are often described as "abstaining from grain" (*bigu*) as part of their training and progression in the Dao. Many scattered and contradictory writings have appeared on this elusive practice of *bigu* from reducing it to another ascetic practice to modern works touting it as the next weight loss and health panacea. This paper seeks to brave the wild tangle of references and to separate out the chaff. I wish to immediately point out that cultivated cereal grains are a relatively recent addition to the human diet and "represent a radical departure from the foods to which we are genetically adapted (Cordain 1999)." Likewise, the "abstention from grain" of Saints must be seen to be a fundamental technique of achieving immortality, perhaps only inferior to a magical plant or elixir that would instantly fulfill the same function as the practice of *bigu*.

Beyond the tension of the "raw and the cooked" is the fundamental dreariness and difficulty of an agricultural existence. The book of Genesis, already in chapter 2, implies man's very creation was anticipated to work the fields possibly indicating that it was his sole purpose at that early stage of creation, "and there was not a man to till the ground." Adam, of the red dirt, is punished for tasting the forbidden fruit with the odious warning that "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Many ancient myths describe rituals and rites seeking to arbitrate and articulate the deep sense of misery of man's fall from a garden of plenty. One such example is the Gardens of Adonis of ancient Greece that represent, as Detienne (1994) writes, an "anti-agriculture" where the "frivolous" female potted cereals stand in marked contrast to the "serious" farming of the males.

Detienne's research reveals the complex relationships between families, bloodlines, human and plant husbandry and the wilder side of weeds, harlots and sex outside the state/reproductive paradigms that informed the Greek reality. His discussion on vegetarianism as an act of political revolt outside the communal sharing of blood sacrifice (Detienne 1998) as refusing society is extremely relevant as context to this discussion of the Daoist practice of *Bigu*. As I have discussed elsewhere (Dannaway, Piper and Webster 2006), there is a significant body of literature in Jewish and Islamic sources that identify the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden as wheat. There is surely some statement for a prejudice against agriculture in the refusal of Cain's offering. Cain was the "tiller of the soil" whose name means "to acquire, get, or possess," identical to the word for "spear" and cognate with "to forge" and "reed or stalk" in associations that are found in this Chinese context.

Of course not all agricultural myths tend towards the depressing. Many involve gods or legendary heroes who spread the beneficent technologies in civilizing acts of mercy to a wild, desperate and starving population. Shennong (literally: Divine Farmer), the legendary Emperor of the Five Grains, helped the masses of starving huddled in the bush to learn the secrets of plants organizing a pharmacopoeia as well as teaching agriculture. There is an organizing principle at work combining the idea of a hierarchy (an Emperor and dynastic families that trace their origins to them) and the subservient collective that must "join together...in order to root out and destroy the weeds that covered the land (they must) cut down the flea-bane, the mug-wort, the false-hemp, the star-thistle" (Granet 1930). Contrasted to the cursed punishment of agriculture of Biblical myths is the Chinese notion of a divine nutritional salvation that rescued the population from living the savaged lives of beasts and scavengers. Hereo/divinities such as Shennong and Hou Chi, the Lord of Millet Grains, would receive special sacrifices as tribute that would be collected by families (such as the Chou house) and tribes that appropriated the gods' clout to legitimize their rule (Cannadine and Price 1992). Millet appears to be only grain to have been deified in ancient China (Giradot 1983). There is also broader evidence of Indo-European "praise of famous grains" in various mythological contexts (Watkins 1977).

What becomes evident in the study of the tensions between Confucians and Daoists is a fundamental difference in their assessments of the prehistorical period of China. The Confucian's viewed primordial times as period of starvation, of violence and wilderness, to loosely paraphrase and translate Levi (1982), contrasted to the Daoist view of a golden-age of uncontrived Eden-like bliss. "*Zhuangzi* praises that idyllic age with these words: 'Spirits and gods show their good will and nobody dies before his time'" (Levi 1982). This is anathema to the Confucian view that it took a civilizing divine-potentate to rescue humanity from its own ignorance and helplessness in a brutal wilderness. This expresses a fundamental cosmological orientation that is the foundation for much of the social movements in China, perhaps even into modern times. "Ancient man imbibed dew" and "fed on primordial breath and drink harmony" and ate not the toilsome, vulgar crops of the red dust that are exemplified in the Five Sacred Grains (*wu ku*).



Another illustration of the inner cultivation versus the outer agriculture.

### Cereal Killers, Celestial Snitches and Agrarian Crisis

"Now, the people of mysterious antiquity, they reached old age because they remained in **leisure** and never ate any grains." From Most High Numinous Treasure

"Cutting stalks at noon time, Perspiration drips to the earth. Know you that your bowl of rice, Each grain from hardship comes?"

Cheng Chan-Pao

The peasant was yoked to the earth in a diabolical scheme of death and taxes and back breaking labor in furtherance of the state agenda. When famine or natural disaster altered the already precarious relationship between man and the land it was the poor who bore the brunt of the burden, thus eventually the "esculentist movement" (Gwei-djen and Needham 1968). When the situation became critical there was exodus to the mountains. The sedentary existence of an agricultural society was thus at the mercy of the elements and prey to all manner of social ills and class exploitation. The gifts of beneficent legendary emperors is bitter-sweet and the paradox at the heart of this relationship informs much of Daoist cosmology and practice. If the "Five Grains" are taken literally as representing rice, glutinous millet, panicked millet, wheat and soybeans then it must be noted that all these foods require significant cultivation, "farming" and converted land. This must be kept in mind when discussing the wild, uncultivated foods of the Daoist adepts such as pine resin, needles and nuts and fantastic mushrooms and minerals. As Mollier (2008) writes, "the damaging effects of cereals were denounced in 3rd century BCE in the documents of Mawangdui."

Famines, plagues, wars and corrupt/ineffectual governments characterized much of China's history from the pre-historical period (Schipper 1993). Scholars note that after the fall of the Han dynasty more and more people refrained from eating cereals (Pregadio 2008). In 1406, an famine or 'Salvation-in-the-midst-of-desolation- herbal,' compiled by Chu Hsiao (Reid 1977) who also set up "famine gardens" (Christopher 1985). The options were few in such a predicament and something of a spiritual ultimatum arose that continued to characterize Chinese religion. This can be distilled to the choice of either armed revolt or social activism of sorts or "dropping out" into autonomous reclusion. Armed revolts by peasants are many, the most famous perhaps being the Yellow Turban Rebellion initiated by Daoist adepts who proposed an alternative world view to restructure society from the Yellow Heaven. The struggle was not against society *per se* as much as it was frustration at the loss of an "idealized, primitive agricultural community...or a nostalgia for a prefeudal or Neolithic communal society" (Giradot 1983). Needham's discussions of the Hun Tun myths as the formation of class distinctions and imposing of a feudal system describe the atmosphere that crystallized some of core facets of the Daoist Immortal. Zou Yan of the 4<sup>th</sup> century wrote of his cosmological theories that related grain to earth (square) and *qi* to heaven (round) thus making them incompatible.

A quasi-mystical primitivism that was essentially pragmatic would be ill-served to be labeled as asceticism, a point I will return to later. Chinese mystics were not "above" ascetic practices and self-mortification but generally they certainly do not approach the level of, say, Indian yogis who undergo severe austerities and mutilations (though there are exceptions). Even if Needham's theories prove narrow and exclusive of esoteric (as

some allege (though this an unfair and uniformed criticism of his work) implications they must be seen to elegantly describe a crucible of strife that permanently altered, or even created, this expression of Daoist arts. The uncertain situation of a tumultuous social order would eventually leave all classes from Emperor down to some degree at the mercy of fate ultimately linked to diet. The nostalgia for a primitive golden age inspired mass revolts on one level, often resulting in disaster for all parties, and a hermit's seclusion on the other. As more and more land was converted to agrarian pursuits the mountains become the potent symbols of the wild, natural and untainted source of power. Eventually monastic orders arose as a compromise between the secular and spiritual realms, marking an important point when a cult or movement must reach a compromise with society. This is especially true in Daoism particularly during periods in and out of court favor. This would reflect the influence and competition of Buddhism as well as no other alternative other than to establish non-confrontational communes after all the rebellions basically failed.

Retiring to a mountain, then as now, would require an inordinate amount of training, planning and discipline. Following Maslow, the aspirant's first concern, especially in times of famine and strife, would be nourishment. This essentially puts the person back in the same situation as before the advent of agriculture. The Daoist masters in some sense decide that in the face of continually crumbling social orders, with intermittent prosperity, to have done with the charade and to face the situation on their own terms. To be able to minimize or abstain from food (especially the Five Grains) and **to thrive** by way of subtle arts would be tantamount to freedom from the feudal system. I emphasize "to thrive" here because it is quite different from some forced fast where the person simply wastes away. Modern mystics, such as the "Buddha Boy" Ram Bahadur Bomjam of Nepal claim to abstain from food and a recent documentary on him featured an Indian yogi who underwent 24/7 CCTV scrutiny by doctors and was found to not have ingested anything. There are also Chinese practitioners who perform Bigu for lengths of time enclosed in glass in public to prove the practice is possible, though a discussion of modern Bigu will be found at the end of this paper.

The Daoist, turning is back on the feudal power structure, must be self-sufficient or to join groups that formed, especially later as monastic orders, in small utopian communities modeled after the "primitive agrarian collectivism" that is well described by Needham. From the time of the Yellow Emperor, and an especially in a Confucian context, there existed the "legendary rebels" who "would not submit" and thus were exiled by force to remote lands. These mystic incorrigibles are the prototypical source for eccentric and lunatic adepts that inhabit Chinese history. The legendary rebels were part of "metal-working confraternities" or "metallurgical initiatory brotherhoods" who were "leaders of pre-feudal collectivist society...[and] would have attempted to resist the earliest feudal lords, and to prevent them from acquiring metal-working as the basis of their power" (Giradot 1983). These is provides much of the symbolism and vocabulary for the various mystical alchemies, inner and outer, that used metallurgical technical terms as code.

Intersecting this mythological complex, that weighed on the collective unconscious of China much like the doctrine of "original sin" in the West, was a system of "magical medicine" that fought pathogenic corpse-demon-worms that were bent on their hosts destruction. These parasites, which sometimes took the form of actual worms

in the body, also existed on a more subtle dimension and were of great concern to Daoist aspirants (though it may well be presumptuous to refer to them in past tense). Gradually there was conceived as being an equally grand heavenly hierarchy—as above, so below—that was to torment the ethereal souls in a multidimensional fashion. There are many variations and numbers, but the majority of Daoist schools recognize three major “worms” (*san-ch’ung*) or “corpse demons” (*san-shih*) that feed on the cereals, or “The Five Grains,” ingested by their human host. The three worms shorten the lifespan of their host by snitching to the celestial bureaucracy of his or her misdeeds. Each infraction, depending on if it’s a misdemeanor or major offense, will accordingly result in time deducted from the host’s allotted days on earth. The worms are motivated to incite such transgressions to hasten their own salvation from being a parasitic demon-informer. This may have been deduced from crop infestations to the observation that organic parasites entered through feet and inhabited intestines.

The three worms, or again three corpses. depending on the text, reside in the head, torso and lower body (three elixir fields *dantian*) and are assisted by a pernicious group of nine worms that do everything they can “to incite people to evil or ill.” Upon his death the host is cast into hells and the worms are rewarded by feast of the poor soul’s corpse. The Upper Worm is named *Peng Ju*, is white and blue color, and focuses on tempting the adept to long for delicious food and other “physical” delights. The Middle Worm, *Peng Zhi*, is white and yellow and incites the adept to greed and excessive emotions of joy and anger. The Lower Worm, *Peng Jiao* is white and black conspires to entice the mystic to the worldly pleasures of sex, alcohol and fancy attire (Eskildsen 1998) or vitality-sapping wet dreams (Eskildsen 2004).

Ko Hung (283-343) writes of five sorts of corpse-demons in his *Prescriptions Within Arm’s Reach for Use in Emergencies* that according to Strickmann (2002) “enter as the invitation of the three corpses that are the regular residents of the body’s interior.”

1. Flying corpses, roam about a person’s skin and bore through to his inner organs. Their action is manifested in intermittent stabbing pains.
2. Reclusive Corpse, attaches to bones and enters flesh from within, burrows into veins and arteries and blood, symptoms break when it beholds a funeral or hears the sound of wailing.
3. Wind-corpse, course “exuberantly” through four limbs until person is unable to pinpoint pain, leading to dizziness and blackouts, outbreaks provoked by wind and snow.
4. Sinking corpses, enwraps the vital organs and strikes the heart and ribs, causing knotting, slicing sensations, when ever cold is encountered.
5. Corpse-infusion or corpse-infestation (*shih-chu*) and “is the dire culmination of the series. Victim’s body feels “sunken and weighted down” with confused vital spirit and oppressive feelings of dullness and exhaustion, vital breaths are shifting and changing in body’s every joint, leading to major illness. (Strickmann 2002).

Strickmann’s often witty research reveals a further relationship with other demonic villains, the seven *p’o*, who have appropriately terrifying names such as: corpse-dog, hidden dung, sparrow-sex, greedy-guts, flying venom, filth-for-removal, and rot-lung. This complex of corpse-demon-worms also invades the aspirant’s

dreams, appearing in the guise of three men in “rather old-fashioned costumes.” As the treatment, exercises and drugs take effect, the ascetic is tortured with nightmares of horrible murders of his kith and kin or that he is being mutilated by the five types of punishments which are taken to mean that the demons are about to be destroyed (Strickmann 2002). Depression, incubi/sucubi scenarios and other types of sinister mischief can ensue to try and shake the adept’s determination.

Japanese Koshin day or Gengshen in Chinese: The Chinese calendar system’s year is given by combinations of one the “ten trunks” with one of “twelve twigs” which can have sixty combinations in a cycle that renews every sixty years. The sixty signs of the sexagesimal cycle are used for days of the month and every 60 days a new cycle starts. In China, it was “already taken over by Buddhism and included two Indian Gods in the associated pantheon, Indra and Vajrakumara. (Minoru 1969). A Buddhist fire rite, uncertain origin, entitled Secret Essentials for Performing Homa to the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper (Beidou qixing humo biyao yigui) The Book of Wages and Fate says, "In this world are the divinities [who are] the Comptrollers of Fate (zhuming shen) who, on each gengshen day (the fifty-seventh day of the sexagesimal cycle) go up the Celestial Emperor to report the sins and evils that people do. Those who commit serious offenses will see a suan deducted [from their life-account]. Those who commit lighter offenses lose a ji."(Mollier 2008).

### The Three Cadavers and Nine worms (san-shih chiu-ch'ung):

The scrolls in their hands likely hold information on your misdeeds.



#### Three Worms

【太上降三尸虫保生經】

The Baopuzi (320 AD) states: There are three corpses in our bodies. The three Corpses are made of matter, yet they are not fully corporeal: they are real like heavenly souls, numinous powers, ghosts, and spirits. They desire to cause people to die early, at which time these Corpses are able to act as ghosts, to move around freely, and to partake of peoples sacrifices and libations.



The *Chu sanshi jiuchong baoshen jing* (Scripture on Expelling the Three Corpses and Nine Worms to Protect Life) prob. 9th century gives the following details:

1. The Upper Corpse, *Pengju* lives in the head, symptoms of its attack include a feeling of heaviness in the head, blurred vision, deafness, and excessive flow of tears and mucus.
2. The middle corpse, *Peng Zhi*, dwells in the heart and stomach. It attacks the heart and makes its host crave sensual pleasures.
3. The lower corpse, *Peng Jiao*, resides in the stomach and legs. It causes the Ocean of Pneuma (*qihai*) corresponds to lower *dantian*) to leak, and make host lust after women.

In Japanese theory:

1. The "superior worm, is black and three inches long and lives in head, stimulates love of horses, carriages and luxury clothes
2. The green middle, lives in the back, stimulates love of foods
3. The third, is white and lives in stomach, it stimulates sexual desires (Blacker 1999).

Nine worms, which cause corpse-malady (*shih-chai*) or corpse-exhaustion (*shih-lao*) [(Strickmann 2002):

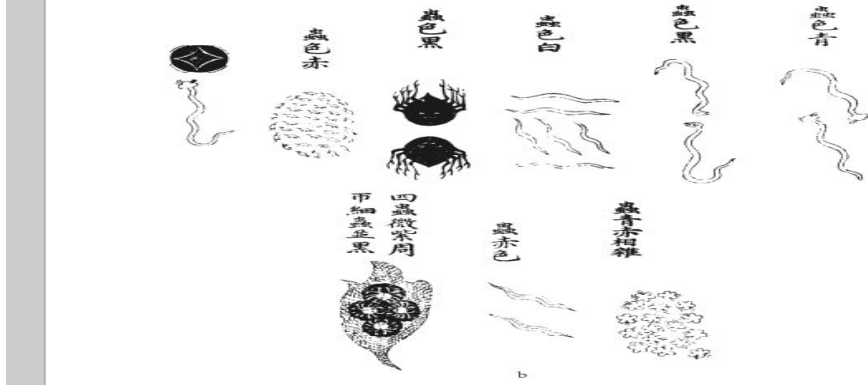
1. The "ambush worm" (*fuchong*) saps people's strength by feeding off their essence and blood.
2. The "coiling worm" (*huichong*) infests the body in pairs of male and female that live above and below the heart, consuming the host's blood.
3. The "inch-long white worm" (*cun baichong*) chews into the stomach, weakening the inner organs and damaging the digestive track
4. The "flesh worm" (*rouchong*) causes itching and weakens the sinews and back.
5. The "lung worm" (*feichong*) causes coughing, phlegm buildup, and difficulty in breathing.
6. The "stomach worm" (*weichong*) consumes food from its host's stomach, causing hunger.
7. The "obstructing worm" (*gechong*) dulls the senses induces drowsiness and causes nightmares.

8. The "red worm" (*chichong*) causes stagnation of the blood and pneuma, heaviness in the waist, and ringing in the ear.

9. The "wriggling worm" (*qiaochong*) causes itching sores on the skin and tooth decay.

(Pregadio 2008)

Nine Worms



One wonders if these represent actual parasites found inside corpses or in feces as they resemble real parasites more than Three Corpses above.

Yet another source of concern in this demonic situation would have been relationship with the Stove God (*Zaoshen*). Since at least Han times, worship of the Stove God and abstention of cereals had a clear link (Pregadio 2008) which is logical if the idea of raw and cooked is excepted because the cooking was done on the family stove or hearth. A certain adept, Li Shapjun taught to his disciples, 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, the “method of worshipping the furnace and abstaining from cereals to prevent old age (*cizao gudao quelao fang*).” This Stove or Furnace God, also known as King of the Stove (*Zaowang*) Lord of the Stove or Royal Lord of the Stove, would likewise snitch on the family, of good or bad deeds, to the Jade Sovereign once a year, either the 23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> day of the 13<sup>th</sup> Lunar month. The family would paste up paper images on him on the New Year and then burn them. Prior to this, on his days of informing, his face is smeared with food to shut him up or with sweet stuffs to sweeten his words. The cult of the Stove God first referred to in the *Lunyu* (Analects) of Confucius and is a sacrificial cult that held placating ritual son the 8<sup>th</sup> lunar month. Like the other tattling worm-demons his reports to the Director of Destinies (*Siming*), the two became conflated in Tang dynasty, could lead to demerits and life units could be reduced by 100 day units (*suan*) or 12 year units (*ji*) (Pregadio 2008). Thus the individual is the likely victim of actual imperial spies in repressive regimes, inner-demonic worm informers and even a spy in his very hearth and home and there are a litany of prohibitions to observe when near the stove.



The Three Worms, as mentioned, feed off the 5 Grains (rice, millet, wheat, oats, and beans) and bloody foods while yoking the body “firmly to the earthly realm and to prevent any refinement of internal energies or attainment of immortality (Arthur 2006).” A primary method of eliminating the Three Corpses was to simply cut off their chief source of nourishment, namely the 5 Grains. This is essentially the *bigu* practice which in practicality varied in any given context. Arthur (2006) believes that the simple avoidance of grains was the original intention that gradually evolved to mean a complete avoidance of ordinary, or any, food. Other terms such as *duangu* “to cut off grains” or *quegu* “to eliminate grains” or *xiulang* “to cease cereals” and *jueli* “to abandon staples” would corroborate this assumption. Arthur (2006) believes that prior to the Tan dynasty (618-907) the practice was for short rituals fasts for ritual purifications “while long-term *bigu* practice did not avoid but merely limited food intake” while “ideally combined with other cultivation methods.” One may speculate that given the Stove Gods function and the cult of incense in Daoism if foods were accepted or rejected based on what was good for the inner stove or furnace of inner-chemical Daoism. Many Daoist alchemists describe a sacrifice to the Stove God as being the first step in transmuting cinnabar (Welch 1966; Schafer 1975, Needham 1980). On *gengshen* day, a ritual day spoken of at length below, the three worms “ascend to heaven and file a report on our misdeeds with the Department of Destiny. Similarly during the last night of the month, the Stove God makes a journey to heaven and reports on our behavior. For the more important misdeeds, three hundred days are deducted from our lives. For lesser sins, three days are deducted from our lives.”

Arthur’s view of *bigu* original objectives and practices cast it as a balanced approach to magico-medical system of real parasites and demonic cadaver-worms that were thought to feed off staples. Eskildsen (1998) views the earlier practices as much more intense and radical in the objective of ceasing all eating with the idea that such a practice itself could lead to immortality. He cites texts that use *bigu* “to avoid grains” with *bushi* “do not eat” and concludes that when it is said that grain or cereals are avoided what is really meant is food in general. This becomes a rather complicated issue when the full implications of total abstinence from eating food are understood as a means to immortality by way of depriving the Three Worms of sustenance. No food at all would be ideal as the production of feces was particularly odious to inner gods and the constant cycle of hunger and defecation just seemed frivolous to spiritual pursuits. The adepts bewail the people’s diets and lack of Daoist cultivation with such as verse as “Lamenting That People Only Know How to Eat and Defecate, without *Ever Assigning Their Minds to Their Nature and Life* that went:

The grain cart enters, the manure cart exits.  
They take turns coming and going.  
When will it come to an end?  
Even if [people can] cause their life to span over a hundred years,  
This is only 36,000 days (Eskildsen 2004).

Although the next section and appendix will deal with specific techniques and recipes for accomplishing *bigu* and suppressing hunger, there are divergent methods that must be articulated. If the goal was abstinence from food, not as Eskildsen suggests from a particular food taboo (like Pythagoras and beans for example) but rather from a magico-medical standpoint of eliminating disease causing pathogens, then it may indeed be

proper to call *bigu* an ascetic practice. This is more in line with the severe austerities of penitents or certain Hindu sages who starve themselves or live on a bit of milk or a few hemp seeds as did the Buddha in his more severe stages of the path. But the Daoist adept, ideally anyway, employed all manner of practices to achieve this end from herbal formula to alchemical elixirs to body cultivation. In the past, it was a spiritual elite that could successfully, and situationally, remain in the sanctified state heedless of bodily concerns:

“Commoners eat grain, and when the grain is gone, they die. The Transcendent nobility eat grain when they have it, and when they do not, they ingest pneumas (Bokenkamp 1997).

The Three Worms eventually obtained a heightened state of power and their obstinacy was no match for the old ways and “can no longer be expelled by mere concoctions of crude herbs but require rituals measures and ethical purity” (Arthur 2006) or some great elixir or esoteric technique to cease eating. But the cessation of ingesting food, or the restriction as Arthur suggests of its earliest intentions, was not meant to plunge the adept into starvation and physical discomfort, though this was no doubt the result for some who attempted such an arduous practice. The Daoist cultivation techniques of “eliminating grain and eating *qi*” (*Quegu shiqi*) when accomplished with success is ascetic in the original Greek sense of “exercises” that enabled one to replace, not just abstain, food with the more subtle spiritual nourishment of *qi*. Daoists did follow regimes of asceticism that were similar to the Greek Christian practices of repression (especially of lust in the Christian and certain Daoists contexts) and abstinence but *bigu* posits a higher form of sustenance, *qi*, available to those who “go against the grains” of civilization. The Five Grains are replaced by the Five Sprouts of celestial essences.

The term *qi* presents its paradoxes as well in terms of *bigu* and Daoist cultivations that could range from alchemical or macrobiotic treatments, to sexual arts and gymnastics (or practices very similar to yoga). There is a massive amount of data on Daoist arts and absorbing *qi* from the above mentioned techniques to talismanic waters and rituals that will aid the adept on in his task. Again, the initial stages of *bigu* are fraught with dangers and there is a period of “weakening and decay” until “orthopathic *qi*” becomes dominant and illness vanishes (Englehardt 1987). The adept must purge the wayward, defiling “grain *qi*” of ordinary foodstuffs with the refined “primal *qi*” (*yuanqi*). It is interesting to note that certain immortals, as mentioned above, are intimately linked with the discovery of agriculture and that many were thought to be essential to a good harvest by means of their supernatural powers. As Schipper (1993) notes, “one of the most recurrent themes in the legends of the Immortals is that they don’t eat grains” and yet “from Antiquity on” there are terms like *ku-hsien* or “immortals of grains” that combine the *hsien* concept of forest spirits with the rites of slash and burn agriculture of ancient China. Schipper (1993) posits a taboo “based on the fact that the spirits who help the cereals grow do not themselves partake of these foods.” The Daoist goal of *zhenren* defined as lightness, luminescence and causing levitation would be incompatible with grain diet that produced much fecal matter and “putrid exhalations” which appeal to three worms (Mollier 2008).

But these scholars who debate on if there is a true taboo in the abstinence of cereals miss or ignore some critical references in Levi (1982). These represent the “veritable horror” of cereals and the reasons they are so abhorred because as the “germs of death” and the cause of every illness. They are not just dangerous to humans, “: “when

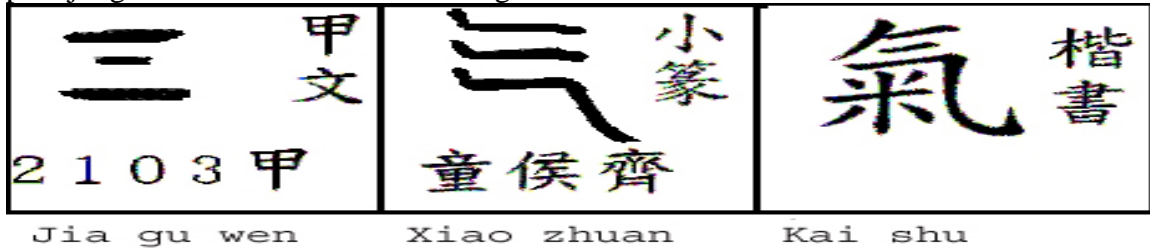
barbarians eat rice they become leprous; horses get a heavy foot when they eat wheat and wild geese get cancers all over their bodies when they eat this poison” (Levi 1982). Other dietary precautions, such as in rich foods, meats and wine are discussed as some times proscribed at other times embraced but there is nothing of the severity in the opinions on cereals. Levi’s discussion of Shennong’s relationship with the fire-element Yandi, the Burning Emperor, or Chidi, the Red Emperor and the connection with slash and burn agriculture is truly inspired. The dynamic of swidden, hunting and agriculture in a tricyclical, seasonal mythology of fire mastery and cooking meat and cereal growing put an end to raw food and civilization was forever linked to fire (first protection, heat and cooking then mastery of metals and similar technologies).

The barbarians, like the famous example of the hairy-beast concubine who was caught after hiding in the woods and died after eating cereals, represent a nostalgia for the primitive\*. Like Gilgamesh who suffers from the civilizing factors of the world and is thus alienated from the wilderness, “barbarian tribes” would develop disease when exposed to “civilized” food. Of these tribes, “They are called Ti in the East... some eat their food without cooking it. They are called Man in the South... some eat their food without cooking it. They are called Rong in the West... some eat without cereals. The Ji are to the North... some eat without cereals” and they likely fared as well brushing up against civilization as did indigenous tribes to colonial explorers. There is a deep meaning here in the fire god and the food he cooks being the nourishment of parasites that are in constant conspiracy against the human. Levi also connects a similar ritual complex and identification with the stove god and the latrine and Stein (1970) likewise extends the affinities of the Fire god to debris, and thus to the excrement produced by cereals.

As Levi (1982) notes, “A beginning of corruption is hidden in each cooking. The word *lan* “boiled, cooked” means also overcooked, withered, rotten, or the beginning of putrefaction” again reinforcing that there is at least an ambiguous if not dual attitude to cooked food. The adept’s almost lycanthropic transformations of beastly hair or suddenly growing feathers, *yuhua* feathery transformation, are well attested to in Daoist myths. There are countless examples, but here is one: Wo Quan gathered herbs and his only food were pine-seeds only. He had long hairs all over his body and he moved himself with the speed of a galloping horse (*Shoushenji*, 1. 1b) (Levi 1982). Imitating animals may well be the foundation of certain types of martial arts and it is linked with various *bigu* techniques such as the sage who fell down a hole and learned from a turtle to stretch out his neck to the sun in the morning and to thus imbibe *qi* and dispense with ordinary foods.\*\* The sages’ bizarre, madness or lunacy is likewise a symbolic break with the ordinary world of social conventions which the adept express from diet to remote hermitages and befriending wild animals, to his or her primitive diet. Again Levi (1982) quotes “the behave like beasts and they have a tiger’s or a wolf’s greed” (*Xunzi*, p. 188). I would add that an entheogenic substance, especially *Amanita muscaria* which is linked to berserkers and wild mystics worldwide, would be a fitting sacrament to social and sensual reversion to chaos. Its effects on tiger-men who can gallop like horses would be consistent with such effects I have discussed elsewhere (Dannaway 2009).

The Immortals always are just off in the distance, just a bit further out to sea, just a bit higher up the mountain. Beyond modern constructs that burden myths, there are examples of the Shuli, “the cooked ones” and the *Shengli*, “the raw ones of Limu

mountains. The “raw ones” live in the impenetrable heights of the mountains beyond the reach of the civilizing hearth and beyond them at the top of Mt. Limu are the immortals, which are as far away as possible from civilization while still remaining on earth. The proximity to civilization, like graded levels of health or longevity the higher up the mountain, often determines the vitality of Immortals and power plants. Levi (1982) expresses this in the context of a “refusal of orthodoxy” in favour of a primitive Golden-age where Daoist “dietetics are not a collection of good house-woman recipes or a proto-scientific hygienic diet” but an act of protest. Gradually it evolved as well into a mystical practice to defeat demon-snitches to the celestial bureaucracy that was ever vigilant to pass judgement and issues life-draining demerits.



The pictogram for *qi* is of “air, cloud, breath or vapor” rising from fire or the cooking of cereals (Engelhardt 1987) or the logogram of rice/millet (or steam rising from rice as it cooks). This implies an evolution of the term into a broader meaning of nourishment from food to “that which fills the body” meaning life, breath, vapors or energy. (There is a system of grain depots in the country and body-- as within, so without—thus infinite microcosmic worlds). There were significant debates on these subjects within Daoism and between Daoism and Buddhism. Some are critical of Laozi and other Immortals, with such passages as: “I do not understand why Laozi did not give people this essence (yellow essence or *huanji* discussed below) but made them eat the Five Grains which rot the intestines. Moreover, the Three Sovereigns [Celestial Masters] were all spirit men. Why, then, did they not make their descendants Kings in the Country of Long Life? Instead, they left them with rules about offering five pecks of grain...praying they continue...pursuing shortened lifespan the very foodstuffs that chisels human life away and rot the intestines. Laughable that!” (Kohn 1995). The Third Immortal King tells the Sovereign Emperor “People live long and reach old age because they do not eat the Five Grains” which contrasts the to revered *Huahu jing* [Scripture of the Conversion of the Barbarians] which prays for unbroken generations and that “the Five Grains would continue to grow in this Country of the Gods” (Kohn 1995).

Daoist, and Buddhist, legends feature movable or celestial cuisines (*tianchu*) that arrive to the successful *bigu* practitioner served Jade woman and Golden boys served in jade vessels (Pregadio 2008). Mollier (2008) discusses Daoist and Buddhist texts of Kitchen scriptures or sutras, depending on the context, and ensuing controversies of origin and accusations of plagiarism from both sides in their spiritual and political rivalries. These feature methods to abstain from eating, in some cases simply “abstention from cereals” that each group seeks to link as being taught by their founder, either Laozi for Daoists or the Buddha himself for the Buddhists. Both groups practiced the secret rites for the same goal, which was to have visions of the Celestial Kitchens that contained aromas and foods that permanently quenched the adepts need for mundane food. Mollier (2008) suggests the “five kitchens practice may be assimilated to the

avoidance of cereals *duangu* or *bigu*, absolute, partial or reserved for legendary saints.” There is evidence of Buddhist concerns with the Three Corpses in scattered sources and abstention from grain as well. For instance the San-chieh chiao, who had their assets seized and were dissolved 713, were at one time given an edict declaring that they were “only allowed to practice alms-begging, long retreats, abstinence from grain and observance of precepts and sitting in meditation, anything else would be illegal (Tokuno in Buswell 1990).” There is earlier precedent for Buddhist abstention from grain Huijiao (497-554) in the Biographies of Eminent Monks (*Goaseng zhuan*) relates Buddhist monks abstained from cereals, ate only mineral vegetable substances, wild fruits, mushrooms, pine seeds, resin needles (Mollier 2008).

There is talk of “abstention from grain” in the Buddhist context of self-immolation. Some hagiographies have saints like Sengqun being able to perform abstention from grain (*jueli*) after drinking magical pond water near his hut. Huiyi, before his self-immolation, stopped eating grain and ate hemp and sesame, incense pills and oil to prepare their body as fragrant incense (Benn 2007). Benn notes that this may have a foundation in Buddhist dietary practices, the Three Whites, and not the Daoist *bigu* though he must not have read Levi (1982) linking of fire-mastery, abstention from grain and self-cremation. The Daoist adept takes drugs or performs energy circulations until he is literally burned from the inside, perhaps from taking some seriously toxic compounded alchemical drugs! The relationship between rains, funeral pyres and burnt offerings in agricultural myths to incenses, self-immolation and burnt talismans and books expresses a primal “magic” of fire being of the gods. Daoist cremation seeks to “abolish” between the two universes.

Hindu ascetics have similar practices of fasts that involve the shunning of all cultivated food. Parry (1994) notes the fasts do not mean a complete abstention from food, but rather the avoidance of all cultivated grains and food to which salt has been added. The mystic eats only *phalahar* which consists mostly of fruit. He explains this by suggesting that the ascetic has abandoned his domestic hearth and therefore can not cook for himself but makes the pertinent point to this discussion, “the crux of matter is that *phalahar* excludes all crops cultivated by the plough” and that “that ploughing is represented as an act of violence against the earth and insect life, thus making the food uncongenial to the highest spiritual states” Parry (2004). Modern account of Hindu women include fasts that exclude cultivated grains (*anaj*), *Ekadasi vrat* (Pearson 1996) for certain periods of time as well all of which suggests there was a specific Indian doctrine of avoiding the fruits of civilization’s agriculture.



Hundun's orificeless body was "bored" to death by well-meaning 'civilizers' that nevertheless killed "it." See Giradot (1983) for an inspired treatment.

Giradot's (1983) discusses the Hundun legend and early myths of "anusless" people "needing to neither to eat nor to piss" --to which we must add "to defecate" -- though its puzzling that Giradot never mentions abstention from grain in his otherwise exquisite treatment of the subject. The cessation of moving the bowls and purging of excrement, like the medical colonics and detox regimens of modern times, was an obsession in many Daoist texts. One quote should suffice from the Dayou Jing [Scripture of Great Existence] that tells us: "That the Five Grains are chisels that cut away the life. They make the Five Inner Organs stink and shorten the life span. Once this food has entered the stomach, there is no more chance of longevity. If you aspire to complete avoidance of death, you must keep your intestines free of excrement" (Kohn 1995). **[Footnote Huangting jing (nei) (Concordance: 3.3) says that those who don't eat cereals if putrefaction free. Liang Qiuzi commentaries explain that by getting rid of cereals you free yourself from the garbage retained by your body. Ge Hong in Baopuzi (15 p. 267) quotes the ideas of certain sects which say that "to achieve long life you must have pure bowels". Wufu xu (2.23b-24a) says that the 3 Worms, fed by the cereals' breath, bring putrefaction (lan chu).]** This again extricates the *bigu* practice from a mere taboo and places it in medical framework. The existence of worms in the digestive track and intestines would only have confirmed the deep suspicions the early shaman/physicians had of fecal matter and the substances that were eaten to produce them. Corroboration of this can be found in the herbs used to facilitate *bigu*, many of which were anthelmintics.

There were fair amount of sceptics of the practice of *bigu*, as there was of many of the breath and gymnastic practices, such as the sceptical Wng Chong of the 1<sup>st</sup> century who mocked pretending ascetics and alleged longevity (Levi 1982). Many Daoist texts abstention from cereals on its own is not sufficient to attain immortality. Even the Great Recipe to smelt cinnabar, which can resurrect the dead, ward off starvation when avoiding cereals and compel spirits is not enough to effect longevity (*neibian*, 15, pp. 273-274 in Levi 1982). Likewise, Levi cites the *Shenxian zhuan* repeated statements that abstinence is not enough and interprets this that the practice is really more of a doctrine in distinct groups and perhaps not a common feature of Daoism in general. But a footnote (Levi 1982) tells of a collection of hagiographies of the 13<sup>th</sup>, which includes saints from all traditions, and that attests that all those elevated to "sainthood" practiced abstention from grain. The practice is perhaps the most fundamental in lightening the body so that the feathery adept may toss off the yoke and alight into the air.

### Ways and Means

"You attain the Tao by avoiding all grains. You will never again have to follow the rhythm of the moon and plant or harvest.

"Now, the people of mysterious antiquity, they reached old age because they remained in leisure and never ate any grains.

"As the Dayou zhang (Verse of Great Existence) says:



The five grains are chisels cutting life away,  
Making the five organs stink and shorten our spans.  
Once entered into our stomach,  
There's no more chance to live quite long.  
To strive for complete avoidance of all death  
Keep your intestines free of excrement!"

From Explanation of the Five Talismans of Numinous Treasure (*Taishang lingbao wufuxu*)

The above, perhaps appropriately chaotic, descriptions of a system of celestial espionage by way of demonic worms and all sorts of domestic deities hopefully defines the dire situation the Daoist adept is up against. He has gossiping foes all about him --as within, so without—but there is some hope, at least in theory. These methods range from all night vigils, macrobiotic drugs, and rigorous practices that were sometimes practiced in focused concert for long lengths of time to remove the pernicious snitches. Many of these techniques no doubt formed what has become Traditional Chinese Medicine and the systems influence can be seen around Asia, sometimes bringing with it the doctrine of 3 Corpse-worms and abstention from grains. One method, associated with *gengshen* or monkey day, diffused and evolved from China into Korea and Japan.

The all night vigil, as mentioned above, is the observance of *gengshen* which originated during the Six Dynasties, day the 57<sup>th</sup> day of each sexagenary cycle, that constitutes a “Daoist year” (which could explain some longevity stories?) On this night the worms leave and report to heaven so people remain awake on a vigil which was thought to weaken the worms. “Three such vigils were thought to severely weaken the worms, seven to cause them to perish together with misfortune and illness, extension of life” (Pregadio 2008). In China the occasion, the observance of which became widespread during the Tang, had quite a sombre tone as aspirants tried to thwart the worms with abstinence of sex and meat while undergoing purification rituals and meditation. Linking the interesting connections of intersecting doctrines of Buddhism and Daoism above, “assemblies to observe *gengshen* (*shou gengshen hui*) were held also by Buddhists from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries” (Pregadio 2008). During the Tang, in around the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century the observance spread into Korean Peninsula though its not known when exactly, or how, it reached Japan though some speculate it was during Heian Period (794-1185) or as even earlier by the *ommyoji* and esoteric Buddhists (Minoru 1969). The Japanese Buddhist pilgrim Ennin (793-864) mentions the day in 838 in his travels “in search of Dharma.”

Known as *Koshin* in Japan, it was more of a social festival of general merriment and feasting to stay awake compared to the austere Chinese observance. The Japanese built up a significant cult around the day and associated gods, spirits as well as developing their own distinct theories of demonic parasites. Both the Chinese and Japanese terms, of *geng* and *ko*, as in *gengshen* and *koshin*, respectively mean monkey thus it is a “monkey day.” One is tempted to conclude from the “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil” of the monkey worship and monkey iconography associated with the day that there is some basis in the myths that glorify the primitive, uncontrived purity of the monkey culture compared to humans. Levi (1982) writes of “the appearance of monkeys, the wild version of humans, after that millet stopped swelling, and also the separation of

gods from men because of rice fragmentation” which speaks to a direct relationship with the mythology and symbolism of the very day seeking to lessen the parasitical influence that seems born of civilization. One can assume that the golden age was Corpse free and at liberty from the soil and stove god/demons and their domestic espionage.

The Japanese cults of Shugendo and Shinto “conspicuously” adopted the Koshin observances (Pregadio 2008) as well as the practice of abstention from grains (Kubo 1958). The *san shih* Corpse-worm complex is treated fully in the Japanese text the *Ishimpo* compiled in 982 from Chinese sources (Blacker 1999). As in China, the worms were blamed for diseases as well as for stimulating gluttony and sensuality which shorten life. The syncretistic Japanese folk-traditions assimilated esoteric Buddhism and Daoism into their own beliefs and *koshin* evolved to include Indian deities Indra (*Taishakuten*), the Head of Thirty-three Heavens, and Vajrakumara (*Shomen Kongo*) and the latter, the messenger, who Buddhists attributed power to cure and undo the Worm damage (Minoru 1969). All this “monkey business” in the name is explained by associations with Sarutahiko, the god of the crossroads who went from a calendar day to deity. But the most crucial fact is that this is the god of the harvest, essentially confirming the entire complex has its roots in agriculture.

The Japanese likewise practiced various dietary abstentions: *nikudachi* from meat, *shiodachi* from salt, *kokudachi* for abstention from the Five Cereals and *hidachi* or from cooked food (Blacker 1999). Japan’s famous sages, such as Ryosan retired to Mt. Kimpu eating only leaves, or Yosho who diminished his intake to a single grain of millet and then ceased altogether and vanished only to be seen flying like a “unicorn or phoenix” (Blacker 1999). The Japanese have a specific practice, “tree-eating” or *mokujiki*, to help give up the cereals which consists of eating berries, bark or pine needles. Blacker mentions, Mokujiki Shonin, the Saint Tree-eater, which is applied to ascetics since medieval times. I have been unable to find examples in China of a similar level of cultic devotion as is found in Japan, where people pray to Koshin-sama for protection with attendant *koshin* cult and cult monuments (*koshin-to*) of veneration. These innovations seemed to have appeared in Japan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and represent a fusion of monkey, *koshin* and Mountain Deity folklore into a religion rather than the social festivities of the past (Ohnuki-Tierney 1989). This may well indicate a formal religion centered on liberation from corpse-demons that evolved from an austere Daoist observance in China to a festive occasion in Japan and then finally into a folk-religion. Therefore ritual devotion can be said to be one method of ridding the Worms. The above mentioned techniques of Li Shaojun, who taught Han Wudi (141-87 BCE) the “method of worshipping the furnace and abstaining from cereals to prevent old age” (*cizao gudaο quelao fang*) demonstrates a more devotional form though existing in China as well.

A supernatural affliction might be cured with supernatural methods as well which brings up the subject of talismanic water, which were spells that were written on paper, probably in magical cinnabar ink, that were burned. The ashes were added to water and drinking it would kill the worms. Such talismanic waters (*fushui*) were highly regarded for all manner of ills and could, as mentioned above, be given to entire armies to protect them from harm and hunger and thirst. Such waters would be imbibed to aid the adept on search for yet further magical texts or fruits/herbs. The cult of Immortality in Daoism is persistent and the diverse means for attaining such an objective would naturally coincide with eliminating the worms as chief adversaries in the adept’s quest. These must be

viewed, in many cases, as supplemental, supporting or potentiating practices rather than methods practiced in isolation. Of further note, to quote the adept Hu Fuchen on “obtaining immortality and supernatural powers by means of *bigu*” it must be said that the practice could both be entered into by, and conferring of, magical potency.

One could drive out the worms on special magic days, as the *Wufuxu* states: “When you cut the nails on your hands and feet on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month you can drive out the three worms from your intestines” (2.14b). The Oral Lessons of the Female Immortal tell that it is essential for male adepts to avoid women on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month, the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month and the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month. This is logical enough when it is learned that on these days the three corpses, of men and women combined, come out of the pupils of the eyes and females corpse demons beckon and seduce males and vice versa. Methods of retreat are prescribed that include abstaining from sleep, painting a red dot under the left eye and yellow dot under the right nostril then clicking teeth, chanting and knocking head, swallowing salvia and pressing the painted dots seven times. There were likely methods such as used by Japanese Zen priests that are at the origins of the term *kaiseki* (hot stone) which was wrapped in the towel and applied to the torso to reduce hunger. It has come to be an exceptionally refined meal of elegant simplicity and “just enough” but was likely developed from more austere rites taught in China.

In additions to various types of magic and spell craft (conjuring spirits into water for example), the Daoist would practice gymnastics (*daoyin*) and breathing regimens that evolved into such practices as *Taiqi* and *qigong*. Daoist scriptures are replete such techniques and are exemplified by such methods as *Quegu shiqi* (Refraining from Cereals and Ingesting Breath). Zhuangzi wrote of those that do “not eat the five cereals, but breathes wind and drinks dew...” and we have mentioned the fellow taught methods by a turtle for imbibing *qi* from solar and lunar essences. Fasting itself was a method to “destroy the 3 worms of the cereals” (*shamie guchong*) and foods were thought to block channels in the body. The production of feces along with certain specific foods, especially grains and the Five flavours of acrid, sour, salty, sweet and bitter. " As the Verse of Great Existence (*Dayou zhang*) says:

The five grains are chisels cutting life away,  
Making the five organs stink and shorten our spans.  
Once entered into our stomach,  
There's no more chance to live quite long.  
To strive for complete avoidance of all death  
Keep your intestines free of excrement!"

“Abstinance must be absolute. In *Daoyou jing* we can read: ‘Cereals are the scalpels which cut life. They cause the 5 bowels to be rotten... Don’t hope in eternal life if only a grain gets into your mouth!’” (*Taisho* 52 n° 2103,148 B). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> cent BC *Huainanzi* quotes a common saying: “Those who eat cereals are intelligent, but they die early, those who don’t eat them at all are immortal” (Levi 1982). Different groups proposed different times that stipulated the effects of fasts from cereals. The *Taishang shengxuanjing* says a fast of 30 days kills the Upper worm, 60 the Middle, 100 and so on as mentioned, but that even after the adept purges the body he will still feel the urge to eat. This is explained

that the refined essence of grains causes a slimy membrane that coats the Five Viscera, Six Bowels, the joints, muscles and vessels but perseverance for 20-30 more days will make it disappear (as will moles, scars and blemishes). Some claim effects will appear in the as early as three days on the health while others warn that urine will darken and there will depression and a fierce spiritual/psychological battle between the adept and the Three Worms. The putrid *qi* of cereals and noxious fumes of excrement and the five flavours made the body inhospitable to the easily offended gods that, along with the Worms, made the body their abode. The “refined essence of grains”, like modern suspicions of high fructose corn syrups, was thought to be especially deleterious to the health. Even in the process of Eliminating Grain and Eating Qi (*Quegu shiqi*) there were six types of *qi* to be inhaled, and five types of atmospheric *qi* to be avoided.

At this nexus of macrobiotic dieting and ritual observances and stove gods is Daoist alchemical theory. This is contextual linked to the *soma* complex of miraculous plants that grant immortality that gradually shifted to the production of an immortality drug (Needham 1974) as well as decidedly psychoactive incenses (Needham 1974, Dannaway 2009). Another aspect to the entheogenic effects of such smokes and plants would be the possible suppression of the appetite as the psychedelic experience, one hears, can likely make one nauseous at the thought of food. Of course a plant or alchemically prepared substance that is a “passport to heaven” as described by Needham would likely vanquish inner demons and invoke the necessary internal deities (though perhaps not always). Alchemical substances like cinnabar (mercury sulphide), sulphur and similar substance would no doubt exert strange psychological and physiological effects on the adept and the effects on the appetite may be dramatic (though dangerously or toxically so). The inner alchemy (*neidan*) of visualizations, postures, sexual arts (locking energy, semen retention, sexual vampirism) and even diet would converge on macrobiotic supplements that would feed the inner alchemical cauldron.

Alchemical substances were complicated to prepare and the substances in the are very difficult to determine with any certainty. The Jade Pillar Elixir (*yuzhu dan*) contained cinnabar, vinegar, malachite and sulphur and when taken for one hundred days it would produce the “celestial kitchens.” Pure lacquer was ingested to make the “Nine Worms...drop away” and other ingredients call for honey and lacquer to be used to fry cinnabar for similar purposes (Campany 2002). Needham (1976) did a cross-reference of Ge Hong’s twenty-seven elixirs and cinnabar is found twenty-one times, mercury in eleven or twelve, realgar and malachite eight times, potash alum, sulphur and magnetite in five, and mica in three, but stresses these may all be code as oral instruction is essential.

Daoist survivalists and hermits in remote locations would be at the mercy of the elements and, if they hadn’t mastered completely living of *qi*, would require some modicum of nourishment. The hermit would have to be an expert botanist and many texts offer systematic, though sometimes dangerous, techniques to *just* survive and to comfort hunger pangs. These consisted not only of the mentioned magical and alchemical methods dreamed up by the “recipe makers” or “gentleman possessing magical recipes” (*fangshi*) that rose in prominence in the Han period (Harper 1998) but also of wildcrafting herbs and minerals. Ge Hong or Ke Hong, the famous alchemist, has many such recipes to alleviate hunger. Though he is somewhat sceptical of the claims on diets and immortality, writes “those who hide in the mountain or forests in case of troubles or

famines in the world will not starve to death if they know this method.” Some of the methods employed by adepts are as simple as sucking on a jujube seed (*Yue Zichang’s method of Holding a Jujube Seed in the Mouth*) or continuously swallowing air and saliva while some employ decidedly toxic plants that may permanently scar the stomach, or worse, giving a sense of being unable to eat. Pungent foods like garlic and onions or Zhenghong ji ( p. 3a) speaks mentions fish pastes and all foods with a raw meat smell as unhelpful to the process of corpse-expulsion.

Daoist use of plants like Poke root (*Phytolacca* species) and Arborvitae seeds (*Thuja orientalis*) and strange fungi, as well as consumption of minerals like mica or stalactites and powdered gem or semi-precious stones, was not uncommon. Sometimes specific plants had precise recipes such as the reported “method of ingesting sesame” of Master RedPine (*Chisongzi*) the Lord of Rain under the Shennong the Divine Farmer, active “well into the time of High Toil” (Kohn 1993) had many such recipes and associated calisthenics. Sesame was known as Western *barbarian hemp* (*huma*) or “great overcoming” (*jusheng*) and it was “not indigenous to China. It was no doubt imported from Iran, perhaps via the Xiongu as intermediaries....In the time of the Later Han sesame was not a commonplace cereal: it was instead long thought to enable abstinence from cereals and to be a good for long life (Kaltermark in Campany 2002). It is likely its barbarian associations, in light of the above considerations and pure protein that led to its high esteem as a *bigu* supplement.

Plants like ginger and pepper are said to increase *qi*, as are countless others, but “yellow essence” or “deer bamboo” (*Polygonatum* species or *huangjing*) is considered a tonic herb and emergency famine food for the avoiding grains yet it is considered to inferior to atractylis. Of ingesting atractylis or *zhu*, *Atractylis ovata* the Marvelous Arts (Yishu) written early 7th century states "The Herb atractylis is the essence of the mountains, it unites yin and yang essences and pneumas. If one ingests it, one will live long and be enabled to abstain from grains, and eventually reach the status of a divine transcendent." The *Arrayed Traditions* state that adepts lived off it’s essence or combined with calamus, and it is mentioned by Ge Hong for dispensing with grains (Ware 1984; Campany 2002.) It is not always clear that a plant is mentioned, as they shared common designations with a variety of substances. For example, Campany (2002) notes the confusion over an instance of *huang jing* in a text as being identified as a plant (*Polygonatum*) or perhaps the mineral massicot (PhO). Even when the specific plant is confirmed, there are special types, such as a special type of Solomon’s seal that grows on Longvale Mountain which confers the ability to fly into the heavens (Campany 2002). Campany notes of the identification of the term “mushroom” is not definitive, “but is a generic word for protrusions or emanations from rocks, trees, herbs, fleshy animals, or fungi.”

The herbs were, of course, combined and sometimes the results, from personal experimentation are delicious. One was a special soup that is made of sesame seeds, powdered tuckahoe (*Pachyma cocos*, or *fuling*), with small amounts of milk and honey that the adept could take to “nourish the *qi* and moisten the belly” (Eskildsen 1998) or other soups featuring “matrimony vine” (*gouqi*, *Lycium chinese*) that could be taken four times a day. The diet of Immortals, as described in such texts as *Liexan zhuan* and

*Shenxian zhuan* include: “pine seeds, pine sap, pine needles, mica, sesame seeds, peach and plum blossoms, stalactite, lychee fruit, deer bamboo (*huanghing*), “stone grease” (a type of clay), mercury, deerhorn, chestnuts, cypress resin, sulphur, lead, the *zhu* plant (*atractylodes macrocephala*), rush and scallion roots, rape-turnip seeds, mallow (*malva verticillata*), turtle brains, limonite (“Yu’s leftover food”), cinnabar, bramble roots (*rubus tephrodes*), cantaloupe, autumn root (*aconitum carmichaeli*) seeds, of the *zhi* plant (*iris florentina*), the *changpu* plant (*acorus gramineus*), cinnamon, broom plant (*kochia scoparia*), “pine seeds that grow as parasites on mulberry trees,” niter, nions and scallions, the *badou* plant (*croton tiglium*), realgar, sap of the arbor vitae tree (*biota orientalis*), flowers of the *shigui* tree (*rhapsiolus indica*), and “red flower pills” (unidentified) (Eskildsen 1998).” Other miraculous alchemical pills would instantly produce a permanent state of complete inedia.

Fasting regimens were used to gradually live without eating and these included many recipes, some which used rice for example, that allowed the adept to reduce intake over time. Two prime examples are *xunfun* and “white rocks” that were used by the Shangqing Daoists but were probably from older sources. The *xunfan* is made of nonglutinous rice and leaves of the shrub *nanzhu* (*vaccinium bracteatum*), the leaves which alone were thought to suppress hunger during times of famine and poverty. (Eskildsen 1998). Eating this food, and some wheat noodles, is said to allow the adept to gradually reduce eating until nothing is required and he shall be “light and bright” by the end of five years. If the adept wanted to hasten the effects, he could add hollow azurite (*kongqing*), cinnabar (mercury sulfide, *dansha*), Tuckahoe (*Poria cocos*), *jing* (*vitex negundo*) tree leaves. The texts inform that hollow azurite “satiates stomach, improves the eyesight, straightens the sinews, supplements the fluids, increases the *jing*, and makes the faith youthful” though it cautions that engaging in sex will cause immediate death by way of dispersing and defiling *qi*. Cinnabar, sex and defiling acts will bring catastrophe as well to those ingesting, “fills the bones, increases blood, strengthens the will, supplements the brain, increases the *qi*, and “regulates” the lungs” and enhances circulation and “harmonizes” the joints (Eskildsen 1998).

To “avoid grains and enter the mountains” the *Zhengao* writings mention a technique by the immortal Baishizi or the Master of the White Rocks which might be pieces of white quartz in black sesame seed oil, honey, mountain spring water with shallots. The quartz pieces are ground into the shapes of tiny eggs and tossed in after a retreat with breathing practices and chants and cooked for five days, then swallowed whole with the leftover soup being consumed as well. The process allows the adept to eat as much (without damaging his *qi*) or as little as he wants. Other such methods are listed, and will be given in full in the appendix, that use the Five Grains in recipes that are either to gradually reduce hunger or that are “superfoods” of a sort that nourish the adept for ten day increments such as the “The Divine Immortal’s Method of Eating Blue Millet or for deer bamboo foods. Eskildsen’s remarks on the ideal of fasting and ingesting only medicines, or *qi*, are cogent as there are recipes listed in the texts he presents immediately following the recommendation to practice *bigu* for soups and vegetable porridges. If the adept reaches “his limit” in his *bigu* attempt, he can partake of dried *jujubes* and dried venison. “Anything raw or fresh is not to be served” (Eskildsen 1998). There are also many incidents of geophagy and magical clay-flours that suppress hunger in China (Laufer 1930).

The above mentioned plants/minerals are supplements for food or are stimulants or toxic. Some are entheogenic, some perhaps due to toxicity, or thought to contain *qi* or *jing* energies that would heal or otherwise help the adept to enter retreat without food. Needham wrote of the *Amanita muscaria* as “doubtless among the most secret arcane of the Tao Tsang” as was *Cannabis sativa*, *Ephedra* species, which are three very prominent *Soma* candidates. The Daoist used rituals, magic, trances and common shamanic devices (drumming, dancing, etc.) and potent plant, alchemical concoctions and known entheogens to alter the state of mind which no doubt aided them in their fasts (which also alters consciousness and can induce hallucinations and were perhaps undertaken for that very region.) The incessant incense burning coupled with shamanic drugs and practices and abstention from mundane cuisine all serve to recreate a reality linked back to the Daoist notion of a golden age. The objective might be said to induce a permanent altered state, or a disconnection, from the consensus reality enforced by the state and supported by society.

The mythological and cosmological objections that Daoist had to agriculture products and refined, civilized foods is evidenced, at least in ideal, by the extreme diets discussed above. The foresight and ingenuity in developing survivalist foods in their precarious times was pragmatic as well as fundamentally liberating from the worries of society. These worries of “the land of famine” and having literally to “plough among the tombstones” as well as social strife and invasions make the peasant situation precarious even in the best of times. But the other side of the equation, of what the population was eating, might justify the Daoist intuition. The Daoist may be a lunatic, psychoactively altered social-misfit preferring isolated hermitages to the fields and taverns, but what of collective-hallucination that is the state and society?

Taken literally, the Five Grains are rice, glutinous millet, panicked millet, wheat and soybeans which were cultivated since ancient times. Early Daoist “doctors” may have noticed the allelopathic properties of rice and rice husks as well as witnessed stomach disorders from eating leftover cooked rice, “fried-rice syndrome” caused by *Bacillus Cereus*. It’s sticky, gluey nature, like the other cooked grains, would have been thought as a detrimental to their goals of excrement free intestines. It is perhaps the most benign of the five, but in ancient times its production was limited mostly to the south. The Chinese word for food or meal, *fan* which denotes boiled rice or millet porridge and for those not inclined to Daoism at least, “only *fan* will satisfy hunger (Needham 1984). But perhaps it was the very real environmental of social effects that widespread rice cultivation wrought. The mastery of fire and the manufacturing tools spread rice cultivation throughout China and its production was “used to strengthen descendants and occupy wide new territory” (Xu 1998). There was a wild rice exploited before agriculture, and rice was cultivated in both “wet” and “dry” conditions, and though there is controversy, its hard to determine which came first. Swidden techniques were widely employed in rice cultivation, and rice was planted with digging sticks in fertile river valleys that sustained relatively large populations. But the overuse and abuse converted lush lands to wastelands, as Xu (1998) writes:

“its abundant water and forest allowed people to gather and hunt for some time.... How did this 80x30-mile sector change to wind-blown sand? If we think Shayuan is named from Xiachuan, the first may have been influenced by the latter and initiated agriculture. Slash-and-burn

cultivation is not forest cutting and clearing, but the making of endless widespread fires brought spring sandstorms from distant deserts. One might blame over- or abusive use of ground stone tools, where over-cultivation created desert, exiling people and facilitating the birth of the stone axe. Thus, slash-and-burn cultivation opened a new era.”

Perhaps then it was cultivated rice that was particularly undesirable. The *Pen-ts'ao Ching*, said to be at the advice of Emperor Shennong prescribes Cannabis preparations for beriberi (Jiao Qi), which has a long history in China especially in southern China where peasants had mostly a rice diet. The disease was written of from at least 200 BCE (and posed considerable risks during the Han and Tang especially in Southern China), and was known as *kak-ke* and while it's not clear the condition was associated with rice deficiencies the treatments included foods rich in thiamine (Simmons 1981). By the Tang dynasty physicians were pointing out that polished rice lead to beriberi, and that unpolished rice could help to cure the symptoms (Chen and Xie 1999) which is ironic, and fitting, as it was thought that polishing rice would make it healthier and easier to digest. The disease became more and more prevalent in China from medieval times (KaWai 2004) into the modern era as the taste of polished rice increased.

A diet rich in millet, as seen today in developing countries, can greatly enhance chances of developing thyroid disorders and traditional methods of preparing millet unfortunately retain most of the goitrogenic compounds. And while it may seem silly to talk of potential poisons in these plants in light of the highly toxic substance used to replace them, there is evidence of millet diets, which also lack vitamin C and are low in niacin, causing a syndrome in Senegalese who subsist of the mainly off the grain as similar to ataxic neuropathy (Osuntokun 1968). In ancient China, the very foods that exploded populations and created cities became the culprits in diseases that increased with population density and the rise of porotic hyperostosis. It was in the times of the Longshan culture, renowned for their millet, that “deterioration of community health” began and it continued “Poor health persisted into the subsequent Dynastic period of Western Zhao” (Pechenkina, Benfer and Wang 2002). It is beyond the scope of this article to get into the paleonutritional breakdown of C3 or C4 plants but an increased dependence on millet is linked with a larger breakdown in health based on archeological findings. Pechenkina, Benfer and Wang write:

“Although millets have a relatively high iron content, absorption of nonheme iron from plant sources is very inefficient and is further impeded by the lack of vitamin C...almost all cereals contain minimal levels of largely incomplete protein. Millets are among the poorest sources of protein; they are particularly deficient in lysine, the lack of which can lead to a number of physiological disorders, including anemia, anorexia, growth arrest, weight loss, and low protein turnover, as well as collagen and myosin structural anomalies.”

Wheat rose to prominence in China towards the end of the Longshan eventually replacing millet as the principle grain by the Dynastic period (Pechenkina, Benfer and Wang 2002). It has been carbon dated from mummies dating to 2,650 BC suggesting a very old trade with the Middle East. Wheat and related species present some interesting pharmacological features which Daoist adept might have intuited or experienced based



on the constant scrutiny of his body and the reactions it had to certain substances and techniques of meditation. With clinical data linking gluten to every thing from Celiac disease (Ch'ng and Kingham 2007) to schizophrenia (Eaton 2004) also selected as early as (Ross-Smith 1980) to autism (Kawashti 2006) though this is debated (Christison 2006) and “brain fog” there is a lot of convincing evidence for a wheat or gluten free diet, beyond the chorus from various health fad diets. There is evidence that “wheat, rye, and barley proteins as aids to carcinogens” (Hoggan 1997) as well as spiking blood sugar and insulin levels and damaging proteins (via advanced glycation end-products) especially if it were to be combined with other factors such as genetics, poverty and population density and supplemental diets. The “brain fog” can be linked to opioid substances called gluten exorphins, opioid peptides that have similar effects on the brain as narcotics (Fukudome 1992; Huebner, Lieberman, Rubino 1984, Fanciulli 2005). Gluten hydrolisates and gluten stimulatory peptide activate and block and bind to brain receptors at once producing dysphoria, and to the sensitive, possibly psychotic symptoms. Research confirms that they trigger more hunger, a sort of “comforting” lethargy and then more cravings, so they actual cause hunger, something that Daoists have always alleged. There is also evidence grains in the diet can incite production of natural killer cells (Hoggan 1997) pancreatic disorders and even ADHD.

Similar effects have been ascribed to products of the soya bean as well. The bean, which has become health food phenomena in modern times as a heart cure all and meat substitute has a dark side as well, especially unfermented. Studies link it to Alzheimer’s and other forms of cognitive impairment in men and linked with actual brain shrinkage (White, Petrovich and Ross 1996; White, Petrovich, Ross, Masaki, Hardman, Nelson, Davis, Markesbery 2000). Soy in the diet, even for relatively short periods of time can elevate phytoestrogen levels in the brain and decrease brain calcium-binding proteins (Lephart, Thompson, Setchell, Aldercreutz and Weber 2000). The high protein in soy suffers from the potent enzyme inhibitor that act as “antinutrients” that block the action of trypsin and other enzymes need for protein digestion which can lead to chronic deficiency in amino acid uptake (Fallon 2000) as well impairing thyroid functions (Divi, Chang, Doerge 1997; Ishizuki, Hirooka, Murata and Togashi 1991) and damaging infants (Fort, Lanes, Dahlem, Recker, Weyman-Daum, Pugliese, Lifshitz 1986) from soy diet breast feeding or soy formula causing thyroid disease, diabetes, and effecting neuropsychological development of the child. Fermentation may have protective effects on these disorders, which may explain the reasons why it was not exploited on a larger scale prior to the discovery of fermenting soy, which increase folate levels and produces proteinases that hydrolyse proteins to peptides and amino acids (Huang 2000).

Old adages of “starving a cold” to monastic health regiments and fasts have some validation in articles that stress caloric restriction (CR) as contributing to slowing ageing and extending life span in humans and animals (Couzin 1998) and by encoding inflammatory and stress responses on the genetic level (Lee, Klopp, Weindruch, Prolla 200) and increasing memory (Witte, Fobker, Gellner, Knecht and Floel 2008). Some researchers propose a theory, Hormesis (or Mitohormesis ) hypothesis of CR, that suggests that diet “imposes a low-intensity biological stress on the organism” that “elicits a defense response” that inhibits the causes of aging. This is similar to traditional medical wisdom such as is found in TCM, and especially in the Unani system of herbalism which seeks to induce a health crises by fasting, which releases toxins and stimulates bodies

natural defenses. Other theories of activating longevity genes to “insulin signaling” have been theorized to explain the positive benefits of CR, in least in some cases. Some of the most interesting genetic experiments on longevity genes and CR have been conducted on, with almost diabolical irony, of all things: worms.

TCM researchers propose some novel theories for what they call *Yan Xin Life Science Technology-Optimized Caloric Restriction* (YXLST-CR) though the paper reads somewhat as part study, part advertisement for their particularly “Technology-Optimized” *bigu*. But the research is interesting, with clinical studies of those on *bigu* for some eleven years or more, and they deduce that hormone leptin is the “key element of the physiological system to regulate food intake and energy homeostasis” (Yan, Li, Lu, Chin, Shen, Wang 2002). that corroborates and earlier study (Shimokawa and Higami 2001). “Leptin is produced in fat tissue and reports nutritional information to food intake regulatory centers in the brain known as the hypothalamus” and “decreased levels of leptin stimulates food intake” while an increase lessens food intake. These responses involve a neuroendocrine trigger in response to dietary constrictions that also retards the aging process.

Another theory is that the *qi* described by Daoists essentially may be gamma radiation (Schwarz 2002). This theory, based on the fact that there is evidence of gamma ray and high frequency x-ray absorption/emission and radiogenic metabolism, fits the ability to sustain life without food in a broader category of “systemic memory” as cognate with the *wu li* or “organized energy” of Chinese physics. This is certainly a more elegant theory that confirms the ingestion of *qi* as Daoist texts insist. The scholars mentioned above with the technologically optimized *bigu* also ran tests of cells in vitro that were deprived of essential nutrients and left at the mercy of *qi* imparted to them by a *Qigong* master. External *qi* treatment as a medical treatment has a long history and basically consists of a master summoning his “energy” and then basically pouring into his patients (I have seen doctor’s make strange gurgles and “shamanic” type gestures in this process personally). The test, on mouse cells that usually require specific nutrients to survive in vitro, were treated by Dr. Yan Xin with all the appropriate control groups. The results were that the *qi*-treated cells flourished despite lack of nutrients, while the group deprived of nutrients and *qi* wasted away (Yan, Traynor-Kaplan, Li, Wang, Shen, and Xia 2002). The findings, and the massive anecdotal and clinical evidence of *qi* therapy, point to a distinct cellular action to *bigu*.

Out of the mass of clinical data above, it takes the eloquence of a poet (and expert ethnobotanist) like Dale Pendell (2005) to summarize the true effects of the Five Grains. He discusses rice (*Oryza sativa*), wheat (*Triticum vulgare* and spp.), barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), oats (*Avena sativa*), rye (*Secale cereale*), sorghum (*Sorghum* spp.) pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*), raggee millet (*Eleusine corocana*) in the context of a broader context *The Hallucinogenic Properties of Maize*. He “describes their chemistry as “complex, highly active carbohydrate chains that trigger massive physiological response” which is subtle understatement. His description of “The High” they produce demands a full quotation:

“Deliriously subtle. Usually taken for granted and appreciated most when absent. Affects blood-glucose levels and secondarily adenosine triphosphate reactions throughout the body, essential for thermal stasis from oxidation, in turn supporting the grandest of all hallucinations. Fields

of bosons, leptons, and energy are experienced as form and color, actually a completely arbitrary, if creative, mapping. Electromagnetic force fields, mediated by photons, are experienced as solidity. Even the experiencer is experienced—as a discrete entity called the ‘self.’ Something called ‘volition’ is involved in a way that no one really understands. This also true for perception, sensation, and memory.

The myth of sobriety is our fundamental delusion (Pendell 2005).”

When you complete the process, you no longer yoke the ox, but ride off into the mountains upon it...



## Bigu in the Modern Age

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls”

*Bigu* survives in the modern era amongst scholars, health fanatics, martial artists and those interested in finding cures for modern ailments. It is somewhat ironic that *bigu* is touted by online Qigong masters and TCM herbalists for weight loss when its origins were likely born of starvation conditions or survival situations. Of course abstention from grains was largely medical in terms of longevity and dispelling Corpse-Worms and it would have been seen, if done correctly to harmonize the body. This would be consistent with weight loss or gain as the situation dictated. I have read many modern accounts of *bigu*, mostly if not all very positive of the practice. Some caution that “if you are hungry you are not in *bigu*” which is more consistent with the ideal of living off *qi* and not just elaborate fasting or forced starvation.

A diverse groups of scholars, from The Pennsylvania State University and University of Arizona and abroad, as long with health practitioners from various acupuncture and Qigong groups held a conference in Pennsylvania with some 500 participants. Elaborately titled as the “First National Conference on the Bigu Manifestation, Health Effects and Scientific Research of Yan Xin Qigong” it was truly historic and attracting some highly revered scientists from numerous fields. Presentations ranged from displays of *qi* to clinical histories of *bigu* practitioners as well as explanations of the suggested blood chemistry that express the metabolic states during the fasts.

There are also the modern hagiographic type novels such as *Opening the Dragon Gate* (Kaiguo, Zheng, Cleary 1996) which relates the “making of a Modern Taoist Wizard. The entertaining narrative is sprinkled with quotes from various Taoist scriptures on abstention from grain with descriptions of effects and the caution of controlling one’s speech. There are details on the Dragon Gate method is divided into three stages:

“The first step is not eating grains, just consuming enough fruit and vegetables to maintain life. This practice greatly reduces the burden of the digestive track and purifies the internal organs; it must be continued for at least two months, preferably longer. While working on this step {continue normal affairs, inner exercises}. The second step is fasting, abstention from all food, just drinking a cup of cool water in the morning and evening. When practicing this exercise, there is no filth in the body; there is hardly even any urine. With the mind already clean, the body is purified. One only exchanges energy with Nature, feeling as if the body has been put in totally different realm...preserved in this exercise for three days...body had rosy glow and a crystalline sheen...The third step, “suspended animation.” This means to sit in complete stillness doing inner alchemical exercises to such a degree, for weeks, that one “dies” with no respiration nor pulse. Then a mock funeral is held and the disciple meets his ancestors. The modern example of gradual reduction to a complete state and subsequent “death” is interesting and consistent with ancient accounts.

The few scientific articles, possibly prompted by the conference, that attempt to describe the mechanism or method of *bigu*, that has proven the possibility of long-termed fasting without starvation, are few though the broader topics of longevity and

caloric restriction must eventually converge. In addition to these few references I have amassed a small collection of pamphlets, booklets and the life on *bigu* or *pigu* that advertise special types of meditation or *qigong* to enter full or half-*pigu* (Tam 2006, others in Chinese or unlabelled). For the most part these books purport to teach a special or unique method that in on Tam's school "can be done watching television." Modern *bigu* teachers never mention the Three Worms or more esoteric doctrines associated with the practice. One reads of anecdotal (and quasi-clinical) reports about children, the elderly (in short nearly anybody) going into the state quite easily or from a *qi* catalyst from a Chinese doctor or *qigong* master. One such master reports to have only had to recommend eating, or breaking the fast, to 30 patients and others "guarantee" success and weight loss for the quite expensive special treatments or teachings.

All of this is somewhat difficult to reconcile with the reported troubles and agonies in the early literature and drastic attempts to overcome hunger. In the interest of full-disclosure I have had successful encounters with the practice of *bigu* on and off over the years that ranged from semi- to full-*bigu* that fluctuated more with a streak of hedonism and debauchery (no doubt instigated by those Worms) rather than any pressing biological need to eat. The biggest difficulty was not entering or even sustaining the fast, as perhaps a hypothyroid is at work in my case, but rather the isolating social dimension with respect to families and friends. This demonstrated on a personal level the fundamental communal role of sharing a meal and its reaffirmation of the family structure and society by extension. As an almost lifelong vegetarian I am quite used to saying I do not eat this or that to an understanding host and in an age of Atkin's diets its not uncommon to forgo carbohydrates. But it is indeed quite another matter to inform one's mother that one is "off food" or to explain it as an experiment in fighting Worm-Corpse demons.

\*

"During the reign of Emperor Cheng of the Han, hunters in the Zhongnan Mountains saw a person who wore no clothes, his body covered with black hair. Upon seeing this person, the hunters wanted to pursue and capture him, but the person leapt over gullies and valleys as if in flight, and so could not be overtaken. [But after being surrounded and captured, it was discovered this person was a 200 plus year old woman, who had once been a concubine of Qin Emperor Ziyang. When he had surrendered to the 'invaders of the east', she fled into the mountains where she learned to subsist on 'the resin and nuts of pines' from an old man. Afterwards, this diet 'enabled [her] to feel neither hunger nor thirst; in winter [she] was not cold, in summer [she] was not hot.']

The hunters took the woman back in. They offered her grain to eat. When she first smelled the stink of grain, she vomited, and only after several days could she tolerate it. After little more than two years of this [diet], her body hair fell out; she turned old and died. Had she not been caught by men, she would have become a transcendent."  
(Campany 2002)

\*\* In *Bowuzhi* (2.p.15) a man fallen into a precipice learns from snakes and tortoises the art of stretching out his neck toward the East each morning and evening. He is not thirsty or hungry anymore and his body becomes shining and light. After many years he can rise from the precipice and go back home (Levi 1982).

Appendixes coming soon.

Mention naropa yoga

Thanks to Laura Hoinowski.

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Write of shengong tribe etc.

Note on pages 64 from eskildsen on survival foods

Chinese sorghum  
Ginseng

Daoist moral component to three worms, possibly influence by moralistic Buddhist texts....see early Daoist scriptures.

But are the acts “immoral” or just harmful to health? Not a sin, just unhealthy, or sin because it is unhealthy, as sex wasn’t sinful, even orgies, just dangerous in losing vital energy through semen loss, but if done correctly could be healthy, sexual arts taught to royalty so they could please many people wives, concubines that were part of larger political affiliations, so sexual potency was crucial for a ruler...

feathery transformation yuhua

abstention from grain duanli

corpse free immortals shih chieh

In *Bowuzhi* (2.p.15) a man fallen into a precipice learns from snakes and tortoises the art of stretching out his neck toward the East on each morning and evening. He is not thirsty or hungry anymore and his body becomes shining and light. After many years he can rise from the precipice and go back home. Levi 1982

Shi ji (2048; see also Hanshu: 2037) says that Zhang Liang after having contributed to the rise of the Han monarchy, gave up mixing with other people to abandon a cereal diet and to practice daoyin gymnastics. A table of the different positions in daoyin gymnastic of the III cent. BC has been brought to light by Mawangdui’s digs. It opens with a paragraph dealing with giving up cereals and breath ingestion (Wenwun 1975, p. 1). Zhuang zi makes reference to the same hermit of Lushi Chunqiu and he is happy to state that he

fed on wild berries (Pèrez, p. 361). In Zhuangzi a paradise island is continuously remembered whose inhabitants “don’t eat the 5 cereals and inhale wind and dew” (Pèrez, p. 211).

When Taoism organized lay communities at the end of the Han and under the 6 Dynasties abstinence from cereals even if non practiced will be reported in the mythical lives of the saints<sup>1</sup>.

Levi 1982

Five cereals (rice, sesame seeds, soya beans, **wheat**, millet)

Abstinence must be absolute. In *Daoyou jing* we can read: “Cereals are the scalpels which cut life. They cause the 5 bowels to rotten... Don’t hope in eternal life if only a grain gets into your mouth!” (*Taisho* 52 n° 2103,148 B). In the II cent BC *Huainanzi* quotes a common say: “Those who eat cereals are intelligent, but they die early, those who don’t eat them at all are immortal” (4, p. 131)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In the huge collection in 53 juan by Zhao Daoyi all the Taoist saint biographies are gathered, from their origin to the XIII cent., *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongihan*. They are almost all immortals, whatever their schools are and their period, they practiced cereals’ abstinence.

medicinal plant shang-lu (*Phytolacca* species; *poke-root*)

<sup>2</sup> See also Bowuzhi (7, p. 40), *Yansheng yannian lu* quotino *Shennong ji* (1.1a).

Zhou Dynasty (1050 - 256 BC) time of designating the five grains? soybean was known as shu

Zhengong ji (p. 3a) speaks about giving up fish pastes and all foods with a raw meat smell. For Pengzu sheyang yangxing lun (p. 2b), Taoist dietetic is to rule on ones desires, you should not eat large amounts of a too fatty food, but eat according to the seasons and make wise mixtures of foods.

This going back to the state of nature is nothing else but the chaos doctrine, says Confucius to one of pupils who has fallen in with Taoist doctrine

duangu stopping cereals,

juegu discontinuing cereals

quegu refraining from cereals

xiuliang stopping grains

In chapt. 20 he bashes a fake Taoist who practices cereals’ abstinence without knowing the drugs to substitute them.

encyclopedia of taoism (Pregadio 2008)

Some texts say that abstinence from cereals is not enough to achieve immortality. According to *Baopuzi* it's not part of the techniques to get immortality and only false Taoists will practice it: "It is clear that the different types of Taoists who exist nowadays will never achieve immortality if they don't know

Levi 1982

Note on millet, only grain to be divinized, the five cereals grew spontaneously from the Grave of Lord millet, when the old raw grain died, the new civilized cereals appear. Giradot.

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The encyclopedia of Taoism

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Edition: illustrated

Published by Routledge, 2008

worms or corpses, sanshi and jiuchong

On every Koushin day, the three worms ascend to heaven and file a report on our misdeeds with the Department of Destiny. Similarly during the last night of the month, the Stove God makes a journey to heaven and reports on our behavior. For the more important misdeeds, three hundred days are deducted from our lives. For lesser sins, three days are deducted from our lives QUOTE FROM BAOUPUZI (CHINA, 320 AD)

taxonomy

Batchelor AJ, Compston JE. development of vitamin D deficiency in Asian immigrants with normal exposure to u.v. light.