

The Upper Precentor of Lord Li, Sage of the Latter Age, the Perfected Lord of Grand Simplicity of the White Mountain Palace;

The Upper Steward of Lord Li, Sage of the Latter Age, Lord Wang, overseer of the Perfected of the Western Citadel Palace.

In addition, there are Grand Ministers, Transcendent Dukes, and Grandees for a total of 360 officers. All of these are listed in the catalogs of the azure records on white slips, so I will not here list their names.

The Lord Azure Lad said: Those whose fate is inscribed on their bones delight in Transcendence. Those who delight in Transcendence all aspire to Transcendence. But those who aspire to Transcendence are sometimes blocked, sometimes urged on. Those who are blocked lack a sufficiency of merit from previous generations. Those who are urged on are predestined in the mystic records. [In some cases, people delight in Transcendence but are not single-minded. This is also because they lack a sufficiency of generational virtue.]³⁸ If one's celestial records in the Great Metropolis are manifest in one of the Mystic Palaces, the pneuma-induced indications of this might be observed on one's physical body in the following fashion:

9b

If one's record is blazoned forth in the Grand Bourne, the spirits of one's heart are well ordered in their Cinnabar Chamber.

If a mortal has a jade name in the Golden Porte, that person's eyes will flash with the light of the sun, the teeth will be azure, and the blood white. Such a person is benevolent, delighting in Transcendence; luminous; and of outstanding talent.

Those who have a jade record in the golden books of Upper Clarity have the River Kui constellation marked on their backs and a flat breastbone in their chest.* They are respectful and unassuming, manifesting virtue even toward insects.

Those who have azure documents on the cinnabar slips of the

* "River Kui" refers not to the bowl of the Dipper, but to a six-star, C-shaped constellation in Ursa Major a little to the side of the Dipper's bowl, also named "Literary Glory." See Schafer, *Pacing the Void*, pp. 121-25; and Schlegel, *Uranographie chinoise*, p. 530. Lord Pei is said to have had such a marking on his back. See the surviving version of his biography in *HY* 1027, 105:2a.2.

10a Grand Bourne Palace have in the lines of their palms interlocked *ren* ("person") graphs and an inverted *da* ("great") graph. They are cautious of the secrets and delight in Perfection. Of clear vacuity, they are magnanimous even toward the deluded.

Those who have purple names on the mystic plain silk texts of Fangzhu have square eyes that emit purple beams of light so that they can inspect within their own bodies.³⁹ They are extremely skilled in the practice and, being extremely pure, avoid contamination.

[Those who have an inner record on the jade weft texts in the cloud chambers have round eyes and a square forehead, a dragon mouth with a slender tongue. Such people are expansive and embody perfection. They are discriminating and decisive.

Those who have purple names in cinnabar-red graphs in the Vermilion Palace walk like simurghs and leap like phoenixes. Their Palace of the Navel is luminous and moist.* Such people are respectful and controlled in their actions, yet they are happy and active.]⁴⁰

Those who have a scarlet name in the Jade Records of Grand Clarity have a jade timbre or a bronze resonance to their voice. Their mouth is square and their eyes round. Such people give magnanimously and love without distinction, regarding harm to others as if it were they themselves who were injured.

Those who have a golden name on the rose-gem slips of Grand Simplicity have a white sign on their belly and a mouth that issues purple breath. They are full of the power of compassion and supernatural abilities; yet, hiding their humaneness, they seem inferior to the masses.

Those who have purple records on the cinnabar texts of the Southern Bourne have five-color pneumas issuing from their head to form a multistoried cloud above them. They are kind and cherish the poor, always helping those in difficulty.

Those who have green records in the mystic jades of the Dipper have nine orifices in their hearts and brocade markings on the exte-

* The "Palace of the Navel" may also refer to the Palace of Life, the "womb" behind the navel where the Peach Child is born. (See HY 639, 11b-12a, in this translation.)

rior of their lungs. On their cheek is a jade "nine."* Within their eyes are green tendons, and at the corners of their eyebrows there should be thousands of paired striations, perfectly even, like layered walls. Their temples lack hair, revealing their neck—a "Luminous Hall"—flat and white. The thousand striations are streams that join them to the Perfected; their broad neck is a residence for the reception of spirits. They are benevolent to the poor and lowly. Their humaneness reaches even to birds and beasts.

10b

Those who have red writing on the azure gold of the Upper Prime of the Mystic Palaces have purple orifices in their cinnabar heart and yellow efflorescences encircling their stomach. Their breath is fragrant, and jade liquors flow abundantly between their teeth. Such as these, when yet young, enjoy observing the flowing auroras of the sun and moon and delight in the glowing images of the constellations. Their bodies unblemished and their bones strong, they revere the deep secrets.

Those who have golden graphs on the white jades of the Cinnabar Estrade of the Mystic Metropolis have azure livers with purple veins, gray-green kidneys with figured patterns, and black breast-bones replete with seminal fluids. Spotlessly pure in form and in the spirits that inhabit them, their bodies are fragrant and supple. Their blood is clear and their breath moist. As for their personality, they can envision the mysterious at a distance and apprehend the phosphors that spiritualize their form. Amicable and forgiving, they humble themselves, aiding those in trouble or want.

Those with azure writing on the green-gem billets of the Three Primes Palace have purple brains and brocade-patterned tongues. There is a dark mark at the apex of their temples. Their viscera are green and their marrow scarlet. The top of their head is square and their forehead round. There is a hidden bone in their pubis. Their hair is soft—purple and glistening. There are three orifices in their nether regions, and their evacuation has a tangy odor. An azure light flows from their eyes—an azure essence, a congealed liquid. The

11a

* The number of stars in the Daoist Dipper is not seven but nine, including the two invisible stars "Sustainer" and "Straightener." (Schafer, *Pacing the Void*, pp. 49–51, *passim*.) Presumably, then, the "nine" on such a person's cheek would be a replica of the Dipper and not the graph *jiu* (nine).

striations of their hands reach to all four sides of their palms, and their incisors are triple-pronged. They are holy in thought and of humane vacuity. Their benevolence moves the spirits, and they delight in the subtle with respectful trustworthiness. They find joy in the spring growth of forests and cherish the clear flow of water. Their emotions respond in harmony to the mountains and rivers, and they willingly cast offerings from the banks. Safeguarding their whitesouls and nurturing their cloudsouls, their aspirations reaching to the regions of "Azure Peace," they taste at a distance the joys of the heavenly Transcendents.*

Those who possess the above signs are certainly higher Transcendents. They may achieve Transcendence whether they study or not; it is essential only that they delight in the Dao. If they delight in the Dao and study the subtleties, though, they will sooner ascend, transformed.

11b Next are those who have a "dark mountain" on their nose. The "dark mountain" is a black mark on the nose. Such as these should also have a dark mound on their belly to match the dark mountain. This "dark mound" is also a black mark. If one of these is missing, the other alone is not a sign of Transcendence. If one's breath is foul and one is by nature accustomed to the unclean, this will destroy the black mountain and the black mound marks.

Next is the mark of azure bones. One with azure bones delights in smelling the scents of "five fragrances" and enjoys studying matters pertaining to the spirits.[†]

Next are the goose walk, the dragon leap, the jade pillow growing from the nape of the neck, the hidden dawn behind the ear, the azure mark below the crotch, the striated patterns on the body, the

* "Azure Peace" is the name of the song that flows throughout the palace of the Sage Lord in the opening passages of this scripture.

[†] Although the term "five fragrances" is noted in the *Bencao gangmu* as a name for *Saussurea costus* or costusroot (see Akira Akahori, "Drug Taking and Immortality," in Livia Kohn, ed., *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques* [Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for Chinese Studies, 1985], p. 85 n. 7), in Daoist texts it refers to an incense or aromatic bath composed of five distinct herbs. The specific constituents differ, but one text, citing the *Scripture of the Three Sovereigns*, lists sweet basil, cherry blossoms, melilot, costusroot, and sandalwood (HY 1026, 41:3b). For another recipe, see HY 1026, 41:4a.

perfected heart and stilled gallbladder, and the hardened ears and expansive breath; these are all marks of the Lower Transcendent.

The Mystic Isle also has records where names are carved in gold.* Those listed may achieve release from the corpse without study. Those who study may become Transcendent through casting aside their corpse in broad daylight.[†]

Next are the bureaus of the Three Offices in Mount Tai. This is a realm of life yet separated from the lands of deathlessness.[‡] The cloudsouls of the people here have not perished, and so they float about endlessly in death. Through studying the Dao of Transcendence, they might become landlocked Transcendents, no more. They must, every thirty years, relocate to a new residence, changing their name. They have no fixed date of death. This is because there is no date of death entered for them in the white annals of the Mystic Records kept in the Three Offices. It is not the case that the Three Offices ever mistakenly inscribed anyone's name in the records of death.[§]

12a

For registering the living and dead, Grand Darkness has black

* With the Mystic Isle, we have moved from the celestial heavens to those situated on earth, albeit remote from the lands of human habitation. The Mystic Isle is a Transcendent paradise located in the northwest quadrant of the North Sea, according to the *Shizhou ji*, attributed to Dongfang Shuo (154–93 B.C.E.). For a translation of the relevant passage, see Thomas E. Smith, "Record of the Ten Continents," *TR* 2.2 (1990), p. 92.

[†] The distinction being made here is between different levels of physical transformation. Those who achieve "release from the corpse" disappear either before burial or after it, leaving some trace—hair, a sword, sandals, a staff, or a weightless corpse like the sloughed-off husk of a cicada—behind as a substitute for the body. Those who rise in "broad daylight," however, simply disappear into the heavens. For much more on these means of corporal transformation, see Robinet, *Méditation taoïste*, pp. 57–66; and Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 5, pt. 2 (1974), pp. 301 ff.

[‡] Mount Tai, in present-day Shandong Province, is the traditional locus of the lord of the underworld. Here it is regarded as housing the "Three Offices" of Celestial Master Daoism. One may proceed to all of the previously mentioned paradises without dying. In order to enter Mount Tai, one must first die.

[§] This statement is meant to contradict popular stories regarding the structure and inhabitants of the underworld. Many such stories center around the motif of the "untimely summons." A person is taken to the earth-prisons only to find that there has been a bureaucratic error and more years of life are indicated. Upon being returned to the mortal world, the traveler is able to recount what he or she has seen. See Robert F. Campany, "Return-from-Death Narratives in Early Medieval China," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 18 (1990), pp. 91–125.

records and white registers, and rolls of slips in cinnabar and vermilion. These receive the records of the living, in proper order from beginning to end, as well as the records of the dead from first to last to compare with them. In total there are six thousand slips, all recording the fate of a single person. If there is no record for death, most people will live a long life, as it is difficult for them to die. Their years often exceed one hundred, and when they do die, it is quickly, without sickness or pain. If people of this sort also study Transcendence, they are near enough to achieving it that they may be instructed. Moreover, the natures of such people are often respectful and amicable. They frequently delight in service to the subtle and wondrous. These are all marks of Transcendence.

12b

Next are those who keep their will fixed on the ultimate Dao, their zealous intent firm and correct. Some practice extensively secret virtues, aiding the poor, rescuing those in difficulty, spreading benevolence, befriending the destitute, and burying desiccated bones. Their virtue surpasses that of the ancients. Chaste and pure, they are warmly reverent and generous with those below them. They are not lascivious; neither do they steal. Some have ancestors who bestow grace on them, having established merit for generation after generation with the Three Offices, so that they already have three hundred merits.* All those with this advantage who study the Dao might achieve Transcendence. If their hearts are upright, nothing in heaven or on earth can subvert them. If their corporal spirits are strong, then demons and spirits will not oppose them. If their cloudsouls are luminous, the myriad perversities cannot invade them. If their whitesouls are unsullied, the myriad specters will not oppose them. If their seminal essence is clear, then lascivious corpses may not couple with them. If their bodily fluids are pure, the three worms may not wreak havoc on them.† If their blood is congealed, then the turgid pneumas may not scatter it.

* This describes the positive results of the system of *chengfu* [inherited burden] whereby one's fate was thought to be closely connected to the moral achievements and failures of one's ancestors, particularly those in the seventh generation. See Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence," pp. 46–49.

† The "three worms" (sometimes, as later in the text, called the "three corpses") are maleficent, grain-eating parasites that seek the early destruction of the body that

In this way, those who study the Dao perfect their hearts and strengthen their internal spirits, strictly controlling their whitesouls and embracing their cloudsouls. They confine the myriad perversities in the prison houses of the eight wilds and lock the masses of bewitching sprites at the outer limits of the nine directions. They are zealously sincere in holding to perfection, one with the unflagging energy of the primal age of Grand Incipience.* Their constant desire is to fly away to Transcendence on darting pinions. Their ruddy spirit is at peace in its scarlet residence and their five treasures secure in the clear mystery of their bodies. Encountering trial, they observe but do not topple; glory and dishonor do not move them. Summoned by the South-Facing Monarch, they pay him no heed.[†] They can discard ten thousand in gold with no expression of regret. They are content in the face of grinding cold and suffering, delighting in still fasts in the mountains. Maintaining their determination without flagging, they may live as long as heaven and earth.

13a

Only those who are like this may we begin to call students of the Dao. If one lacks these signs and these actions, though he be a renowned hero whose aspiration is to swallow the Four Seas, or one of vast energy and boundless might whose influence overtops the clouds; though he be one of profound knowledge with flying brush and disputatious speech or one of exceptionally elegant action who might impose order on the unseen and clear away doubt, whose mouth speaks of Nothingness and whose eyes flash to the eight directions—still he does not have the qualities of a Transcendent.[‡] When we say that “one labors in vain for a lifetime, never knowing

they might be free to roam within the earth. See Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, pp. 331–39.

* On this age in the creation of the world, see endnote 13 to the introduction to the *Inner Explanations*.

[†] This phrase echoes the skull's reply to Zhuangzi when Zhuangzi offered it the means to return to life: “Why should I give up the happiness of the south-facing monarch for the sufferings of the living?” (Graham, *Chuang-tzu*, pp. 124–25).

[‡] Yang Xi is here speaking, no doubt, of the practitioners of “Mystic Learning,” who were, even as he wrote, in vogue in the high society of the southern capital of the Jin. For examples of the style of discourse and comportment derided here, see Mather, *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü*; and Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, pp. 87–92 and 124–26, *passim*.

what one fails to achieve," it is this sort of person of whom we speak.

HY 179 IV. TABOOS FOR TRANSCENDENTS
RECORDED BY THE PERFECTED,
FROM THE *PURPLE TEXTS* INSCRIBED
BY THE SPIRITS

- 1a The Lord Azure Lad said: There is more than one thing that renders the study of Transcendence difficult. This difficulty is not the sort of difficulty known among mortals. Transcendence is so difficult that it cannot be encompassed in writing. Though a person have the visage of a Transcendent and be thereby marked for ascendancy, there are
- 1b ten items that negate the marks of Transcendence. If one depends on the marks of Transcendence and still transgresses these items, the marks will be negated and one will not become a Transcendent. Now I will secretly inform those with the marks of Transcendence. You should adhere to these things:

1. Do not delight in sexual debauchery. When you engage in debauchery, your cloudsouls and bodily fluids flow away, your glowing essences wither and dry up. Your spirits are scorched, your whitesouls scatter. Your bones become thin, your marrow sullied. Then your cloudsouls will call out to the numinous Bureaus, notifying the celestial offices. The palaces in the three registers of your body will fall into contention. Your embryonic flowering will become mixed and confused. This is the first of the ways to destroy the marks of Transcendence.*

2. Do not steal or act violently. If you are violent, your Yellow Court will be sunk in wild contention and the three corpses will delight in killing you.† Your cloudsouls and corporeal spirits will observe the lasciviousness as your whitesouls have intercourse with demons, blocking your inner chambers. Thereafter, your eyesight will become unfocused and injurious vapors will issue from your mouth.

* Each of the following items, with the exception of the tenth, ends with this formula. I have deleted it for the remaining items.

† The Yellow Court is one of the nine palaces of the brain. See Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, pp. 127–31.