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‘Turning the light around’ in the *Secret of the Golden Flower*:

A qualitative analysis of a Daoist classic text

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Daoism is a syncretic religious and spiritual tradition that has had a pervasive influence on the development of Chinese and other East Asian culture (Robinet, 1997). Despite a growing interest in Eastern philosophical and religious traditions (e.g., Buddhist psychology and mindfulness meditation; DeSilva, 2000; Kabbat-Zinn, 1991), Daoism has received comparatively little attention from Western psychologists. Daoists, like the Buddhists, have produced a sophisticated set of praxis aimed at developing the practitioner to an ostensibly elevated mental and spiritual level (see e.g., Kohn, 1989, 2008a, 2008b). Furthermore, Daoism also includes coinciding methods designed to enhance physical health and wellbeing (see e.g., Engelhardt, 2000). Scientific study of the particular benefits of these types of Daoist physiological practices is in its formative stages, but the field is expanding and results to date are quite promising (Chen, 2004; Sancier, 1996). Daoism also has an alternative theoretical basis to Buddhism and other non-Western psychologies such as Advaita Vedanta that have been studied by Western psychologists to date. Daoism may therefore offer valuable new perspectives regarding non-Western modes of thinking concerning psychology, spirituality, and the philosophy of mind. In addition, it is noteworthy that millions of Chinese, Koreans, and others consider themselves to be Daoist, at least in part, and Daoism is in many ways a fundamental background to the Chinese way of thought (Nisbett, 2003). The psychological study of Daoism may therefore contribute to a greater understanding of East Asian culture in particular and cross-cultural psychology in general. These points should make clear the rationale for granting Daoism a more prominent place in the field of psychological science than it has enjoyed to date.

The research that has been conducted on Daoism has been primarily from the Jungian and Humanistic psychological traditions. Given that Daoism has a strong association with ostensibly trans-egoic experiences, it is surprising to find that almost no work has been done on Daoism by transpersonal psychologists. Cott and Rock (2009) indicated that many forms of Daoist praxis and the experiences associated with them are likely to fit clearly within the domain of transpersonal research. For example, Hartelius, Caplan, and Rardin (2007) conducted a thematic analysis of 160 definitions of transpersonal psychology from 1968 through 2002, producing three themes that broadly capture the key definitional elements of transpersonal psychology. The three themes indicated that transpersonal psychology is (a) beyond-ego, (b) integrative/holistic, and (c) transformative. Daoism clearly adheres to all three of these themes. An example of ‘beyond-ego’ Daoism can be found in the *Wudao Lu* by Liu Yiming, which states “When inward and outward are

illuminated, and all is clear, you are one with the light of the sun and moon...the subtle body of a unified spirit, pervading the whole universe” (Cleary, 1988, p.4). Principles such as ‘yin’ and ‘yang’ pervading all aspects of reality indicate the holistic nature of Daoism, as exemplified in the Daoist version of the *Yi Jing* for example. Finally, the transformative nature of Daoist praxis may perhaps be exemplified in the progressive sequence of stages presented in the current analysis of the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi*. Thus, there is potentially a great deal of information within Daoism that may be of interest to transpersonal psychologists, such as a variety of meditation states and methods for achieving them (e.g., ‘sitting and forgetting’ in the *Zuowanglun*; Kohn, 1987), subtle energy phenomena (e.g., *yangsheng* and the accumulation and manipulation of *qi*; Despeux, 2008a), and ostensible out-of-body experiences and methods for inducing them (e.g., travels to heavenly realms as described in some *Shangqing* texts such as the *Shangqing taishang dijun jiuzhen zhongjing* and the *Shangqing jinque dijun wudou sanyi tujue*; Wong, 1997).

Cott and Rock (2009) discussed two primary sources of Daoist information that may be amenable to psychological study. The first is the living Daoist tradition, comprised primarily of the *Tianshi* and *Quanzhen* movements. The other two major movements in the history of Daoism, *Shangqing* and *Lingbao*, are largely subsumed under the title of *Tianshi*, and there are of course other smaller movements such as practitioners of the Thunder Rites (雷法 *leifa*). The other is the textual tradition as represented by collections such as the *Daozang* and the *Zhangwai Daoshi*. It is important to note, however, that along with the obvious issues in dealing with translations of ancient texts, there is a strong tradition of secrecy in Daoism. This has resulted in many texts using analogy and code in their descriptions of practices, and even on occasion being deliberately scrambled in order to protect the secrets of certain sects or authors. Indeed, many of the texts we have access to today were not originally intended for uninitiated readers. Thus care must be taken in the interpretation of classical Daoist texts and, where possible, texts should be interpreted in conjunction with the living tradition. That being said, standard psychological research practices should also be taken into consideration.

One Daoist textual source that is already relatively well known by Western psychologists is the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* (太一金華宗旨). The *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* is an important text of the *Longmen* school, the most prominent branch of the *Quanzhen* movement (Esposito, 1998). The text is attributed to the immortal Lü Dongbin and may have appeared as early as 1668 as a result of spirit writing.¹ However, due to multiple versions of the text and different stories concerning its production, the exact origin of the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* is unclear, and the earliest extant copy is from 1775 (Esposito, 2008). The contents of the text relate primarily to meditation techniques and it is essentially an instructional treatise. This text is also a good source for psychological study in that

1 Spirit writing is a common medium for the production of Daoist texts (see Despeux, 2008b).

it states itself that its purpose is to clearly elucidate points that in the past had been hidden by the secrecy and metaphor mentioned above, and it uses clearer language and more concrete examples than many earlier texts. The current study, therefore, aimed to conduct a qualitative analysis of the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* in order to clearly elucidate the main points presented in this important Daoist text. The *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* was chosen because it expresses its message more clearly and explicitly than many other Daoist texts and because, despite potential misunderstandings about its contents, it is one of the most well known Daoist texts within Western psychological circles.

The *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* text was popularized in the West by Jung's commentary on a translation of it by Richard Wilhelm under the title *The Secret of the Golden Flower: A Chinese book of life*² (Wilhelm & Jung, 1931/1962). Given this was an early translation, and that Jung had limited access to accurate information about Daoism (indeed much of Western understanding of Daoism has only come about in the past 20 years or so, see e.g., Kirkland, 2004), there are several issues with this early presentation of the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi*. Wilhelm appears to have chosen to leave part of the text out, as his translation includes only eight chapters as compared with thirteen in all six known editions of the text and is also missing part of the first chapter (Cleary, 1991; Esposito, 2008). Furthermore, according to Cleary (1991), Wilhelm took considerable liberties in translating the text, and when the two translations (Cleary's and Wilhelm's) are compared there are certainly considerable differences.

The accuracy of Jung's commentary has also been questioned (e.g., Cott & Rock, 2009). Jung's commentary focusses primarily on two of the constructs discussed in the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi*, namely *hun* and *po* (also, *p'o*). Jung interpreted these two constructs as being equivalent to his *logos* and *anima* respectively. By *logos* we mean the "masculine clarity of consciousness and reason" (Wilhelm & Jung, 1931/1962, p. 117), and by *anima* we mean the feminine, emotive aspect of man, unthinking and independent of the conscious mind (Jung & Storr, 1983). The decision by Jung and Wilhelm to translate *hun* and *po* as *logos* and *anima* renders them essentially equivalent *a priori*, thereby negating the recognition of distinctions between *hun* and *logos* and *po* and *anima* that may exist. For example, if we understand *anima* as being related with the unconscious, a clear contradiction appears in that the text states, in relation to *po*, "The lower soul (*po*) functions in association with consciousness, and consciousness develops based on the lower soul" (Cleary, 1991, p. 14). This contradiction arises due to the translation of *po* as *anima* and is not present in the text itself. It is therefore the current authors opinions that constructs such as *hun* and *po* should be left untranslated and their definitions should be drawn from the text itself. Furthermore, the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* discusses many more constructs than just *hun* and *po* and Jung largely ignores these in his commentary. While other authors may interpret the text differently to Jung, or discuss

² Wilhelm's translation, along with Jung's commentary, were originally published in German and later translated into English.

different aspects of it, until a structured analysis of the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* is conducted many aspects of the text may remain uncertain. That is to say, opinions regarding what the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* is discussing may be extrapolated from other texts, possibly erroneously, or may simply be an interpretation that is not grounded in Daoist material at all. Therefore, a systematic qualitative analysis should clearly demonstrate what exactly is presented in the text of the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* and what is not. Thus, the current analysis aimed to (1) provide definitions derived from the text of all the major constructs it discusses and (2) elucidate the relationships between these constructs, also derived from the text itself. In addition, the words of the text are used explicitly in the results of the analysis, providing further evidence for readers to see for themselves what exactly is presented in the text of the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi*.

Methodology

The aim of the current analysis was to develop a detailed summary description of the fundamental contents of a single text, the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi*, specifically relating to the constructs discussed in the text, the relationships between them, and any procedures relating to them. A variety of methodologies were considered and several initially appeared promising. However, upon closer inspection no single methodology proved to be entirely commensurate with the current study's aims. The foremost issue with the majority of approaches considered (e.g., thematic analysis, content analysis, phenomenological analysis) was that in most cases they elicited results based on the comparison of a number of texts (Hayes, 1997; Krippendorff, 2004; Marks & Yardley, 2004), whereas in the current study only a single text was to be considered. Furthermore, even in cases where these methods were adapted for use with a single text, they tended to remain incommensurate with the overall aims of the present study for a number of reasons outlined below. Thus, a composite methodology was used, based primarily on thematic analysis but borrowing from other methodologies where necessary to fulfill the requirements of the present study.

Ordinarily a thematic analysis would result in a number of themes that summarized, in broad terms, the general topics under consideration in the text (e.g., Cott & Rock, 2008). These themes, however, would not outline in a systematic way all of the important constructs mentioned in the text, including descriptions of their nature, and detail the relationships between each. Thus, the initial methodology of thematic and phenomenological analysis were used in the sense that the text was read thoroughly several times in order to develop a familiarity with the topics discussed, and then salient phrases, statements, or words were extracted (e.g., Matsu-Pissot, 1998; West 1998). However, while these salient statements were organized into more generalized themes (e.g., Elite, 1998), they were also maintained as more specific, distinct components (i.e., the constructs) *within*

those themes, and the relationships between these components were retained as described in the text. Furthermore, the relationships between the themes were also described in the current analysis.

Like thematic analysis, grounded theory also initially appeared promising, being a rigorous methodology that can be applied to qualitative data whilst maintaining relational information. However, ultimately what was desired in the present study was not a *theoretical explanation* of a particular phenomenon derived from the text (as grounded theory would produce; e.g., Gordon-Finlayson & Daniels, 2008; Hartley & Daniels, 2008), but a *systematic description* of the primary contents of the text. Thus, the basic principle of grounded theory of building a model based on the text, then referring back to the text to support or refute aspects of the model and build on it further, was applied. However, in grounded theory generally new textual sources are sought out after each stage of model building (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997), whereas in the current case there was only the single textual source. Therefore, in the present study, salient elements were extracted from the text and categorized according to their apparent meaning and function, i.e., themes were produced. Then, the text was consulted again to test whether these categories were appropriate, and to see if any new elements or categories might be elicited. Thus, the themes that were produced were checked against the text to ascertain whether they were an accurate representation and whether they could be expanded upon. This process continued until ‘exhaustion’ occurred (i.e., no new elements could be elicited from the text).

The basic premise of map analysis was also a partial fit with the aims of the present study because this technique examines not only the primary components of the textual material but also relationships between them (Carley, 1993). However, as described by Carley (1993), map analysis is situated within the context of content analysis, and as such is essentially a method of quantitatively analyzing qualitative data. That is to say, once certain codes are decided on, they are counted and may then be analyzed statistically. The main difference in map-analysis, as compared with classical content analysis, is that relationships are also coded and information may then also be presented graphically, displaying for example one or two way, positive or negative relationships (Carley & Palmquist, 1992; Carley, 1988). This approach is particularly efficacious for comparing large amounts of data across many sources, and for more generalized relationships, e.g., across ten years of newspaper reviews there was an increase in positive associations between the artist’s name and the term ‘surrealist’. However, the current case called for detailed information about constructs and relationships, drawn from a single source, and thus a quantitative approach such as content analysis was deemed inappropriate. Therefore, the underlying principles of map analysis, i.e., the highlighting of relationships as well as components, and the idea of graphically representing information were borrowed, but applied within an analytic approach closer to thematic analysis and grounded theory.

The resulting composite methodology adhered to the following procedural steps:

1. Before beginning the analysis, the text was read from start to finish several times in order to gain a familiarity with the content.
2. Any psychospiritual constructs, as well as passages describing their nature, were extracted from the text. These were organized into a set of primary constructs to be examined.
3. Following this, the text was again searched for references to relationships between these primary constructs. This allowed a reorganizing of the primary constructs; constructs that were equated with each other in the text were collapsed under a single heading and then all remaining constructs were arranged into groups according to their relationships as described in the text. These groups became the primary ‘themes’ of the analysis.
4. Subsequently, with these themes in mind, the text was again examined to elicit any relationships between these primary themes, as well as to cross-check these themes for validity against the text.
5. Finally, all this information was organized into a conceptual map, clearly depicting the primary teachings of the text.

Results and Discussion

This combined results and discussion section is presented as a discussion of each theme followed by a series of quotes from the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* describing the theme. Although somewhat cumbersome, the quotes provide direct evidence of what the text is discussing and provide descriptions of each construct as well as the important relationships between them in the words of the text. The overarching phenomenon under examination appears to be ‘turning the light around’ (回光 *huiguang*). The analysis elicited five themes, two discussing the general process of turning the light around, and three discussing specific procedures and outcomes in an apparent stage-like progression, which results from the general practice of turning the light around. The five themes are: Turning the light around – the refining of the lower soul into the higher soul and of the conscious spirit into the original spirit; Turning the light around – the refining of the light of consciousness into the light of essence; Tuning the breath; The interaction of fire and water; and The interaction of heaven and earth. The chapter number and passage number are presented after each quote in accordance with Cleary’s (1991) translation. The results are intended to be read in conjunction with Diagrams 1 and 2.

1. Turning the light around – The refining of the lower soul into the higher soul and of the conscious spirit into the original spirit (Figure 1 – Aspect 1)

This theme discusses one aspect of refining the products of ordinary experience (i.e., ordinary waking consciousness) to gain access to the ingredients for enlightenment and immortality in the Daoist worldview. The text discusses six constructs relating to this process, which can be arranged into two groups. The first group (the concentric circles on the right of Figure 1) are the products of ordinary human experience. There is the *conscious spirit*, which develops based upon, and functions in association with, the *lower soul*, which in turn is housed within the *body*. These are contrasted with the *original spirit*, which is concealed within the *higher soul*, which in turn is housed within the *celestial mind* (the concentric circles on the left of Figure 1). The process of turning the light around is described, in this aspect, as a process of refining the dark *lower soul* and interrupting the ordinary stream of *consciousness*. The refined *lower soul* will become pure light, restoring the *higher soul*. This is represented in Figure 1 in the arrow from the *lower soul* in the concentric circles on the right, to the *higher soul* in the concentric circles on the left. Within this process, the other process of interrupting *consciousness* is also occurring, which will allow the *original spirit* to come to the fore, where it should rightfully be according to the Daoist theory presented in the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi*. This is represented in Figure 1 by the arrow from the *conscious spirit* at the heart of the concentric circles on the right, to the *original spirit* at the heart of the concentric circles on the left. It is immediately clear from reading the definitions below that the psychology represented in the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* differs significantly from modern-day Western psychology. The representation of a number of constructs (e.g., *original spirit*, *celestial mind*) that have no obvious analogue in mainstream Western psychology is perhaps the first point of note. These may be considered the domain of philosophy and religion in the West (e.g., the spirit or soul, the Godhead), however it is also possible that these types of constructs may be particularly amenable to measurement in Daoism, given that they seem to hold a much more concrete reality in many Daoist practices (e.g., the *Fire of Spirit* and the *Water of Vitality* described below). That is to say, in Daoism constructs such as ‘soul’ are often referred to as being much more concrete than they are in, for example, Christianity or Judaism, and are sometimes even manipulated via praxis (e.g., solidified or crystallized). Furthermore, the apparent goal of ‘turning the light around’ seems to be vastly different from any goal found in any common Western psychological interventions. If we consider the *conscious spirit* and *lower soul* being in control to be the ordinary experience of a reasonably well-adjusted individual, then many Western approaches, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, is arguably geared toward reestablishing this situation. In contrast, this is simply the starting point for ‘turning the light around’, with the primary goal being something far more lofty

and ultimately spiritual. It is once again clear then, how this practice might be of interest to transpersonal psychologists considering, for example, Daniels' (2005) 'short way' of defining transpersonal psychology as being essentially about the spiritual aspects of human experience. The presentation of the six constructs and the process relating to them in the words of the text is outlined below:

The first construct is the *conscious spirit*. It is contrasted with the *original spirit* and paired with the *lower soul*. It is directly described as lust but based on other aspects of the text probably includes all conceptual thought. Ordinary psychological experience is ruled by the *conscious spirit* and *lower soul*, and it is necessary to interrupt these through meditation and refine them in order to bring forth the *original spirit* and *higher soul*, which is one of the ultimate goals of 'turning the light around'.

Conscious Spirit (識神 *shishen*)³ – Consciousness develops based on the lower soul. [2:10] All lust affecting temperament is the doing of the lower soul. This is what consciousness is. [2:19] If consciousness is not interrupted, transformation and transmutation of the lower soul go on endlessly from lifetime to lifetime, generation to generation. [2:10] If consciousness is not stopped, spirit does not come alive; if mind is not emptied, the elixir does not crystallize. [10:15]

The *lower soul* is described as the substance of consciousness and consciousness is said to develop based upon it. The term 'yin' is also used to describe the lower soul. 'Yin' is contrasted with 'yang', and is used in two ways in the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi*. One is that 'yin' and 'yang' should complement each other in perfect harmony, as in theme 5 where *heaven* (yang) and *earth* (yin) balance each other and ultimately merge into one. The other is that 'yin' is undesirable and should be completely refined to produce pure 'yang', which is desirable. It is in this context that the lower soul is referred to as 'yin' in this theme. It is also noteworthy that the text refers to the *lower soul* as continuing to subsist after death, and it therefore seems to be more than simply a psychological construct.

Lower Soul (魄 *po*) – The lower soul functions in association with consciousness. [2:10] The lower soul is dim; it is the substance of consciousness. [2:10] The lower soul is yin, energy that is dense and opaque. This sticks to the ordinary mind that has form. [2:18] After death it feeds on blood, in life it suffers greatly. [2:19]

The *body* is referred to only briefly in the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi*, as the location that houses the *lower soul*. The text states that the *body* is created by attention, but it does not elaborate further on

3 The character for that Cleary translates as 'conscious' or 'consciousness' has the connotation of acquired knowledge, so should not be taken to mean all types of 'consciousness' as the word is understood in western psychology and philosophy.

this point. The *body* does not seem to play a particularly important role in ‘turning the light around’.

Body (身 *shen*) – People create the body by attention. The body is not just the physical body, because there is a lower soul therein. [2:10] If you are dull and depressed on awakening, that is a sign of clinging to the body, which means clinging to the lower soul. [2:12]

The *original spirit* is contrasted with the *conscious spirit* mentioned above. Traditionally, ‘vitality’, ‘energy’, and ‘spirit’ are the ‘three treasures’ in a number of Daoist practices. However, the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* seems to give special importance to the ‘spirit’, in that the *original spirit* (as opposed to the *conscious spirit*) lasts for eternity. According to the text, in order to gain access to the *original spirit*, one must follow the practices of ‘turning the light around’, interrupt the *conscious spirit*, and refine the *lower soul*. It is important to note here that the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* makes a distinction between quietism and its practice, which it describes as undivided concentration. The practitioner would thereby, ipso facto, gain access to the infinite. This point may be of particular interest to transpersonal psychologists, in that the direct experience of the *original spirit* may result in a temporal transcendence of the personal (i.e., a transpersonal experience).

Original Spirit (元神 *yuanshen*) – Vitality and energy degenerate along with the universe, but the original spirit is still there; this is the infinite. [2:2] The life of the spirit comes from the prior death of the mind. If people can kill the mind, the original comes alive. Killing the mind does not mean quietism, it means undivided concentration. [4:14]

The *higher soul*, according to the text, houses the *original spirit*. It appears to relate to the conscious experience of something, as in seeing or dreaming. One may speculate that the *higher soul* is, therefore, the vessel through which experience of the world is possible for the *original spirit*. The *higher soul* is in turn housed within the *celestial mind* and is described, in contrast to the *lower soul* as being ‘yang’ energy that is obtained from the cosmos.

Higher Soul (魂 *hun*) – There is the higher soul, which is where the spirit is concealed. The higher soul resides in the eyes during the day and lodges in the liver at night. When it resides in the eyes, it sees; when it lodges in the liver, it dreams. [2:11] The higher soul is in the celestial mind; this is yang, energy that is light and clear. This is obtained from cosmic space and has the same form as the original beginning. [2:18]

The *celestial mind* houses the *original spirit*, and is equated with the *earth of attention* in theme 4. It is also perhaps equivalent to the *heart-mind* in theme 3, which will be elaborated upon below. It is described as akin to a house where ‘the light’ is the master, and thus may be the staging ground for ‘turning the light around’.

Celestial Mind (天心 *tianxin*)– The celestial mind is like a house; the light⁴ is the master of the house. [1:12] The earth of attention is the chamber of the centre, the celestial mind. [2:8]

The procedure for this theme is to refine the lower soul and interrupt consciousness. This is achieved through the meditation technique of ‘turning the light around’. ‘Conformity’ arguably refers to ordinary waking consciousness in the absence of any meditational practice, and this results in an outward ‘leakage’ of spirit and consciousness. Thus the practitioner is advised to reverse this leakage, which may mean to keep experience and attention focussed inward, rather than the ordinary outflow of interaction with the phenomenal world. The *conscious spirit* seems to be conceptual thought, and thus to interrupt it probably means to achieve a meditative state wherein conceptual thoughts cease to interfere with the mind. If this is achieved, the true nature of the *original spirit* may be revealed. However, practitioners would still need to be aware of states such as *oblivion* (see theme 3), which may also be experienced as the lack of conceptual thought. To actually know what the *lower soul* and the *higher soul* are, may require direct experience, probably with the guidance of a master. Indeed, the text itself states that, while it is attempting to clearly elucidate the practice of meditation, the guidance of a master is still necessary. Thus, this text alone is not sufficient to practice the techniques described.

Procedure – Turning the light around is a means of refining the higher soul, which is a means of preserving the spirit, which is a means of controlling the lower soul, which is a means of interrupting consciousness. [2:13] Refining away the dregs of darkness to restore pure light, is just a matter of dissolving the lower soul to make the higher soul whole. [2:14] If learners refine the dark lower soul completely, then it will be pure light. [2:20] Nothing is worse than having a running leakage of spirit and consciousness; this is conformity, so the way of the golden flower is accomplished completely through the method of reversal. [3:10]

2. *Turning the light around – The refining of the light of consciousness into the light of essence* (Figure 1 – Aspect 2)

This theme is the other general aspect of turning the light around. It is discussed in terms of two constructs; the *light of essence*, and the *light of consciousness*. Ordinarily, the *light of essence* is constantly being transformed into the *light of consciousness* due to coming into contact with the objects of experience (including psychological phenomena such as memory, logic, etc.). The process as described in the text is to interrupt this process and reverse it, stilling the constant stream of consciousness and its objects via meditation, to allow the *light of essence* to become full and clear by itself. This is represented by the arrow from the box on the right of Figure 1 to the box on

⁴ The 'light' is variously the *Light of Essence*, the *Heart/Mind*, the *Fire of Spirit*.

the left of Figure 1. The *light of essence* may be related to what is sometimes called the ‘pure consciousness event’ (PCE; e.g., Forman, 1990) and thus ‘turning the light around’ may be a method of achieving this state. The PCE may be defined as a wakeful yet phenomenologically contentless (i.e., non-intentional) consciousness (Forman, 1998). The existence of such states has been debated (e.g., Almond, 1988) and thus the process of ‘turning the light around’ may prove interesting as a new avenue for research into the possibility of the PCE. As the text below states, if ordinary conceptual consciousness is forgotten, basic reality is seen, which seems to indicate that ordinary conscious experience obscures fundamental reality. Furthermore, it would appear that achieving the *light of essence* is not only a goal in itself but also the means to success in the other processes described in the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* (i.e., themes 4, 5, and 6). The *light of essence* and the *light of consciousness*, as well as the processes related to them, are outlined below in the words of the text:

The *light of consciousness* is related to the *conscious spirit* of the previous theme. It is the ordinary, day-to-day psychological experience. The *light of essence* is what exists spontaneously prior to the categorical discrimination of cognition. Once cognition and perception become involved, the *light of essence* becomes the *light of consciousness*.

Light of Consciousness (識光 *shiguang*) – Whenever people look at things, when they perceive them spontaneously all at once without discriminating, this is the light of essence. It is like a mirror reflecting without intending to do so. In a moment it becomes the light of consciousness, through discrimination. When there is an image in a mirror, there is no more mirroring; when there is consciousness in the light, then what light is there any more? [10:3] When the light of essence turns into thought, then it is consciousness. When consciousness arises, the light is obscured and cannot be found. It is not that there is no light, but that the light has become consciousness. This is what is meant by the saying of the Yellow Emperor, “When sound moves, it does not produce sound, it produces echoes.” [10:4]

The *light of essence* is that which becomes the *light of consciousness*, and consequently that which results when the *light of consciousness* is refined or reverted through meditation. That is to say, when ordinary consciousness is interrupted and stilled, the *light of essence* will present itself. The *light of essence* is not literally light, but is akin to the unformed ‘substance’ of consciousness. Thus, the *light of essence* may be considered a ‘pure’ or unmediated consciousness. Only when the conceptual mind is ‘forgotten’ does the *light of essence* become accessible. Consequently, deliberate meditation will not produce the light of essence; it can only be achieved through an effortlessness that is probably what is meant by the term *Wuwei* (無為)⁵.

5 This term is famous in Daoism and is used extensively in, for example, the *Zhuangzi*, which is probably the second

Light of Essence (性光 *xingguang*) – “Light arises in the empty room.” This light is not luminous, but there is an explanation of this as an evidence of efficacy in the beginning before one has seen the light. If you see it as light and fix your attention on it, then you fall into ideational consciousness, which is not the light of essence. [10:2] Deliberate meditation is the light of consciousness; let go, and it is then the light of essence. [10:14]

The procedure captured in this theme is essentially to revert the *light of consciousness* back into the *light of essence* through a process of ‘forgetting’. Once the ordinary workings of conceptual consciousness have been interrupted, such that ‘random imaginations’ and ‘routine compulsions’ cease, ‘basic reality’ can be experienced. What exactly this ‘basic reality’ is certainly merits further investigation, however as the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* does not delve into this topic in particular detail, ‘basic reality’ does was not captured as a theme or construct in the present analysis.⁶ It is again important to note here that the text makes a distinction between quietism and *oblivion* (see theme 3) and what here is referred to as ‘forgetting conceptual consciousness’. This theme also highlights the relationship between all of the themes. ‘Turning the light around’ (themes 1 and 2) is the general process; however, there are levels within this process and themes 3, 4, and 5 constitute these levels. Theme 3 is the beginning process of stabilizing the awareness and producing the foundation, which is the *water of vitality*, the ‘energy of primal real unity’. After this ‘hundred days of foundation’ the adept will have ‘true light’ which is the *fire of spirit*, and the interaction of ‘water’ and ‘fire’ can take place (i.e., theme 4). The result of this interaction is purified spirit and purified energy, pure ‘yang’ and pure ‘yin’, *heaven* and *earth*. The interaction of *heaven* and *earth* is referred to as ‘true intercourse’ and also ‘bathing’ and ‘incubation’. This is the culmination of mental stillness or clarity, as explained in theme 5.

Procedure – At the pass of essence and life, you forget conceptual consciousness. [13:14] After conceptual consciousness is forgotten, you see basic reality. [13:15] It is not stopping random imaginations only temporarily; it is truly emptying routine compulsions for all time. [3:5] *Turning the light around* is only the general term: with each level of progress in practice, the efflorescence of the light increases in magnitude, and the method of turning around becomes subtler. [8:7] Turning the light around is a matter of single-minded practice: just use the true breathing for stable awareness in the central chamber (Figure 2 – Stage 1). [13:22] This is all based on quieting of mind and stabilization of energy. When the mind is forgotten and the energy congeals, this is a sign of effectiveness (Figure 2 – Stage 1). The emptiness of energy, breath, and mind is the formation of the elixir (possibly the completion of Figure 2 – Stage 2, i.e., the ‘ungraspable sense of vast space’ that results from the joining of the ‘yang’ from ‘water’

most well known Daoist text after the *Dao De Jing*.

⁶ One text that may be useful in investigating the nature of ‘basic reality’ from a Daoist perspective is perhaps the *Wuzhen Pian*, which has also been translated by Cleary (1987) under the title ‘Understanding Reality’. Of course it is not certain that ‘reality’ is taken to mean the same thing in the *Wuzhen Pian* and the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi*.

and the ‘yang’ from ‘fire’; see below). The unification of mind and energy is incubation (Figure 2 – Stage 3). Clarifying the mind and seeing its essence is understanding the Way. [13:22] Turn it around for a hundred days (Figure 2 – Stage 1), and the vital energy will naturally be sufficient for true yang to rise spontaneously, so that there is true fire naturally existing in water (Figure 2 – Stage 2). If you carry on the practice this way, you will naturally achieve intercourse and form the embryo (Figure 2 – Stage 2). You are then in the heaven of unknowing, and the child thus develops (Figure 2 – Stage 3). [9:2] Refine the conscious spirit, remove arbitrary views, and then after that the medicine will develop. [12:2] The medicine is not a material thing; it is the light of essence, which is none other than the primal true energy. Even so, it is necessary to attain great concentration before you see it. [12:3] When you have seen it for a long time, eventually the light of the basis of the mind becomes spontaneous. When the mind is empty, and all indulgences are ended, you are liberated from the ocean of misery. [12:4]

3. *Tuning the breath (Figure 2 – Stage 1)*

This theme, along with the next two, represents the stage-like progression that occurs through the more general practice of ‘turning the light around’. ‘Tuning the breath’ is the beginning stage, where conceptual consciousness is still predominant. Thus, the technique of resting the breath on the mind and the mind on the breath is used to help still conceptual consciousness. This is represented in Figure 2 as the double-headed arrow between *heart-mind*⁷ and *breath*. The problems that arise at this beginning stage of turning the light around are *distraction* and *oblivion*, represented by the ovals connected to *heart-mind* by broken arrows. These two problems are discussed in terms of the *lower soul* mentioned in the first theme. *Distraction* and *oblivion* are not constructs in the same sense as, for example, *hun* or *breath*, but are included in Figure 2 more as ‘states of being’ that can occur at this stage. That is to say, where constructs such as *hun* seem to be attributed some sort of metaphysical reality in the text, *distraction* and *oblivion* are described as processes that may occur, or the state of experiencing that process. The method for curing *oblivion* and *distraction*, according to the text, is simply to rest the *breath* on the *heart-mind* and the *heart-mind* on the *breath* until both *heart-mind* and *breath* become pacified. *Heart/mind*, *breath*, *oblivion*, and *distraction*, as well as the processes related to them are outlined below in the words of the text:

The idea of the *heart-mind* permeates all five themes of this analysis. In the first theme there is the *celestial mind*, which shares the character *xin* (心) with *heart-mind*. It is also equated with the *earth of attention* in theme 4, which in turn may be related to the ‘ancestral earth’ referred to below in this theme. Furthermore, both the *celestial mind* in theme 1 and the *heart-mind* in this theme are said to

⁷ The Chinese character *xin* means both heart and mind, and Cleary translates it as either heart or mind, depending on context. Thus, heart-mind has been used here.

house the 'spirit'. Although no 'mind' is explicitly mentioned as a construct in themes 2 and 5, the first line of text below is reminiscent of theme 2, not only in the *heart-mind* being equated with light, but also in the process of forming a thought and that thought being the substance of the 'mind'. Thus, the *light of essence* and the *light of consciousness* may be two aspects of *heart-mind*. In theme 5, although 'mind' was not explicitly extracted as a construct per se, clarity of mind is described as being necessary in the procedure section and 'mind' is even equated with *spirit* at this stage. It is important to note here that *heart-mind* does not refer to the physical heart or brain but is more akin to the substance of consciousness and is in fact equated with the light that is turned around.

Heart-Mind (心 *xin*) – When the mind forms a thought, this thought is the present mind. This mind is light; it is medicine. [10:3] This is where the perfectly open and aware spirit concentrates. [1:11] Taoists call it the ancestral earth, the yellow court, the mysterious pass, the primal opening. [1:11] The transmutations of spiritual illumination are all guided by mind. [1:14]

The *breath* is also not the physical respiration but something more subtle associated with both the breathing and the *heart-mind*. Indeed, the two components of the Chinese character for *breath* are 'oneself' or 'one's own' and 'heart/mind'. The text, in fact, states that the *breath* and the 'mind' are one and the same, although it also discusses them separately so it is not entirely clear what the distinction is. This may be another point where experiential knowledge is necessary, possibly under the guidance of a master. As stated below in the procedure section, the 'true breathing' will only become perceptible after a certain level of subtlety is achieved and maintained for a period of time, whereupon the 'substance of the mind' will become perceptible.

Breath (息 *xi*) – One breath setting up the foundation does not refer to respiration. Breath is one's own mind; one's own mind is the breath's original spirit, original energy, and original vitality. [9:3]

Distraction is one of two obstacles to practice that practitioners face at this stage. It is described as a lingering presence of the *lower soul*, which causing the spirit to race and the mind to be distracted. It is, compared with *oblivion*, relatively easy to cure because, although one might not be aware of it during day to day life, during meditation it will become obvious, at which point *distraction* itself becomes a cure for *distraction*. That is to say, once the practitioner becomes aware that they are distracted, they can return to concentrating on meditation.

Distraction (散乱 *sanluan*) – When you are not sitting quietly, you may be distracted without knowing it; but once you get aware of it, distraction itself become a mechanism for getting rid of distraction. [4:16] Distraction means the spirit is racing...distraction is easy to cure. [4:18]

The lower soul is a lingering presence in distraction. [4:20]

Oblivion is a more serious problem than *distraction*, and the text states that in *oblivion* the *lower soul* is in complete control. *Oblivion* means the spirit is unclear and the mind is cloudy, thus it is not easy to recognize that one has fallen into *oblivion* and thereby attempt to alleviate oneself from it. The text suggests getting up and taking a walk as a potential aid in dealing with oblivion, but ultimately it states that the solution to both oblivion and distraction is ‘tuning the breath’. The text also makes a distinction between (1) *oblivion* that the practitioner is able to become aware of, and (2) *oblivion* that the practitioner never becomes aware of and is, thus, never alleviated.

Oblivion (昏沈 *hunchen*) – As for unawares oblivion and oblivion of which you become aware, there is an unconceivable distance between them. Unawares oblivion is real oblivion; oblivion that you notice is not completely oblivious. [4:17] Oblivion means the spirit is unclear...oblivion is hard to heal. [4:18] Oblivion means the lower soul is in complete control. [4:20] When you are sitting quietly, if you become drowsy, this is oblivion. [4:21] When you don't hear it, the breathing is fine; and when breathing is fine, the mind is clear. If you can hear it, the breathing is rough, which means the mind is cloudy. Cloudiness means oblivion, so it is natural to feel sleepy. [4:22]

The procedure for this theme begins with methods for dealing with the two obstacles of *oblivion* and *distraction*. The text then moves on to discuss a method of ‘letting go’, which was also mentioned in theme 2. The practitioner relaxes and ‘lets go’ of conceptual thought, but not so much so as to fall into oblivion or to be unable to allow the mind to ‘listen to’ the breathing. The text goes on to say that, just as the *breath* is not the physical respiration, ‘listening’ is not auditory but a mental process of resting the attention on the *breath*. This progressive process of gradually letting go whilst maintaining a certain level of awareness on the breath leads to deeper and deeper levels of quietude (靜 *jing*), which is eventually necessary for the completion of the process described in theme 5. It also leads to the acquisition of ‘real light’, the *fire of spirit*, and the *water of vitality*, all of which are necessary for continuing on to the next stage (theme 4). The significance of one hundred days is not entirely clear based on the text alone, as it states that one hundred days is not in fact one hundred days. Again, this may be a point that requires clarification by a master.

Procedure – Generally speaking, the two afflictions of oblivion and distraction just require quieting practice to continue unbroken day after day until complete cessation and rest occur spontaneously. [4:16] When you sink into oblivion and become drowsy, get up and take a walk. When your spirit has cleared, sit again. [4:28] When you sit, lower your eyelids and then establish a point of reference. Now let go. But if you let go absolutely, you may not be able to simultaneously keep your mind on listening to your breathing. [4:7] You should not allow your

breathing to actually be audible; just listen to its soundlessness. [4:8] The more you let go, the greater the subtlety; and the greater the subtlety, the deeper the quietude. [4:8] Eventually, after a long time, all of a sudden the subtle will be interrupted and the true breathing will appear, whereupon the substance of the mind will become perceptible. [4:9] This is because when mind is subtle, breath is subtle; when mind is unified, it moves energy. When breath is subtle, mind is subtle; when energy is unified, it moves mind. Stabilization of mind must be preceded by development of energy because the mind has no place to set to work on; so focus on energy in used as a starting point. This is what is called the preservation of pure energy. [4:10] Just observe clearly, and when your breathing grows quiet you then become accurately aware. This is application of the method of reversal [3:7]. If you can stabilize the breathing, [13:3] the light returns to the primal opening (heart/mind). [13:4] There emerges unified energy (*water of vitality*, Figure 2 – Stage 2) [13:5]. On the whole, to set up the foundation requires a hundred days before you have real light. As you are, you are still working with the light of the eyes, not the fire of spirit (Figure 2 – Stage 2), not the fire of essence, not the torch of wisdom. [9:1] A hundred days setting up the foundation is not a hundred days; one day setting up the foundation is not one day...One breath is held for a lifetime, not only a hundred days; so a hundred days is also a single breath [9:3]. The hundred days is just a matter of empowerment [9:4].

4. *The interaction of fire and water (Figure 2 – Stage 2)*

This theme is the second in the stage-like progression that results from the general process of ‘turning the light around’. The three constructs involved in this stage are acquired through completion of the first stage. The *water of vitality* is the unified energy that emerges through the light returning to the *heart/mind*. The *fire of spirit* is the real light that is achieved after the ‘hundred days of setting up the foundation’, which is tuning the breath. The *earth of attention* is, as mentioned in the previous theme, related to the *heart/mind* and may even be the evolution of it. *Water* is represented symbolically as ‘yin’ (broken line in the trigram symbol below *water of vitality* and *fire of spirit*) outside and ‘yang’ (solid line) inside; *fire* is represented as ‘yang’ outside and ‘yin’ inside. The goal of this stage is to achieve pure ‘yang’, by replacing the ‘yin’ inside *fire* with the ‘yang’ from inside *water*. The *earth of attention* is the mediating factor within this process, maintaining the central balance. The interaction of *water* and *fire* is represented in Figure 2 by the arrows from *fire of spirit* and *water of vitality* into *earth of attention*. The method for doing this is to use the *fire of spirit*, which is the representation of the light at this stage, to arouse the ‘yang’ within *water*. When the *fire of spirit* meets with the *water of vitality*, the ‘yang’ energy within *water* will respond by itself. The one ‘yang’ from *water* and the two ‘yangs’ from *fire* will then join to make three ‘yang’ lines, which is the symbol for *heaven* (see Figure 2 – Stage 3). On a more

psychological level, it is the ‘yin’ within *fire* that is controlling the spirit and making it pursue sense experience. This is related to the *lower soul*, the *conscious spirit*, and the *light of consciousness*. If this ‘yin’ is replaced with the ‘yang’ from *water*, the spirit will become stable. This is associated with the *higher soul*, the *original spirit*, and the *light of essence*. The three constructs and the processes that relate to them are outlined below in the words of the text:

As mentioned above, the *fire of spirit* is the ‘yang’ *spirit* with ‘yin’ inside controlling it. The *water of vitality* is energy, ‘yang’ within ‘yin’. The *earth of attention* is the representation of mind at this stage of the practice. It is interesting to note that the *earth of attention* and the *fire of spirit* may, in fact, be different aspects of the same thing, the *earth of attention* being its substance and the *fire of spirit* its function. The *water of vitality* would be the foundation on which this ‘thing’ is based, but what exactly this ‘thing’ constitutes is not elaborated upon in the text.

Water of Vitality (精水 *jingsui*) – The water of vitality is the energy of the primal real unity.

[2:8] [It] is the foundation. [2:9]

Earth of Attention (意土 *yitu*) – The earth of attention is the chamber of the center, the celestial

mind. [2:8] [It] is the substance. [2:9]

Fire of Spirit (神火 *shenhuo*) – The fire of spirit is illumination. [2:8] [It] is the function. [2:9]

The following paragraph describes in detail the process of arousing the ‘yang’ from *water* and joining it with the ‘yang’ from *fire*. *Fire* is described as being in substance pure ‘yang’, but with ‘yin’ inside controlling it. It may be possible to say that it is this ‘yin’ that causes, for example, the *conscious spirit* of theme 1 to develop. Indeed, the *lower soul*, which the *conscious spirit* develops based upon, is described as being ‘yin’ in nature. However, if this single ‘yin’ can be replaced with a single ‘yang’, that from *water*, then the *spirit* will become calm and the process of reversal mentioned in the final quote of theme 1 will begin to occur by itself. It is perhaps noteworthy that the language of the text seems to give these ‘yin’ and ‘yang’ energies a more distinctly physical reality than simple psychological constructs. That is to say, this theme seems to be referring to subtle energies that have an existence somewhere in between the purely psychological and the grossly physical. The existence and nature of these energies merit further attention by transpersonal psychologists in that they appear to transcend the psychological realm and may be some sort of mediator between the mental and the physical. Some research does exist concerning subtle energies such as *qi* (氣; see Chen, 2004); however, in the absence of further research with the living Daoist tradition mentioned in the introduction, the existence and nature of subtle energies in the methods outlined herein remain unverified.

Procedure – After [body and mind are free and peaceful...and the celestial mind takes its rightful

place in the center], lower your eyelids and gaze inward at the chamber of *water* (this is probably a reference to the 'lower elixir field', but the text does not specifically state this). Where the light reaches, true positive energy comes forth in response. [8:9] *Fire* is yang outside and yin inside (see Diagram, a solid line represents yang and a broken line represents yin), so it is in substance *the creative* (Yi Jing symbol for pure yang), with one yin inside ruling it, arousing mind according to things and going along out into habitual routines. [8:10] The one yin [inside the *fire* trigram] concentrates on pursuing sense experience, while the one yang [inside the *water* trigram] concentrates on reversing and withdrawing the senses themselves. [11:2] Now when you turn the light around to shine inward, [the mind] is not aroused by things; negative energy then stops, and the flower of light radiates a concentrated glow, which is pure positive energy. [8:11] Correlates inevitably associate, so the positivity (yang) in *water* leaps up, whereupon it is not the positivity in *water* but just the positivity in *the creative* itself responding to the positivity in *the creative*. Once the two things meet, they join inextricably, the living movement of creative energy now coming, now going, now floating, now sinking. In the basic chamber in oneself there is an ungraspable sense of vast space, beyond measure; and the whole body feels wondrously light and buoyant. [8:12]

5. *The interaction of heaven and earth (Figure 2 – Stage 3)*

This theme represents the final stage in the progression of 'turning the light around'. There are two constructs involved in this final stage; *heaven*, which represents *spirit*, and *earth*, which represents *energy*. These two constructs are again products of the previous stage. Through the interaction of *water* and *fire*, the single 'yin' line from the *fire* trigram and the single 'yang' line from the *water* trigram trade places, to produce the trigrams for *heaven* (three 'yang' lines) and *earth* (three 'yin' lines). That is to say, *heaven* and *earth* are the products of the interaction of *water* and *fire*. At this stage, the *spirit* is nurtured within *energy* and *heaven* enters *earth*. This is represented in Figure 2 by the double headed arrow between *heaven - spirit* and *earth - energy*. This is achieved through a supreme level of psychological stillness and clarity (靜 *jing*). This is also called 'bathing' or 'washing the thoughts', and is the culmination of the reversion from conceptual thought to essential nature spoken of throughout this analysis. The two constructs and related procedures are outlined below in the words of the text:

The discussion of this stage in the text of the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* is more metaphorical and abstruse than the prior stages, possibly because it is further from conceptual consciousness. *Heaven* is the result of replacing the 'yin' in *fire* with the 'yang' from *water*. It is a representation of *spirit*, but the *spirit* that is now no longer drawn outward by sense experience but is instead turned inward

and centered. It is most likely the same as the *original spirit* of theme 1, and thus seems to refer to the infinite within the practitioner.

Heaven - Spirit (乾 - 神 *qian - shen*) – Congeal spirit in the lair of energy, and you'll suddenly see white snow flying in midsummer, the sun blazing in the water at midnight. [8:1] The “sun” is the single yang in the center of *water* on the verge of blazing and returning to *heaven*. Herein lies [the operation of spiritual alchemy know as] “taking from *water* to fill in *fire*.” [8:31]

Earth is the result of replacing the ‘yang’ from *water* with the ‘yin’ from *fire*. This is a representation of *energy*, but again it is *energy* that has been transformed since the previous stage. How exactly the *energy* in this theme is different from the previous theme is not entirely clear based on the text alone and may again require experiential understanding and the guidance of a master to recognize.

Earth - Energy (坤 - 氣 *kun - qi*) – The “white snow” is the true yin within *fire* about to return to *earth*. [8:31] Yin and yang are essence and life, essence and life are body and mind, body and mind are spirit and energy.⁸ [11:3]

The procedure at this stage is essentially one of supreme mental quietude. There is no active work other than sitting in quietude and emptiness, *heaven* enters *earth* spontaneously of itself. The text warns that if this does not occur spontaneously (i.e., if deliberate attention is involved), then *heaven* and *earth* will not join properly and will after a time separate by themselves. For those familiar with the terms, the text makes allusion to the interaction of *fire* and *water* in theme 4 as being the ‘microcosmic orbit’ (小周天 *xiao zhoutian*) and the interaction of heaven and earth in this theme as being the ‘macrocosmic orbit’ (大周天 *da zhoutian*).⁹

Procedure – The coming and going is traceless, the floating and sinking are indiscernible. The channels are stilled, energy stops: this is true intercourse. [8:13] Once about to enter utter quiescence, not a single thought is born; when gazing inward, suddenly one forgets the gazing. At that time body and mind are in a state of great freedom, and all objects disappear without a trace. Then you don't even know where the furnace and cauldron in your spiritual room are; you can't even find your own body. This is the time when “heaven enters earth” and all wonders return to the root. This is solidifying the spirit in the lair of energy. [8:20] The secret within the secret cannot be dispensed with from start to finish. This is what is called cleaning the mind, washing the thoughts, which is “bathing.” [8:34] If you are actually able to join yin and yang in tranquility, the whole earth is positive and harmonious; in the right place in your central chamber, all things spontaneously expand to fulfillment. This is the method of “bathing” spoken of in alchemical classics. What is it if not the great cycle? [12:7] The alchemical process should

⁸ *Earth*, ‘yin’, *life*, *body*, and *energy* are related. Likewise, *heaven*, ‘yang’, *essence*, *mind*, and *spirit* are related.

⁹ For a more detailed discussion of *zhoutian* see Darga (2008).

ultimately become spontaneous. If it is not spontaneous, then heaven and earth will revert on their own to heaven and earth; myriad things will go back to myriad things: no matter how hard you try to join them, you cannot. [12:10]

Yin and yang are essence and life, essence and life are body and mind, body and mind are spirit and energy. Once you withdraw to rest your vital spirit and are not influenced by objects, then this is true intercourse, as of course when you sit in profound silence. [11:3] When mind is clean (靜 *jing*), that is elixir; when mind is empty, that is medicine. When it doesn't stick to anything at all, it is said that the mind is clean; when it doesn't keep anything in it, it is said that the mind is empty. If emptiness is seen as empty, emptiness is still not empty. When empty and mindless of emptiness, this is called true emptiness. [10:16] When you want to enter quietude (靜 *jing*), first tune and concentrate body and mind, so that they are free and peaceful. Let go of all objects, so that nothing whatsoever hangs on your mind, and the celestial mind takes its rightful place in the center. [8:8] When the light is turned around, the energies of heaven and earth, yin and yang, all congeal. [3:1]

Fundamental structural definition of 'turning the light around'

The practices discussed in the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* may be summarized as follows. The general practice of 'turning the light around' can be described in two themes. The goal of the first is to refine the *conscious spirit* into the *original spirit* and the *lower soul* into the *higher soul*, through a process of reversing the direction of attention from the external to the internal world. The second aspect of the general process of 'turning the light around' is described as a refining of the *light of consciousness* into the *light of essence*, again through the same process of reversal, a complete withdrawal of attention from the objects of conceptual consciousness. The *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* elaborates on this general process of 'turning the light around' by describing a stage-like progression consisting of three parts. The first stage is a clarification and stilling of mental processes through the technique of 'tuning the breath'. The second stage involves both a mental and energetic aspect and is represented by the metaphor of the interaction of *water* and *fire*. The third and final stage is achieved through the culmination of mental quietude and results in the incubation of the *spirit* in the *energy*, which is represented metaphorically by *heaven entering earth*.

Conclusion

This paper has presented preliminary definitions of the major constructs discussed in the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* as well as the relationships between them. The primary constructs can be organized into five themes and the relationships between these five themes has been discussed. Although this

should not be considered an absolute presentation of the major themes of the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi*, the above results should allow those unfamiliar with the text to clearly understand the primary procedures discussed in the text including the constructs involved. It should be clear from the current analysis that prior investigations of the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* by Western psychologists, such as Jung's commentary (Wilhelm & Jung, 1931/1962), have failed to consider all the important constructs discussed in the text and the relationships between them. It is certainly true, however, that this analysis also suffered from some limitations. While the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* tends to use clearer language in explaining the procedures captured in the present analysis, it still relies on metaphor at times and there are several constructs, such as the *water of vitality*, that may require experiential knowledge to truly understand them. It would therefore be edifying, in accordance with the suggestions of Cott and Rock (2009), to verify the results presented herein with the other primary source of Daoist material, the living Daoist tradition. Thus, interviews might be conducted with, for example, members of the *Longmen* school who practice the 'turning the light around' method, and this data could then be analyzed and compared with the results of the present study.

It may also be useful to conduct similar analyses to those conducted in the present study on other Daoist textual sources. This might allow for triangulation of results regarding constructs presented herein, such as the *hun* (*higher soul*) and *po* (*lower soul*), as well as adding new constructs not discussed in the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi*. A corpus of material could thereby be formed as a reference for psychologists wishing to understand a particular construct based on the qualitative analysis of Daoist textual sources.¹⁰ Other future studies relating to the present one might include more detailed phenomenological analyses of single constructs, such as the *light of essence* or the *original soul*, and comparisons of these results with the results of phenomenological analyses of constructs from other traditions, such as Buddhism or Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Quantitative studies of the effects of practices such as 'turning the light around' on mood, subjective well being, etc., may also be edifying. However, the authors would recommend these types of studies be conducted with the assistance of the living Daoist community, rather than based on textual sources alone.

The results of the present analysis should have revealed that there is potentially a great deal of material in Daoist sources that may be of interest to transpersonal psychologists. The overall goal of the practice or 'turning the light around' seems to be an integration, first of the parts of the self (e.g., *breath, mind, vitality, energy, spirit*), and ultimately of all duality, as represented by the polar opposites 'yin' and 'yang'. Thus, arguably the goal of the practice is to transcend the individual ego in the form of the *conscious spirit* and the *light of consciousness*, and move toward an identity with something that is infinite, i.e., the *original spirit*. Needless to say, this overall goal may be

¹⁰ The authors are not suggesting that this is the only way to understand Daoist constructs, it is merely one source of information that might be useful.

considered transpersonal in nature, and there are also numerous specific references to what might also be considered transpersonal experiences. For example, the identification of the self with the *original spirit*, which is said to be infinite, may represent a case of ‘survival of consciousness’ if the self is deemed to be conscious. Depending on the definition of ‘ego’, ‘forgetting conceptual consciousness’ may represent a movement away from ego and thus a ‘trans-egoic experience’. The ‘ungraspable sense of vast space, beyond measure’ mentioned at the end of theme 4 may also represent a transpersonal experience, i.e., a spatial expansion of consciousness. Any one of these could be examined in greater detail to learn more about the variety of transpersonal experiences, and there are not only thousands more texts like the *Taiyi Jinhua Zongzhi* but also thousands of living, practicing Daoists around the world. It is hoped that the present analysis will elicit greater interest in Daoism from transpersonal psychologists and lead to new and valuable research.

Figure 1. Turning the light around aspects 1 and 2.

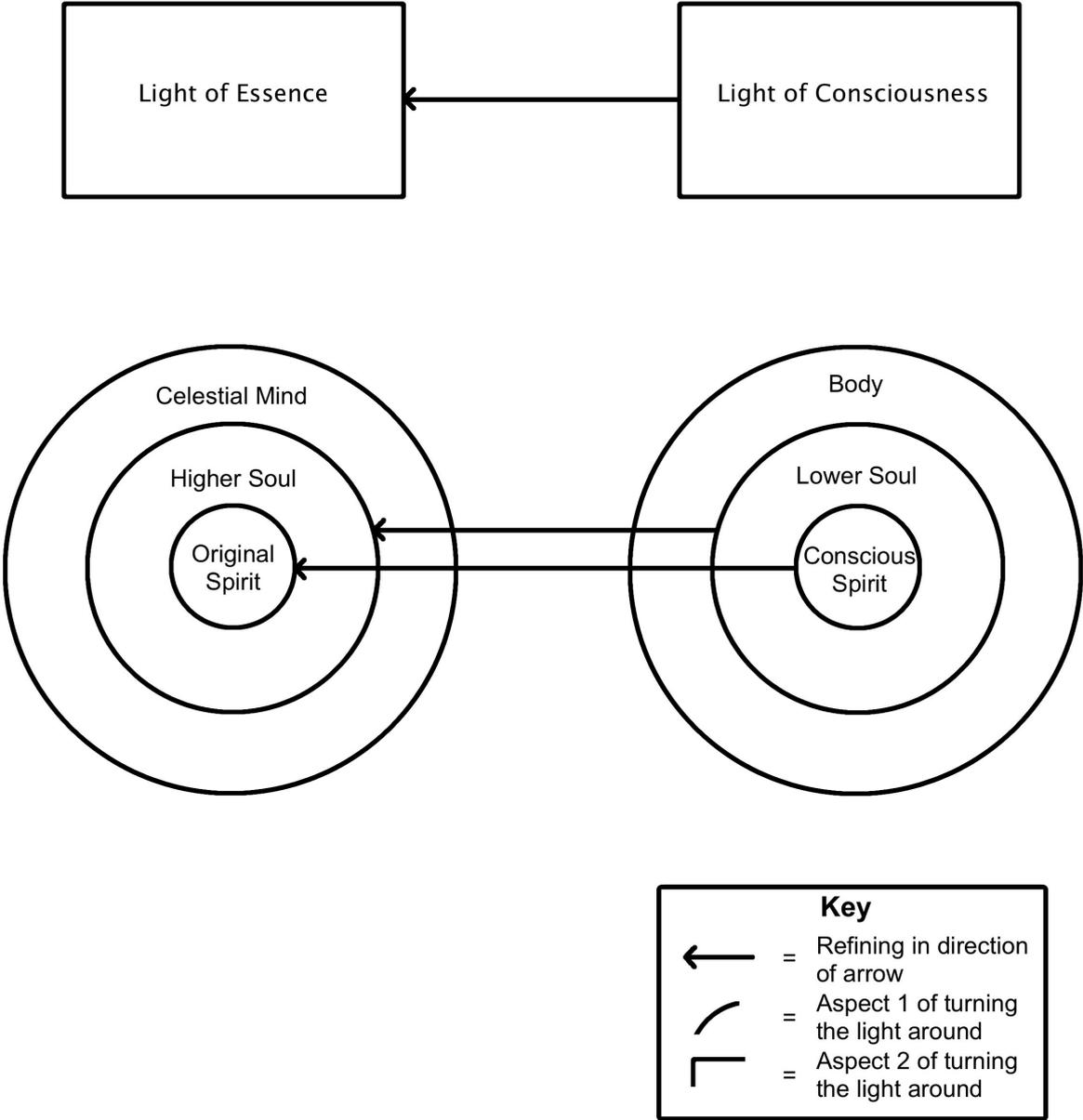
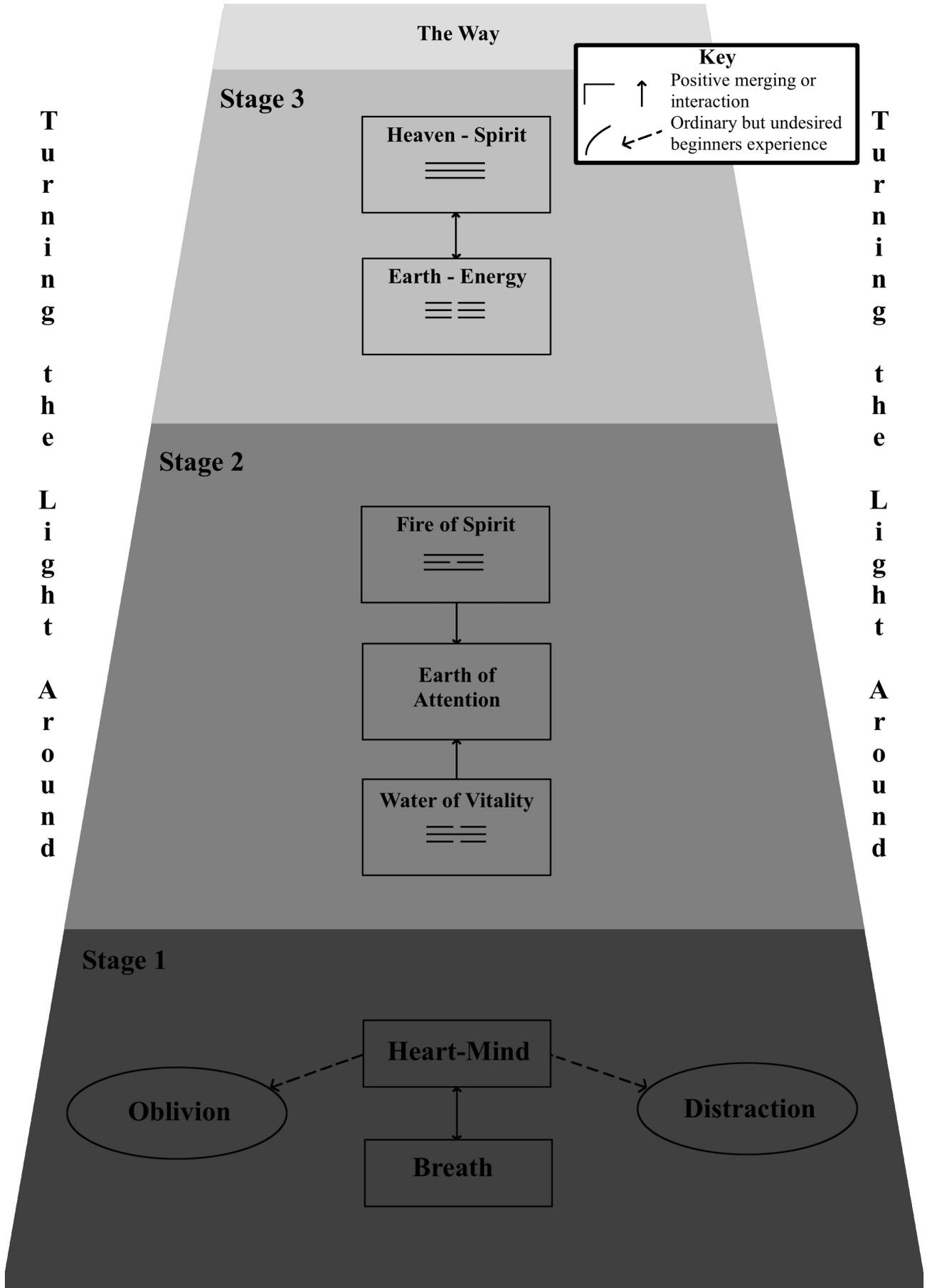


Figure 2. Procedures stages 1, 2, and 3.



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