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Terrifying Demons: A Tang-Dynasty Treatment for Demonic Infestation*

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Abstract

Epidemics were a constant threat to the well-being of people in medieval China. In response to the catastrophic threat of disease, medical practitioners adopted a variety of treatments, including ritual therapies. Such methods have a long history in China, as evidenced by the "magical recipes" that have been discovered among the early Mawangdui 馬王堆 medical manuscripts. In the Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–907) dynasties, the Imperial Medical Office (Taiyi shu 太醫署) established an official role with the title "Erudite of Exorcism" (*zhoujin boshi* 咒禁博士). Although it was a relatively minor position, the Erudite of Exorcism served as a master teacher of incantations of interdiction and was responsible for training Students of Exorcism (*zhoujin sheng* 咒禁生). According to historical records, a number of classical medical texts were studied by those medical students. However, owing to a dearth of extant sources, we know very little about what specialist subjects the Students of Exorcism learned and what incantations of interdiction the Erudite of Exorcism transmitted to their students. Fortunately, *The Book of Interdiction* (*Jin jing* 禁經), compiled by Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581–682), includes popular ritual

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therapies employed during the Sui-Tang period that allow a glimpse into this world. This paper will focus on ritual therapies found in *The Book of Interdiction* that were used to treat malaria-like diseases (*nüebing* 瘧病), one of the most common diseases during the Tang dynasty. By examining such therapies, we may gain a better understanding of how these ritual methods were thought to treat diseases, why they were considered effective by medieval Chinese people, and how they differed from other examples described in earlier manuscripts.

Keywords: incantation, ritual therapy, Erudite of Exorcism, Sun Simiao, malaria-like disease

I. Introduction

Diseases and epidemics, like wars, struck China's medieval society hard and often. Malaria-like diseases (*nüebing* 瘧病)[1] were one of the most common diseases and further caused some of the most severe epidemics in the Tang dynasty (618–907). To cure the diseases, different methods—medical and non-medical (ritual therapy)[2]—were utilized. This paper explores how "incantations of interdiction" (*jinzhou* 禁呪)[3] that were recorded in *The Book of Interdiction* (*Jinjing* 禁經) compiled by Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (541–682) were used to treat malaria-like diseases. As the name suggests, "incantations of interdiction" were ritual therapies to cure illnesses; the incantations were sometimes combined with auxiliary ritualistic techniques and exorcistic performative acts.

Through analyzing a series of incantations and accompanying performative acts for curing malaria-like diseases, I will demonstrate several things. First, I will establish who the recipients of "incantations of interdiction" were; the goal of the performance; and why "incantations of interdiction" were believed to cure diseases. Second, I will explore whether there is a structure within the incantations; how rigid that structure is; and how, by managing this structure and the language, incantations unleash great power. Finally, I will discuss how the accompanying exorcistic performative acts safeguard or even amplify the potency of "incantations of interdiction."

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1 I follow Michael Stanley-Baker's translation for this term. See Zhang Ruixian 張瑞賢, Wang Jiakui 王家葵 and Michael Stanley-Baker, "Clinical Medicine Texts: The Earliest Stone Medical Inscription," in Vivienne Lo and Penelope Barrett, eds., *Imagining Chinese Medicine* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 373–388.

2 I use the term "ritual therapy" to refer to both incantations and the accompanying performative acts. To make my argument clear, in the first section I will only discuss incantations and in the second section, I will focus on the exorcistic acts.

3 At the beginning of *The Book of Interdiction* (*Jinjing* 禁經), Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (541–682) claimed that the regular decoctions (*tangyao* 湯藥) alone could not cure all illnesses, and acupuncture and moxibustion (*zhenjiu* 針灸), incantations of interdiction (*jinzhou* 禁呪), talismans and seals (*fuyin* 符印), and guiding and pulling (*daoyin* 導引) were also effective life-saving methods. Sun Simiao 孫思邈, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi* 千金翼方校釋, ed., Li Jingrong 李景榮, et al. (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1998), *juan* 29, 440.

Many scholars have devoted themselves to the study of ritual therapy in medieval China, such as Michel Strickmann,[4] Donald Harper,[5] Fan Ka Wai 范家偉,[6] Lin Fu-shih 林富士,[7] Liao Yuqun 廖育群,[8] and Zhu Yingshi 朱瑛石.[9] Their studies have greatly contributed to our understanding of the complexity and diversity of therapies in medieval China. This paper considers a previously neglected aspect: it investigates the structure of incantations to explain why "incantations of interdiction" were considered powerful by patients, and why they were considered to be a therapeutic method in medieval China. In the first section of the paper, I will focus on incantations for treating malaria-like diseases, primarily examining five examples. Analyzing these incantations reveals a clear modular structure. Within this structure, constituent units connect validly and logically to maximize exorcistic power. However, some incantations are also accompanied by ritual performative acts. In the

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4 Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

5 Donald Harper, "The Celestial Brigand and Illness," in TJ Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes, eds., *Chinese Medicine and Healing: an Illustrated History*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 84–86; Harper, "Wang Yen-shou's Nightmare Poem," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 1 (1987): 239–283; Harper, "The 'Wu Shih Erh Ping Fang': Translation and Prolegomena" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1982); Harper, "A Chinese Demonography of the Third Century B.C.," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 1 (1987): 459–498; Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature: The Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 1998).

6 Fan Ka Wai 范家偉, *Zhonggu shiqi de yizhe yu bingzhe* 中古時期的醫者與病者 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2010); Fan, "Han Tang shiqi nüebing yu nüegui" 漢唐時期瘧病與瘧鬼, in Lin Fu-shih 林富士, ed., *Jibing de lishi* 疾病的歷史 (Taipei: Lianjing, 2011), 201–243; Fan, *Liuchao Sui Tang yixue zhi chuancheng yü zhenghe* 六朝隋唐醫學之傳承與整合 (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhongwen daxue chubanshe, 2004).

7 Lin Fu-shih 林富士, "Zhongguo liuchao shiqi de wuxi yu yiliao" 中國六朝時期的巫覡與醫療, in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 70 (1999): 1–48; Lin, "Chinese Shamans and Shamanism in the Chiang-nan area During the Six Dynasties Period (3rd–6th century A.D.)" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1994).

8 Liao Yuqun 廖育群, "Zhongguo gudai zhu zhoujin liaofa yanjiu" 中國古代祝咒禁療法研究, *Ziran kexue shi yanjiu* 自然科學史研究 12 (1993): 373–383.

9 Zhu Yingshi 朱瑛石, "Zhoujin boshi yuanliukao—Jianlun zongjiao dui Sui Tang xingzhengfa de yingxiang" 咒禁博士源流考——兼論宗教對隋唐行政法的影響, *Tang yanjiu* 唐研究 5 (1999): 147–160.

second section, I will shift my attention to these acts as part of the ritual therapy. I will explore how they delivered exorcistic power and why their inclusion brought "incantations of interdiction" to their most powerful.

II. The Developments of Ritual Therapy in the Sui and Tang Dynasties

To combat disease and reduce deaths, institutions of medical education were established, and their influence was greatly consolidated in the Sui (581–618) and Tang dynasties, for example, the Imperial Medical Office (*Taiyi shu* 太醫署), which in the Sui and Tang periods played a significant role in the enhancement of health care.[10] The Imperial Medical Office, overseen by the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (*Taichang si* 太常寺), was primarily an educational agency responsible for training medical students and creating medical recipes. In the office, four types of medical specialists were appointed: the Erudite of General Medicine (*yi boshi* 醫博士), Erudite of Acupuncture (*zhen boshi* 針博士), Erudite of Massage (*anmo boshi* 按摩博士), and Erudite of Exorcism (*zhoujin boshi* 呪禁博士).[11] These Medical Erudites served as teachers, training medical students in a specific body of knowledge.

[10] Li Jingwei 李經緯 and Lin Zhaogeng 林昭庚, *Zhongguo yixue tongshi* 中國醫學通史 (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 2000), 229.

[11] Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) et al., eds., *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981), *juan* 48, 1244–1245. Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) in *I Reprimand the Malaria Demon* (*Qian nüegui* 譴瘧鬼) writes: "The Master of Medicine mixes the hundred poisons; his fumigating and rinsing never stop. The Master of Acupuncture applies his moxa wicks, as cruel as hunting fires surrounding a beast. The Master of Exorcism has a poison mouth and fangs; his tongue flies along as fast as lightning. The Master of Talismans plays with his knife and brush; cinnabar and ink splatter this way and that" 醫師加百毒，熏灌無停機。灸師施艾炷，酷若獵火圍。詛師毒口牙，舌作霹靂飛。符師弄刀筆，丹墨交橫揮. Han Yu's depiction is a little dramatic, yet it vividly depicts how different healers tackled malaria-like diseases by different means. Qu Shouyuan 屈守元 and Chang Sichun 常思春, *Han Yu Quanji jiaozhu* 韓愈全集校註 (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 1996), 200. The translation is based on Jerry D. Schmidt's translation. See Jerry D. Schmidt, "Han Yu and His Ku-shih Poetry" (M.A. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1967), 109.

It is also worth noting that the Way of Exorcism (*Jugondō* 呪禁道) was introduced to Japan in the sixth century from Korea[12] and was performed at the Bureau of Medicine (*Ten yakuryō* 典薬寮) by specialists known as Masters of Exorcism (*jugonji* 呪禁師), while the term Erudite of Exorcism (*jugon hakase* 呪禁博士) appears in *The Chronicles of Japan* (*Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀) for the first time in 691.[13] However, after the Bureau of Yin-Yang Affairs (*Onmyōryō* 陰陽寮), which was founded by Emperor Tenmu 天武 (r. 672–686), became firmly established,[14] the Way of Exorcism then gradually disappeared from Japanese state agencies.[15] Even so, the medical system developed during the Sui-Tang period, in which protective rituals and exorcisms were utilized, clearly had a far-reaching impact on neighboring cultures.

The evaluation process for medical students seeking admission to their profession was identical to that of other academic schools during this time; all were influenced by the Imperial Examination. The general process of the admission went like this: the Erudites would give students monthly tests, while the Imperial Physicians would administer tests every three months, and an official of a higher rank, the Aide to the Chamberlain for Ceremonials (Taichang cheng 太常丞), would test students at the end of the year. The selection was strict. According to the *Six Statutes of the Tang Dynasty* (*Tang liudian* 唐六典), "the students who could not complete their studies within nine years would be told to return to their original professions" 其在學九年無成者，退從本色.[16] It suggests that failure to pass all tests meant dismissal.

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[12] Toneri Shinnō, *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀 (Tōkyō: Keizai Zasshisha, 1917), *juan* 20, 418.

[13] Toneri Shinnō, *Nihon Shoki, juan* 30, 667.

[14] Herman Ooms, "Framing Daoist Fragments, 670–750," in Jeffrey L. Richey, ed., *Daoism in Japan: Chinese Traditions and Their Influence on Japanese Religious Culture* (London: Routledge, 2015), 40.

[15] Athanasios Drakakis, "Onmyōdō and Esoteric Buddhism," in Charles D. Orzech and Henrik H. Sørensen, eds., *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 686. See also Ooms, "Framing Daoist Fragments, 670–750," 53.

[16] Li Linfu 李林甫, et al., eds., *Tang liudian* 唐六典 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), *juan* 14, 409.

In addition, newly discovered legal documents such as the "Ordinances on Curing Illnesses" (Yiji ling 醫疾令) issued in the Tiansheng 天聖 reign period (1023–1032), preserve some eighth-century Tang ordinances on imperial medical practices that can offer more clues. It states:

> Regarding the various students in Medicine, Acupuncture, Therapeutic Exercise, and Incantation, [the department] first selects those whose families transmit the study [of that specialty] to them, then selects commoners who engage in learning the techniques [of that specialty].
>
> 諸醫生、鍼生、按摩生、咒禁生，先取家傳其業，次取庶人攻習其術者為之.[17]

The Imperial Medical Office would give priority to students who had already received specialized training from their families. In other words, the office preferred student physicians who were already partly or fully trained.

The ordinance might have been based on two reasonable considerations. Firstly, students who had foundational medical knowledge had more potential to become qualified physicians through professional training. By picking them out at an earlier stage, the Imperial Medical Office could save resources that could be used for training more students, which to a certain extent suggests a fierce competition among students. Secondly, in ancient and medieval China, medical texts were usually transmitted secretly, and the profession of "physician" was to a large extent an inherited one. As Nathan Sivin has noted, medicine was an "adaption of the hereditary family's transmission of a patrimony."[18] Long traditions of practice were considered to be a guarantee of effectiveness. Those students

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[17] Tianyi ge bowuguan 天一閣博物館 and Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan lishi yanjiu suo 中國社會科學院歷史研究所, eds., *Tianyige cang Mingchaoben Tiansheng ling jiaozheng* 天一閣藏明鈔本天聖令校證 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), vol. 2, 577. For further discussions, see Yan Liu, "Words, Demons and Illness: Incantatory Healing in Medieval China," *Asian Medicine* 14 (2019): 7.

[18] Nathan Sivin, "Text and Experience in Classical Chinese Medicine," in Don Bates, ed., *Knowledge and the Scholarly Medical Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 200.

who came from medical families had their own medical repository which enabled them to contribute to broadening the transmission of medical knowledge and expanding the imperial library. In this way, the selection process could be co-opted to benefit the Tang court in compiling more comprehensive medical collections.[19]

Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of the Imperial Medical Office was to select the best physicians. Since 629, every prefecture had its own Erudites and medical students who were responsible for the health of the prefecture's populace.[20] The therapies taught by the Erudites of the prefecture were identical to those taught by the Imperial Medical Office.

Their curriculum included classical medical works, such as *The Pulse Classic* (*Maijing* 脈經), and *The A-B Classic of Acupuncture and Moxibustion* (*Jiayi jing* 甲乙經), among others.[21] Besides these works, however, questions remain regarding what else was taught to students who specialized in ritual therapies, for example, students of exorcism. What kinds of techniques were transmitted to them? Unfortunately, official documents gives scant answers. The Erudite of Exorcism was simply described as "one who is in charge of teaching the students how to use incantations to eradicate demons that caused epidemics" 掌教呪禁生以呪禁祓除邪魅之為厲者.[22]

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[19] Victor Xiong, "Sun Simiao," in TJ Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes, eds., *Chinese Medicine and Healing* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 89–90.

[20] Ouyang, *Xin Tangshu*, *juan* 49, 1314.

[21] According to *Tang liudian*, "all Students of General Medicine, and Students of Acupuncture would read *the Pharmacopoeia* that made students recognize the shapes of herbs and know the natures of herbs; they would read *the Illuminated Hall* that made students know the pits by checking the chart; they would read *the Secret Instructions on the Pulse* and diagnose ailments by taking the pulse in turn, which made them know the patterns of the floating, the sinking, the unsmooth, and the slippery of the pulse of four seasons; they would read *the Plain Questions*, *the Classic of Yellow Emperor's Needling*, and *the A-B Classic of the Pulse*, which made them excel in these classics" 諸醫、針生讀《本草》者，即令識藥形，而知藥性；讀《明堂》者，即令驗圖，識其孔穴；讀《脈訣》者，即令遞相診候，使知四時浮、沉、澀、滑之狀；讀《素問》、《黃帝針經》、《甲乙脈經》皆使精熟. Li, *Tang liudian*, *juan* 410.

[22] Ibid., *juan* 14, 411.

In this context, the Chinese character 厲 *(li)* means epidemics.[23] It seems that in the Tang dynasty, the primary function of the incantations (*zhou* 呪 [咒]) was to drive away demons that brought about widespread contagion.

However, excavated evidence shows that the function of incantations was not limited to targeting "demons that caused epidemics." Many iatromantic writings of the Tang dynasty were discovered in Dunhuang 敦煌. Iatromancy (*busui* 卜祟) was a method of divination and related techniques used to diagnose and treat illnesses. This method aimed to identify the demons that caused the ailments and expel them through sacrifices, incantations, talismans, and other exorcistic rituals.[24] As such, it is seen that incantations could be used to deal with all sorts of disease demons. The adoption of rituals to exorcise demons has a long history in China and can be traced back to the expulsion ceremony known as the Great Exorcism (*danuo* 大儺) in the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE). Since only limited information can be obtained from official documents about what incantations circulated and how exorcistic performative acts were conducted in the medieval period, it is fortunate that *The Book of Interdiction* gives us a glimpse into this enigmatic world.

III. Ritual Therapies for Curing Malaria-Like Diseases

The Book of Interdiction is the oldest known collection of ritual therapies from the Six Dynasties (3rd–6th century) and Sui-Tang period. It forms part of *The Supplement to the Essential Prescriptions Worth a Thousand Gold* (*Qianjin yifang* 千金翼方) that was compiled by Sun Simiao in around 690.[25] Historical records show

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[23] TJ Hinrichs, "The Catchy Epidemics: Theorization and Its Limits in Han to Song Period Medicine," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 41 (2015): 34.

[24] Harper, "The Celestial Brigand and Illness," 83.

[25] Nathan Sivin contends that *The Essential Prescriptions Worth a Thousand Gold* (*Qianjin yaofang* 千金要方) was compiled between 650 and 659. The opinion that the interval between Sun Simiao's two major medical works, *Qianjin yaofang* and *Qianjin yifang*, was thirty years, which Sivin contests, is based on Ye Mengde's 葉夢得 (1077–1148) statement in *Remarks from a Summer Retreat*

that Sun was active mainly in the Guanzhong 關中 area, and maintained close ties to the Tang court in the dynasty.[26] The therapies included in *The Book of Interdiction,* to a large extent, reflect representative features of ritual therapies that circulated in the central area; Sun claimed that the ritual therapies he collected were from ordinary people. *The Book of Interdiction* comprises some one hundred and fifty recipes for sixteen disordered conditions.[27] This paper will mainly focus on ritual therapies for curing malaria-like diseases, which were one of the most common diseases in the Tang dynasty.[28]

Malaria-like diseases were called *nüebing* in medieval China. *Nüe* 虐 first appeared in oracle bone inscriptions, and with it usually comes other characters meaning either natural disasters or ailments, for instance, "malaria-like disease of virulent magical infection" (*gunüe* 蠱虐).[29] According to *Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters* (*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字), *nüe* (is a disease where) "fever and chill cease and recur" 熱寒休作病.[30] *The Jade Thesaurus* (*Yupian* 玉篇) of the sixth century CE also states, "(it is a disease that causes the patient) alternating chill and fever" 或寒或熱病.[31] From these explanations we can see that from the very beginning, *nüe* has been associated with disease. Descriptions of *nüe* from early China resemble the cardinal symptoms of malaria in the

(*Bishu luhua* 避暑錄話). See Nathan Sivin, *Chinese Alchemy: Preliminary Studies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 139.

[26] Xiong, "Sun Simiao," 87.

[27] Liu, "Words, Demons and Illness," 11–12.

[28] Upon careful examination of diseases mentioned in "Xin Pusa jing" 新菩薩經 and "Quan shan jing" 勸善經 preserved in Dunhuang, Yu Gengzhe 于賡哲 assumes that malaria-like diseases were one of the severe diseases which put ordinary people's lives at risk in the Tang dynasty and Five Dynasties (907–960). See Yu Gengzhe, "Xin Pusa jing Quan shan jing beihou de jibing konghuang" 新菩薩經勸善經背後的疾病恐慌, *Nankai xuebao* 南開學報 5 (2006): 68.

[29] Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, *Qiu Xigui xueshu wenji* 裘錫圭學術文集 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2015), vol. 1, 82.

[30] Ding Fubao 丁福保, ed., *Shuowen jiezi gulin* 說文解字詁林 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), vol. 8, 7639.

[31] Gu Yewang 顧野王 and Chen Pengnian 陳彭年, eds., *Songben Yupian* 宋本玉篇 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1983), 218.

present day. However, as Marta Hanson has suggested, "imposing biomedical conceptions of disease onto the past—and even onto unfamiliar cultural contexts of the present—precludes understanding the historical and culturally shaped individual experience of disease as well as contemporary medical responses to them."[32] Therefore I translate the term as 'malaria-like diseases.' Unlike common ailments such as *jiaoqi* 腳氣, which is regarded as a disease specific to certain groups or regions of people, malaria-like diseases affected all segments of the population.

One well-known example of a *nüe* affliction is the case of Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770), a highly acclaimed poet in the Tang dynasty who contracted *nüeji* 瘧疾, an alternative name for *nüebing*. He wrote about his ailment in his poems, such as this example: "… After three years I still suffer from malaria / that one demon will not vanish away. Every other day, it seeks out my fat and marrow / adding to the chill, it wraps me in frost and snow"[33] Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779–831) was another renowned Tang poet who contracted a malaria-like disease. In the tenth year of the Yuanhe 元和 reign period (815), Yuan was demoted by the emperor to Tongzhou 通州.[34] He contracted a malaria-like disease there which almost killed him. In a letter written to his friend, Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), Yuan spoke of the dreadful circumstances in Tongzhou: "In autumn, the dysentery and malaria-like diseases [predominate]. This region has neither doctors nor ritual specialists. Medicines and minerals are thousands of miles away. Patients all worry because only one could survive out of a hundred people" 秋為痢瘧，地無醫巫，藥石萬里，病

[32] Marta E. Hanson, *Speaking of Epidemics in Chinese Medicine: Disease and the Geographic Imagination in Late Imperial China* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011), 7.

[33] See Du Fu, "Ji Pengzhou Gao Sanshiwu Shijun Shi Guozhou Cen Ershiqi Zhangshi Shen sanshi yun" 寄彭州高三十五使君適虢州岑二十七長史參三十韻, in Peng Dingqiu 彭定求, ed., *Quan Tangshi* 全唐詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), *juan* 225, 2427. The translation is based on that of Stephen Owen. See Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of Du Fu* (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), vol. 8, 203.

[34] Bian Xiaoxuan 卞孝萱, *Yuan Zhen nianpu* 元稹年譜 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1980), 251–252.

者有百死一生之慮.[35] Tongzhou typically refers to the eastern side of modern Sichuan 四川 province, close to Shaanxi 陝西 province.[36] This is a mountainous and marshy region of northern China, where it was believed that noxious miasmas (*zhang* 瘴) was one of the causes of the malaria-like diseases there. But the malaria-like diseases caused by the miasmas of the far south, the Lingnan 嶺南 area, were even more frightful.[37] In other words, malaria-like diseases were not restricted to specific regions but were widespread across medieval China.

To alleviate sufferings from this common affliction, medieval medical texts provided various treatments. *The Recipes at the Heart of Medicine* (*Ishinpō* 醫心方) includes many of them, such as drinking fermented soybean soup or lotus seed powders with wine.[38] Besides that, in the world-renowned "medical recipes cave" of the Longmen caves (Yaofang dong 藥方洞), a medical formula engraved on the stone wall around the sixth century suggests inhaling vapors of swallow dung mixed with wine to cure malaria-like diseases.[39] However, these are recipes only for curing "common" malaria-like diseases. *The Recipes at the Heart of Medicine* also included a category of recipes named "malaria-like diseases caused by demons" (*guinüe* 鬼瘧).[40] Most of the therapies under this category are ritual therapies,[41] and yet, to medieval Chinese people, medical therapy and ritual therapy were not necessarily seen as incompatible.

It is possible that *guinüe* became attributed to a form of demonic harassment because of the apparently random pattern of

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[35] Yuan Zhen, "Xushi ji Letian shu" 敘詩寄樂天書, in *Quan Tangwen* 全唐文, ed. Dong Gao 董誥 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), *juan* 653, 6635.

[36] Tan Qixiang 譚其驤, comp., *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* 中國歷史地圖集 (Beijing: Zhongguo ditu chubanshe, 1996), vol. 5, 52–53.

[37] Hanson, *Speaking of Epidemics in Chinese Medicine*, 70.

[38] Tamba Yasuyori 丹波康賴 (912–995), comp., *Ishinpō* 醫心方 (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 1996), 294–295.

[39] Zhang, Wang, and Stanley-Baker, "Clinical Medicine Texts," 374.

[40] Tamba, *Ishinpō*, 295.

[41] Unschuld holds that "medical and non-medical traditions of health care may appear irreconcilable in terms of their underlying worldviews. In everyday clinical reality, though, there are many overlapping." Paul U. Unschuld, "Chinese Retributive Recipes on the Ethics of Public and Secret Health Care Knowledge," *Monumenta Serica* 52 (2004): 326.

infections across the population.[42] But the belief that sicknesses could be ascribed to evil spirits or demons was strongly anchored in the Chinese mentality. The evil spirits were related to the aggrieved souls (*yuanhun* 冤魂) and the sepulchral plaint (*zhongsong* 塚訟).[43] Examples can be found in many early Daoist scriptures, such as the *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhen'gao* 真誥).[44] The demons were related to disease demons, for example, the malaria demon. Although today treatments have changed, the notion that demons are to be blamed for sickness is deeply ingrained. Terms like "demon of disease" (*bingmo* 病魔) are still frequently used in modern China. To understand ritual therapies for curing illnesses caused by demons, we may first look at records in *The Book of Interdiction,* for example, therapies for curing malaria-like diseases.

(a) Incantations for Curing Malaria-Like Diseases

The Book of Interdiction contains eleven therapies for curing malaria-like diseases. These can be categorized into three types: incantation-only, exorcistic performative act-only, and the two paired together. Below is the first incantation under the categorization of "Malaria-Like Diseases of Interdiction" (*Jin nüebing* 禁瘧病).

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[42] Li Jianmin 李建民, "They Shall Expel Demons: Etiology, the Medical Canon and the Transformation of Medical Techniques Before the Tang," in John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski, eds., *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 1107.

[43] Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 130. I follow Peter Nickerson's translation of *zhongsong*; see Peter Nickerson, "The Great Petition for Sepulchral Plaints," in Stephen R. Bokenkamp, ed., *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 231.

[44] Xu Mi's 許謐 (305–376) uncle, Xu Chao 許朝, murdered two men. These two men brought a complaint before the magistrates of the underworld. This infernal lawsuit caused sickness in a member of Xu family. *Zhen'gao* reads "Xu Chao violently murdered Zhang Huanzhi of the Merit Bureau of Xinye Commandery. He also unjustly killed Qiu Longma. These men have both been waiting for an opportunity and recently have placed an accusation before the Water Official [the most feared of the Three Offices of the underworld]. The Water Official has compelled Xu Dou [i.e., Tao Kedou] to return to her tomb, there to keep watch for a child in her household who is due to weaken" 許朝者，暴殺新野郡功曹張煥之，又枉煞求龍馬。此人皆看尋際會，比告訴水官。水官逼許斗，使還其丘墳，伺察家門當衰之子. "Zhen'gao" 真誥, DZ 1016, 7.6a–6b. The translation is cited from Nickerson, "The Great Petition for Sepulchral Plaints," 236–237.

Version I: Dragon Version

> Climb up the mountain and gaze afar to the sea, where within the water, there is a dragon that has three heads and nine tails. It does not eat anything but only eats malaria demons. It eats three thousand [demons] at dawn and eight hundred at dusk. If it does not eat enough [malaria demons], it will dispatch servants to catch [more]. Once the talismanic medicines enter the five viscera, the malaria demons should conceal their traces. [The demons that] do not submit and depart will be tied up and sent to the Lord of the River. Quickly, quickly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances.
>
> 登高山，望海水，水中有一龍，三頭九尾，不食諸物，惟食瘧鬼。朝食三千，暮食八百，食之不足，差使來索。符藥入五臟，瘧鬼須屏跡，不伏去者縛送與河伯。急急如律令。[45]

"Climb up the mountain and gaze afar to the sea" 登高山，望海水, on the one hand, shows where the dragon resides; it is secluded and far away from the human living world. On the other hand, it depicts a journey of searching. Standing on the peak as a vantage point gives "the incanter" a broad view that overlooks the sea. According to *Ancient Rules of the Former Han* (*Han jiuyi* 漢舊儀), a collection of administrative regulations of the Former Han (206 BCE–8 CE), compiled by Wei Hong 衛宏 (fl. 25–57), the malaria demon was the son of Zhuan Xu 顓頊, a legendary king who lived in the river.[46] Zhuan Xu was said to govern the north, the direction of which represents the water.[47] This may explain why the incanter is meant to gaze upon the sea.

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[45] Sun, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi*, *juan* 29, 449.

[46] "Zhuan Xu had three sons. [As soon as] they were born, they died. [They] left and then became demons of pestilences. One [of them who] resided in the river was the malaria demon" 顓頊氏有三子，生而亡去為疫鬼。一居江水，是為虐鬼. See Fan Ye 范曄 (398–445), et al., eds., *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981), *juan* 30, 3127.

[47] "The North means water. The god of it is Zhuan Xu. His assistant is Xuan Ming. He holds the power and governs winter" 北方，水也，其帝顓頊，其佐玄冥，執權而治冬. For the translation, see John Major and Sara Queen, trans., *The Huainanzi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 118–119.

Interestingly, the "real" power to battle the malaria demons appears not to come from the incanter directly; instead, the incanter searches for some spiritual force powerful enough to control the river-bound malaria demons. Different from other phrases in the incantation, which are mostly tetrasyllabic or pentasyllabic, this beginning phrase is trisyllabic. This form can be traced back to Han demon curses[48] and similar examples can be found in some Han rhapsodies (*fu* 賦) in which trisyllabic incantatory maledictions are embedded.[49]

Donald Harper suggests that exorcistic rituals are usually associated with hunting magic, such as using jujube arrows and peach-wood bows as exorcistic weapons.[50] This incantation does not mention hunting symbols explicitly, but the searching motif of the opening phrase may suggest a hunt. For example, if we compare it to the hunting scene depicted in Yang Xiong's 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE) famous rhapsody, "Plume Hunt Rhapsody" (*Yulie fu* 羽獵賦), the similarity is evident: "lightly leaping, proudly prancing, they enter the western park, near Divine Radiance, gaze upon Peaceful Joy. Cross bamboo groves, trample basil gardens, tread thoroughwort dikes" 秋秋蹌蹌，入西園，切神光，望平樂，徑竹林，蹂惠圃，踐蘭唐.[51] In a trisyllabic phrase, a verb of motion or action is followed by a place name.[52]

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[48] The form of trisyllabic phrases can be traced back to Warring States rhetoric and to *Chuci* 楚辭, but since this paper focuses on incantations, I will only discuss Han demon curses.

[49] Donald Harper argues that the incantatory traditions influenced the composition of Han rhapsody. He has a detailed discussion on the incantatory nature of Wang Yanshou's 王延壽 (140–165) "Dream Rhapsody" (Meng fu 夢賦). See Harper, "Wang Yen-shou's Nightmare Poem," 254.

[50] Harper, "The 'Wu Shih Erh Ping Fang': Translation and Prolegomena," 73.

[51] David R. Knechtges, *Wenxuan or Selections of Refined Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), vol. 2, 123.

[52] In addition, in his study on how talismans were used by specialists to combat against epidemics, Ch'en Hsiang-ch'un shared an example for curing malaria-like diseases. The talisman should be written on a cake (*gao* 糕) instead of on paper, the usual carrier of talismans in medieval China. Ch'en speculates the reason for writing the talisman on a cake is that *gao* is a homophone of height (*gao* 高) and it indicates that, if one climbs higher, then the malaria demon can no longer attack him. See Ch'en Hsiang-ch'un, "Examples of Charm against Epidemics with Short Explanations," *Folklore Studies* 1 (1942): 41. This is

In the next phrase, a dragon with three heads and nine tails appears in the water. Obviously, it is not a "common" dragon. The dragon is reminiscent of mythical figures recorded in the ancient text *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (*Shanhai jing* 山海經). According to Anne Birrell, many animals described within this classic text serve as omens of the catastrophes that threaten the human world.[53] In this case, the dragon seems not to be a prediction of a disaster to human beings but is instead an agent that brings disasters to malaria demons.

Like the creatures in *Classic of Mountains and Seas,* the dragon has an unusual appearance and mystical nature imbued with magical powers. The numbers "three" and "nine" deserve our attention. First, they are both odd numbers, implying that the dragon embodies mighty *yang* power. Since demons generally represent *yin*, the opposing power in the dragon is necessary to contend against them. In addition, the number "three" can also reference the three realms (*sancai* 三才), designating three fundamental powers of the universe—Heaven, Earth, and Humanity.[54] Nine is a key cosmological number that can stand for the Nine Palaces (*jiugong* 九宮) of the cosmos, referring to the nine heavens, nine mountains, nine rivers, and so

another possible interpretation. Mountain climbing as a method to avoid evil fortune has a long tradition in China, and it has been an important custom of the Double Ninth Festival (*Chongyang jie* 重陽節). *Festivals and Seasonal Customs of the Jing-Chu Region*, compiled in the sixth century, recorded an anecdote pertaining to the Double Ninth Festival. It states that as soon as Fei Changfang 費長房, a prestigious Master of Methods (*fangshi* 方士) of the Eastern Han, realized that his disciple Huan Jing 桓景 would suffer a calamity on the ninth day of the ninth month, he suggested to him that he escape from his house, by saying that "ask your families to make small bags immediately and fill these bags with dogwood and attach them to your arms. Then, climb up the mountain and drink chrysanthemum liquor. [By doing so], the calamity can be eliminated" 急令家人縫囊，盛茱萸系臂上，登山飲菊花酒，此禍可消. Following Fei's advice, Huan guided his family to the mountain, and upon their return found that all his livestock had suffered a sudden death. See Zong Lin 宗懍, *Jingchu suishi ji* 荊楚歲時記 (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1987), 60.

[53] Anne Birrell, trans. and ed., *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 35.

[54] Livia Kohn, "Three Ones; Three-in-One," in Fabrizio Pregadio, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Taoism* (London: Routledge, 2008), 854.

forth.[55] The dragon with three heads and nine tails seems to stand for some superior celestial power beyond the human realm. Furthermore, the number "nine" also represents metal,[56] a material associated with weapon making, so it also carries a violent and military sense.

This dragon "does not eat anything" 不食諸物.[57] In other incantations, the equivalent phrase is "does not eat the five grains" 不食五穀. In terms of meaning, the two phrases do not diverge significantly—both emphasize that the creatures summoned to drive the malaria demons away do not consume earthly foodstuffs. *Wu* 物 here seems not only to refer to common foodstuffs but to have a special implication. According to *Discourses of Zhou* (*Zhouyu* 周語) *in Discourses of the States* (Guoyu 國語), the phrase *dawu* 大物 designates the sacrificial vessels. Therefore, what the dragon does not eat presumably refers in particular to the foods in the vessels. In that sense, the dragon to a certain extent is portrayed as superior to "common" gods who demand agricultural products as sacrifices.

The term "five grains" usually implies the ordinary foodstuffs meant for ordinary beings. In Daoist tradition, transcendence-quest adepts should avoid the five grains. Robert Campany argues that avoiding grains is not only to oppose grains, but also to oppose all the cultural values and institutions to which grains were attached.[58] For this reason, transcendence-quest adepts avoid grains and instead rely on the ingestion of *qi* for sustenance.[59] In this incantation, the

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[55] Li Ling 李零, *Zhongguo fangshu xukao* 中國方術續考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2016), 70.

[56] Howard L. Goodman, *Ts'ao P'i Transcendent* (London: Routledge, 2016), 25.

[57] *Discourses of Zhou* (*Zhouyu* 周語) states, "when kings, dukes, and feudal lords set up a banquet it was in order to discuss affairs (of state) and perfect their eminence. It was to establish great virtue and to display grand ritual vessels" 夫王公諸侯之有飫也，將以講事成章，建大德，昭大物也. See Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, *Guoyu* 國語 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), vol. 2, 63. For the translation, see Roel Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, and Sagehood in Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 35.

[58] Robert Ford Campany, *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 86.

[59] Following the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, Campany recounts the hierarchy based on what to eat (from low to high): flesh-grains-*qi*-nothing. Related explanations can be found in Campany, *Making Transcendents*, 84–87. However, in the case of the incantations cited in this paper, there is seemingly a third category of beings, not belonging to heaven or to earth. A piece of supporting evidence can also be found

dragon is not an ordinary creature, as it does not require agricultural products; to some extent, it is elevated to a loftier position, belonging to a third category existing between heaven and earth. But since it still eats "things"—demons—it is inferior to transcendence-quest adepts. Given the dragon's status, this incantation is thought to summon the dragon for someone possessing the appropriate power and authority to command it.

Moreover, the dragon is described as having a gigantic appetite, which seems hardly possible to satisfy; at dawn, it eats three thousand malaria demons, and at dusk, eight hundred. This same line frequently appears in other incantations, which I will discuss below. As part of the ritual treatment, talismanic medicines are utilized, and as soon as the talismanic medicines enter the patient's five viscera, the malaria demons must depart from the sufferer. The ultimatum is clear: if the demons insist on harassing the patient, they will be tied up and sent to the Lord of the River.

Finally, the incantation concludes with the phrase "in accordance with the statutes and ordinances" 如律令. This is a standard phrase originally written at the end of Han official documents when superior officials wrote to their subordinates.[60] It is also often found in Han-dynasty tomb texts used for ordering the dead to stay away from the living.[61] One of the earliest examples of applying this phrase in exorcism is the Daoist scripture, *The Demon Statutes of Lady Blue* (*Nüqing guilü* 女青鬼律) dating from the third century.[62]

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in the *Demon Statutes of Lady Blue* (*Nüqing guilü* 女青鬼律), dated to the third century. It reads "The Demon of Three Elders of the Southern Village, whose secular name is the Demon of the Five Paths, whose surname is Che, and whose name is Ni, in charge of dead people's records and registers. He examines and calculates living people's faults. … This demon is a celestial killer who only handles documents. Above he is not in contact with heaven; below he is not in contact with earth" 南鄉三老鬼，俗五道鬼，姓車名匿，主諸死人録籍，考計生人罪……此鬼天煞，唯聞文書，上不著天，下不著地. "Nüqing guilü" 女青鬼律, DZ 790, 1.1b–2a. The translation is based on the communication with Gil Raz.

60 Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 and Wang Guowei 王國維, *Liusha zhuijian* 流沙墜簡 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), 107.

61 Amy Lynn Miller, "Promptly, Promptly, in Accordance with the Statutes and Ordinances," in Fabrizio Pregadio, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 549.

62 Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), vol. 1, 127. In *The Demon Statues of Lady Blue*, besides "statute and ordinance" (*lüling* 律令), an "edict" (*zhaoshu* 詔書) was also issued through the Mystic Capital 玄都. As Terry Kleeman argues, these

The use of this phrase in the incantation is important. As previously discussed, the incanter seems to have no direct power to exorcise demons without summoning the dragon. Then, how could an "impotent" incanter take control of a mystic creature? I assume that this concluding phrase plays a pivotal role in empowering the incanter. As Pierre Bourdieu said, "the power of words resides in the fact that they are not pronounced on behalf of the person who is only the 'carrier' of these words: the authorized spokesperson is only able to use words to act on other agents and through their action, on things themselves, because his speech concentrates within it the accumulated symbolic capital of the group which has delegated him and of which he is the authorized representative."[63] The "real" power thus originates from the authority bestowed upon the person who recites the incantation.

Seen in this light, the concluding formula is essential because it lends authority to the incanter by associating him with an authorizing celestial agency to add efficacy to the incantation. In other words, when the incanter speaks this phrase, he is no longer an incanter of the mundane world but instead a spokesman of divine power. Furthermore, connecting the incanter to the divine power is not peculiar to Chinese incantations. In Jewish magical incantations, the formula includes the term *be-šem,* meaning "in the name of," followed by a divine name.[64] In addition to lending the incanter power, this display of authority might also contribute to a placebo effect on the patient.

Version II: Dog Version

An examination of the incantations for curing malaria-like diseases in *The Book of Interdiction* demonstrates that a modular structure

terms were often used interchangeably in this scripture, and these statutes and edicts deal with how to control demons. See Terry F. Kleeman, *Celestial Masters: History and Ritual in Early Daoist Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016), 147.

63 Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 109–111.

64 Michael D. Swartz, "Scribal Magic and Its Rhetoric: Formal Patterns in Medieval Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah," *The Harvard Theological Review* 2 (1990): 172.

emerges in which each incantation generally follows a similar pattern. The dragon incantation discussed above is the first incantation listed under "Malaria-like Diseases of Interdiction." I have explained the text line-by-line so that it may readily serve as an example of the module. The dragon version contains all of the structural elements seen in the module, which consists of six constituent units labelled A to F in Table 1:

Table 1: The Modular Structure of Incantations for Curing Malaria-like Diseases

A. opening phrase	climbs up the mountain; gazes afar to the sea
B. disclosure of the devourer's identity	avoids ordinary foodstuffs; only eats disease demons
C. description of the devourer's power	at dawn, eats a number of demons; at dusk, eats a number of demons
D. threat	if the devourer does not eat enough demons, it will come to catch more
E. command	the demon must depart at once
F. concluding formula	"quickly, quickly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances"

Among eleven recipes for curing malaria-like diseases, five of them fit into this modular structure. The sequencing of the six constituent units is not arbitrary since it follows a chronological and explanatory order.[65] For instance, if the position of B is changed with that of C, the text reads, "it eats three thousand at dawn and eight hundred at dusk" 朝食三千，暮食八百. "It does not eat anything but only eats malaria demons" 不食諸物，惟食瘧鬼. Given the linearity of oral narrative, this backward arrangement of units would cause the audience to wonder just what the dragon ate three thousand of at dawn and eight hundred of at dusk. It is thus seen that the incantations of the Sui and Tang dynasties are more narrative-oriented, whereas the early Han demon curses are image-oriented because the order can be rearranged.

In the early exorcistic tradition, naming the demon was important. Uttering the right names of demons bestows the incanter

[65] Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction of the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 68.

with the power to control the demons. Wang Yanshou's 王延壽 (fl. mid-second century) "Dream Rhapsody" (*Meng fu* 夢賦), which includes twenty-nine demons, has been identified as having an incantatory characteristic by Harper. In the rhapsody, each demon is paired with an aggressive action required to vanquish it, for instance, "Hack Goblin Blighter, Behead Earth Bogy, Batter Ditch Dweller, Dash Vertical Eyes" 斫魅虛，捎魍魎，拂諸渠，撞縱目.[66] Wang used twenty-eight different verbs, which implies twenty-eight different ways to conquer those demons. From this description, I speculate that Wang intended to add a visual and acoustic effect to his "incantation" to show how powerful the "dreamer" was by having mastery of so many exorcistic techniques.

Besides that, as the example shows, the structure of the Han exorcistic malediction is transparent; as Harper concludes, "threatening demons with violent injury was a regular formula in Han maledictions. Syntactically, each curse phrase took the form of a verb threatening injury followed by a direct object which either named the demon or the part of its anatomy under attack."[67] Although in Sun's incantation, "eats malaria demons" 食瘧鬼 adheres to the Han formula of a disyllabic demon name coming after a monosyllabic verb, to parallel the previous line "it does not eat anything" 不食諸物, an adverb "only" 惟 is added before "eats malaria demons". It thus breaks the prevalent Han rule of adopting trisyllabic curse phrases.

As Michael Swartz suggests, the phrasing in magical writings may reflect the literary sensibilities of the time.[68] Enumeration is a major feature of Han rhapsody.[69] The Han demon curses conform

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[66] This line is from "Dream Rhapsody." Harper has translated the entire rhapsody. See Harper, "Wang Yen-shou's Nightmare Poem," 246.

[67] Harper has observed this structure of malediction, consisting of a monosyllabic verb of attack followed by a bisyllabic name of creature. Harper, "Wang Yen-shou's Nightmare Poem," 263 and 268. Harper contends that the structure reflects the influence of incantatory tradition on the composition of Han rhapsody. See Harper, "Wang Yen-shou's Nightmare Poem," 242.

[68] Michael D. Swartz, "The Aesthetics of Blessing and Cursing: Literary and Iconographic Dimensions of Hebrew and Aramaic Blessing and Curse Texts," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 5 (2005): 190–200.

[69] David Hawkes assumes that the language of Han rhapsody is more enumerative rather than descriptive or narrative. See David Hawkes, "The Quest of the

to this literary trend, especially those embedded in Han rhapsodies, such as *Dream Rhapsody*. In comparison with rhapsodies, incantations came from ordinary people, and were intended to be recited aloud, their powers channeled by spoken words. Although they are preserved in written forms, as a spoken art, incantations have a particular communicative nature.[70] The oral features left an imprint on them. An example of this influence is the use of plain but formulaic phrases whose style is described by Milman Parry as a high degree of "economy," allowing the incanter to learn and use them rapidly.[71]

Another incantation for curing malaria-like diseases showing the modular structure is as follows:

> Taking the dog along with [the incanter], climb up the mountain and go down to [make the dog] enter the sea. There is a worm that does not eat the five grains but only eats malaria demons. It eats three thousand [demons] at dawn, and eight hundred at dusk. If it does not eat enough [demons], [it will] give an authenticated command to catch [more]. [If the demons] come out quickly and leave quickly, [they will] receive no harm. Quickly, quickly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances.
>
> 將狗上山，下使入海，中有一蟲，不食五穀，只食瘧鬼，朝食三千，暮食八百，一食不足，下符更索，速出速去，可得無殃，急急如律令。[72]

This incantation contains all six components listed in Table 1, although the creature that devours disease demons now becomes a *chong* 蟲.[73] *Chong* is hard to translate. Its polysemantic nature is

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Goddess," in Cyril Birch, ed., *Studies of Chinese Literary Genres* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 91.

[70] Richard Bauman, "Verbal Art as Performance," *American Anthropologist* 2 (1975): 292.

[71] Milman Parry, "The Homeric Gloss: A Study in Word-Sense," in Adam Parry, ed., *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 246.

[72] Sun, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi, juan* 29, 449.

[73] *Shuowen jiezi* explains *chong* from an etymological perspective as "the ones with feet are called insects, while the ones without feet are called worms" 有足謂之蟲，無足謂之豸. See Ding, *Shuowen jiezi gulin*, vol. 14, 13061. Yet *chong* can also be understood in a broad sense. In accord with *Records of Ritual Matters by Dai*

well illustrated in early medical texts in which *chong* can refer to anything from insects to worms, or from reptiles to parasitic vermin.[74] What *chong* really denotes in this context is not easy to identify. But this *chong* eats neither common foodstuffs (as earthly animals do) nor ingests *qi* (as transcendent beings do); just like the dragon, it belongs to a third category.

Another animal to appear in this incantation is the dog (*gou* 狗), which traditionally accompanies people on hunting expeditions. We should again bear in mind Harper's observation that exorcistic rituals are also related to hunting. Dogs have been associated with hunting in Chinese culture for many centuries. Many words indicating hunting are written with the "dog radical," such as the Chinese character for a winter hunt (*shou* 狩).[75] More than that, a straw dog (*chugou* 芻狗) is said to have been used in ancient exorcistic rituals by the legendary physician Mao Fu 茅父. He used a straw dog as an implement to perform ritual therapies.[76] The dog as an exorcistic symbol likely arose because of its association with *yang* energy: "it takes three months to give birth to a dog, and *yang* dominates [the number] three; therefore, dogs are three *chi* tall" 狗三月而生，陽主於三，故狗各高三尺.[77] The *yang* nature of dogs

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the Elder (*Da Dai Liji* 大戴禮記) by Dai De 戴德, animals generally fall into five types of *chong*, namely, linchong 鱗蟲, yuchong 羽蟲, luochong 倮蟲, jiechong 介蟲, and maochong 毛蟲. "The exemplar of *maochong* is called *qilin*; the exemplar of *yuchong* is called phoenix; the exemplar of *jiechong* is called tortoise; the exemplar of *linchong* is called dragon; and the exemplar of *luochong* is called sage" 毛蟲之精者曰麟，羽蟲之精者曰鳳，介蟲之精者曰龜，鱗蟲之精者曰龍，倮蟲之精者曰聖人. Wang Pinzhen 王聘珍 (fl. nineteenth century), *Da Dai Liji jiegu* 大戴禮記解詁 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 100.

74 Roel Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 19.

75 "The winter hunt is *shou*" 冬獵為狩. Xu Zhaohua 徐朝華, *Erya jinzhu* 爾雅今註 (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 1994), 213.

76 "I heard that a physician of early antiquity called Maofu … used straws to [make] a dog. Facing the North, [he] incanted and spoke out ten words, [then] those who came over by holding the carriage all recovered [and became as well] as before" 吾聞上古醫曰茅父……以蒭為狗，北面而祝之，發十言耳，諸扶輿而來者皆平復如故. Xu Weiqiu 許維遹, *Hanshi waizhuan jishi* 韓詩外傳集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 346.

77 Yasui Kōzan 安居香山 and Nakamura Shōhachi 中村璋八, comps., *Weishu jicheng* 緯書集成 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1994), vol. 3, 1112.

seemingly makes them able to subdue demons and protect the incanter.

It is apparent that the language applied, and the sequence of phrases arranged in this incantation bear a striking resemblance to the dragon version previously discussed. There are three more incantations under "Malaria-like Diseases of Interdiction" that share the same modular structure as these two. Yet, to Sun, they were by no means meaningless repetitions. At the beginning of *The Book of Interdiction*, he writes,

> Books of this kind could be found all over the world; their writings, however, are fragmented and repetitive, and they are not organized into scrolls. Even if they are organized, the scrolls still have no more than two or three chapters. As these chapters are not specialized and refined, when people try to probe their profound meanings, ultimately, they find it difficult to comprehend them.
>
> 且此書也，人間皆有，而其文零疊，不成卷軸。縱令有者，不過三章兩章，既不專精，探其至賾，終為難備。[78]

Seeing such repetitive and fragmented writings circulating among the ordinary people, Sun was motivated to compile an organized collection that avoided these problems. Sun produced *The Book of Interdiction* after careful sifting.[79] Incantations for curing malaria-like diseases are an example. Although a general modular structure runs through these incantations, the details within each incantation are distinct. To Sun, each selected incantation should have a particular meaning.

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[78] Sun, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi*, *juan* 29, 440. The translation is based on Liu, "Words, Demons and Illness," 9.

[79] Gan Zuwang 干祖望 assumes that Sun's *The Book of Interdiction* was a result of careful selection from Daoist scriptures. Sun did not in fact say that he collected incantations from Daoist scriptures, but instead, he wrote at the end of *The Book of Interdiction*, "in the text, the expressions and words are coarse and indecent. That [is because] all of them are collected from the [incantations] circulated among vulgar people" 其間辭語鄙野, 蓋出俗傳. Given this description, I doubt Gan's statement, but agree that *The Book of Interdiction* was a careful selection of incantations rather than a careless compilation. See Gan Zuwang, *Sun Simiao pingzhuan* 孫思邈評傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1995), 151.

Version III: The True Talisman of the White Numen Version

Sun was an outstanding physician, one not only highly regarded in the medical tradition but also in the Daoist tradition. Although one should be cautious about asserting too definitely that Sun associated himself particularly with the Daoist religion, the accounts left about him tend to depict him as a Daoist insider. For instance, in the official Tang histories, his biographies are included in the category "Biographies of Wonder-Workers" (*Fangji zhuan* 方技傳) and "Biographies of Recluses" (*Yinyi zhuan* 隱逸傳) respectively. A wonder-worker and a recluse do not necessarily designate a Daoist practitioner, but these categories are a general repository of diviners, physicians, eminent Buddhists, and Daoist masters. In addition to these two biographies, accounts of him can also be found in collections of supernatural anecdotes, such as the *Continuation of the Biographies of Transcendents* (*Xuxian zhuan* 續仙傳).

All of these sources suggest that Sun straddled the boundaries of such categories. In this regard, as Sivin claims, "between [the secret practices and incantations preserved by Daoists] and the confidential formulae of exorcists and physicians just on the other side of the borderline between the priests and the medical practitioners, there would have been no sharp distinction."[80] It is debatable whether Sun was a Daoist practitioner, but his veneration within the Daoist tradition sounds plausible.

Based on the works Sun left we can see the great breadth of his interests, notably his mastery of medicines. By studying the incantatory treatments for "demon-infusion" (*guizhu* 鬼注) in *The Book of Interdiction*, Michel Strickmann has identified the Daoist character reflected in these incantations.[81] Sun's familiarity with Daoist learning thus unavoidably draws us to reconsider the

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[80] Joseph Needham and Lu Gwei-Djen, *Science and Civilisation in China, Volume 6, Biology and Biological Technology, Part VI: Medicine,* ed. Nathan Sivin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 157.

[81] Ghost-infusion or demon-infusion, in terms of disease classification, represents a class of ailments—"epidemic possession." The word *zhu* is also homophonous with another word meaning "to stay." Some medical texts therefore explain *zhu* as designating a kind of "demon-stasis." Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 24 and 31.

relationship between *The Book of Interdiction* and Daoist scriptures. The following is an example showing similarities between the incantation for exorcising malaria demons in *The Book of Interdiction* and its counterpart in *The True Talisman of the White Numen from the Supreme Mysterious Cavern of the Lingbao [Canon]* (*Taishang dongxuan lingbao suling zhenfu* 太上洞玄靈寶素靈真符, hereafter, *The True Talisman of the White Numen*) ascribed to Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406–477). As a point of comparison, the incantation from *The Book of Interdiction* reads:

> Climb up the mountain and gaze afar to the sea. The Lord of Heaven will descend to catch malaria demons. Cry out in anger. [If] you do not depart quickly, at my home [I] have an honored guest, [His] name is all-smasher [who will attack you]. [His] head is like the Eastern Mountain, and his body is like the Eastern Sea. [He] does not eat the five grains, but only eats all kinds of demons. He eats three thousand [demons] at dawn, and eight hundred at dusk. If he does not eat enough [demons], [he will] hurriedly come to catch [more]. Quickly, quickly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances.
>
> 登高山，望海水，天公下，捕虐鬼。咄！汝不疾去？吾家有貴客，子各破。頭如東山，軀如東澤。不食五穀，但食百鬼。朝食三千，暮食八百，一食未足，摧促來索，急急如律令。[82]

The incantation from *The True Talisman of the White Numen* reveals stark similarities:

> Climb up the mountain, gaze afar to the sea. Fastening tigers and wolves [with leashes], [we go to] catch malaria demons. Cry out in anger. Why not leave quickly? At my home, [I] have an honored guest, [His] name is Rock-crusher. [His] head is like the Western Mountain and his body is like the Eastern Sea. [He] does not eat the five grains, but only eats malaria demons. He eats three thousand [demons] at dawn, and eight hundred at dusk. If he does not eat enough [demons], today [he] will come to catch [more]. Quickly, quickly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances.

[82] Sun, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi*, *juan* 29, 449.

> 登高山，望海水，檢虎狼，捕瘧鬼。咄！如何不疾去？吾家有貴客，字名破石。頭如西山，軀如東澤。不食五穀，但食瘧鬼。朝食三千，暮食八百，食汝不足，今來更索。急急如律令。[83]

These two incantations contain the six major components of the modular structure discussed above and have a remarkable resemblance, with slight variations. In the first incantation, it is the Lord of Heaven who would descend to catch malaria demons, but in the second incantation, demons are hunted by tigers and wolves. The notion that the tiger serves as a protective spirit can be traced back to the Han dynasty. There were twelve protective spirits in the household, including a tiger and an azure dragon, who were regarded as the "real demons" of heaven.[84] When they are stationed in a house, other lesser demons dare not come.[85] The tiger was also a potent military symbol; tiger tallies (*hufu* 虎符) were used to raise troops.[86] The tiger and wolf also appear as twins in early sources. As the Han compilation *Records of Ritual Matters by Dai the Elder* (*Da Dai Liji* 大戴禮記) points out, "tigers and wolves by birth have greedy and violent hearts" 虎狼生而有貪戾之心.[87] Such a pair naturally embodies a violent and exorcistic force.

The two incantations described above also vary regarding the name of the "honored guest." In the first, the guest's name is "All-smasher" (*Gepo* 各破), while in the second, it is "Rock-crusher" (*Poshi* 破石). The connection between these two names is evident. They both contain the character *po* 破 (break), a word with strong military connotations, as is the case with the related compound, *podi* 破敵, "to destroy the enemy." The two incantations convey a strong feeling of tension that the malaria demons will be vanquished

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[83] "Taishang dongxuan lingbao suling zhenfu" 太上洞玄靈寶素靈真符, DZ 398, 3.18b.

[84] In Chinese tradition, even though something is called "demon" (*gui* 鬼), it does not necessarily mean it is bad. The Daoist text, "Nüqing guilü" records various kinds of demons. Some demons work for the celestial beings and capture bad demons who bring disasters to the human world.

[85] Derk Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 91.

[86] Sterckx, *The Animal and The Daemon in Early China*, 102.

[87] Wang, *Da Dai Liji jiegu*, 59.

violently by the "honored guest" if they do not depart immediately. Aside from these variations, the two incantations are almost identical.

Given the resemblance between the pairs of incantations, as well as the appearance of the malaria demons of twelve double-hours (*shier shichen nüegui* 十二時辰瘧鬼) in both Sun's *The Book of Interdiction* and Lu's *The True Talisman of the White Numen*, Fan Ka Wai suggests that Sun inherited the ritual therapies transmitted in Lu's lineage.[88] Fan makes inspiring observations, but there are two problems that deserve further consideration.

The first concerns the date of *The True Talisman of the White Numen*. According to the work's preface written after 913 by Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933),[89] it was Du who retrieved the scripture from the Pingdu mountain 平都山 located in the northeast of Fengdu county 豐都縣 (in modern Chongqing 重慶), in the bingyin 丙寅 year of the Tianfu 天復 reign (906).[90] In the preface, Du attributed the scripture to Lu Xiujing. The received version of *The True Talisman of the White Numen* contains three *juan*, yet, interestingly, the attribution of authorship varies in each *juan* heading. In *juan* 1, it states "Master Lu;" in *juan* 2, it states "Received by Master Lu;" in *juan* 3, it is "Received by Master Du." It is therefore possible that *juan* 3 was not an original part of *The True Talisman of the White Numen* but was added by Du. The part concerning the cure for malaria-like diseases happens to appear in *juan* 3. Although the entirety of the work is attributed to Lu, we cannot ignore the notes concerning transmission. Based on these notes, the connection of *juan* 3 with Lu is rather tenuous.

Secondly, the principal treatment for malaria-like diseases adopted in *The True Talisman of the White Numen* mainly involves the use of talismans (fifty-five talismans for treating malaria-like diseases), although several are paired with incantations, of which there are only four. One of them is the Dog incantation discussed above. *The True Talisman of the White Numen* advises that to

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88 Fan, "Han Tang shiqi nüebing yu nüegui," 241.
89 Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 1, 482.
90 "Taishang dongxuan lingbao suling zhenfu," DZ 398, 1b.

increase the potency of treatment, the Dog incantation should be paired with a talisman (any of the seven talismans listed beside the incantation). However, no talisman has been found to pair with its counterpart in *The Book of Interdiction* (Yuan edition); indeed, Sun's collection rarely includes talismans.[91] From the Tang dynasty to the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), the canonization of the collection involved complex processes of selection, elimination, and adaptation by different authorities during different periods.[92] Moreover, the original manuscript on which the printing was based is also inconsistent after numerous replications. As a result, it is difficult to know if any talismans were part of Sun's original idea.

Even though I agree that the resemblance between the incantations preserved in *The Book of Interdiction* and *The True Talisman of the White Numen* is clear, I still cannot find any convincing evidence showing that Sun inherited ritual therapies from Lu's lineage as Fan suggests.[93] As Lu Gwei-djen 魯桂珍 and Joseph Needham claim, the

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[91] The Tang edition and the Song edition of *Qianjin yifang* are irretrievable. The earliest existing edition is the one carved in the eleventh year of the Dade 大德 reign period of the Yuan dynasty (1307). See Qian Chaochen 錢超塵, "Qianjin yifang banben jiankao"《千金翼方》版本簡考, *Zhongyiyao wenhua* 中醫藥文化, 3 (2012): 38–40. See also Sun, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi*, 3.

[92] For example, in the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127), an office named the Bureau for Revising Medical Texts (Jiaozheng yishu ju 校正醫書局) was established in the second year of the Jiayou 嘉祐 reign period (1057) to improve the accuracy of medical texts and to disseminate medical knowledge; see Li Tao 李燾, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑒長編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), vol. 186, 4487. In addition, in the Song period, more scholar-officials became involved in collecting, collating, revising, and printing medical texts. Thus, to a certain extent, "scholar-officials shaped the medical environment in which physicians studied and practiced." Asaf Goldschmidt, *The Evolution of Chinese Medicine: Song dynasty, 960–1200* (London: Routledge, 2009), 45.

[93] Sun's biographies preserved in the *Old Book of Tang* (*Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書) and the *New Book of Tang* indeed gave Sun a Daoist flavor and hinted that he had mastery of some Daoist esoteric techniques, including that he "talked about true oneness dedicatedly" 高談正一. According to Sivin, "true oneness" implies an esoteric technique said to have been passed down from Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536). See Sivin, *Chinese Alchemy*, 103. However, his biographies showed no direct evidence that Sun was associated with Lu Xiujing's lineage. For the discussions on Sun's biographies, see Sivin, *Chinese Alchemy*, 110–117. Aside from that, Wang Ka 王卡 assumes that those chapter headings were later additions to the scripture. The scripture was compiled by the Tang Daoist

borders between science, magic, and religion were often traversed.[94] Here the evidence that the recipes in *The Book of Interdiction* have Daoist overtones is not enough for us to reach the conclusion that Sun received them from the Daoist tradition.

Version IV: Fan Wang's Version

Fan Ka Wai points out that another early version of the malaria incantation is found in Fan Wang's 范汪 (308–372) collection. Fan Wang, whose by-name was Dongyang 東陽, was a minister in Eastern Jin (317–420) who is said to have compiled a 176-*juan* collection of medical recipes entitled *The Recipes of Fan Dongyang* (*Fan Dongyang fang* 范東陽方).[95] The early version of the malaria incantation reads:

> [Using] vermilion [ink] to write on the forehead, say: "Wear the nine heavens [on the head];" writing on the arms, say: "Hold the nine lands;" writing on the feet, say: "Cover the nine rivers;" writing on the back, say: "In the south, there is a high mountain on which there is a big tree. Under [it], there is static water in which there is a divine worm [with] three heads and nine tails. It does not eat the five grains but only eats malaria demons. [It] eats three thousand [demons] at dawn, and three hundred at dusk. Quickly, quickly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances." Writing on the chest, say: "Climb up the high mountain and gaze afar to the sea. The Managing Clerk at the Heavenly Gate catches malaria demons. [As soon as he] catches [one], [he will] behead [it] immediately without asking [its] crimes. Quickly, quickly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances."
>
> 丹書額言：戴九天；書臂言：把九地；書足言：履九江；書背言：南有高山，上有大樹，下有不流之水，中有神蟲，三頭九尾巴，不食五穀，但食瘧鬼，朝食三千，暮食三百。急急如律令。書胸言：上高山，望海水，天門亭丈捕瘧鬼。得便斬，勿問罪。急急如律令。[96]

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master Zhai Qianyou 翟乾佑 (715–836). For further discussion, see Wang Ka, "Pingdu shan daojiao shiji" 平都山道教史跡, *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究, 3 (1995): 63.

[94] Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 6, pt. 6, 9.

[95] Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643) et al., eds., *Suishu* 隋書 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1980), vol. 34, 1042.

[96] Tamba, *Ishinpō*, 295.

Today, only fragments of *The Recipes of Fan Dongyang* exist, scattered across various medical compilations. The incantation above is contained in *The Recipes at the Heart of Medicine*. It is clear that the latter part of this incantation also shares striking similarities with the other versions discussed previously. Yet what makes this incantation distinct is that it combines the incantation with exorcistic performative acts by using vermilion ink to write on different parts of the body. However, exactly what the incanter would write is unclear to us. Generally, the incantation associates the patient's body with the cosmos, by matching the head with the nine heavens, the arms with the nine lands, and the feet with the nine rivers. In *The Book of Interdiction*, there is another incantation for treating malaria-like diseases which exhibits a very similar idea: "on the head wear the nine heavens; two hands hold the nine bows; two feet step in the nine rivers; in the stomach settle the four deities. All of them come from self-generation" 頭上戴九天，兩手把九弓，兩腳覆九江，腹安四神，皆出自然.[97] Fan's version is thought to be the earliest, predating the incantations preserved in *The Book of Interdiction*. It thus can be seen that Fan's incantation is split into two separate incantations in *The Book of Interdiction*.

This example shows that in ancient incantations, like Fan's incantation above, images with symbolic meanings, such as nine heavens, nine earths, and nine rivers gradually crystallized into representative images. Likewise, phrases such as "climb up the mountain and gaze afar to the sea" steadily developed into the canon. These elements were borrowed and assimilated by different incantations.

Version V: Dispelling the Virulent Magical Infection

Thus far, we have discussed four incantations for curing malaria-like diseases. Based on the previous analyses, there is clearly a modular structure fitting all four incantations, including an opening phrase, disclosure of the devourer's identity, description of the devourer's power, a threat, a command, and a concluding formula. But to see whether the same modular structure fits other incantations, it is

[97] Sun, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi*, *juan* 29, 449.

helpful to examine another incantation for driving away a different type of demon.

> There is also a commander whose name is Twisted Hills. The shape of his teeth resembles a sword and [his hands] hold a helmet. He comes out, and enters various households, and even travels to remote lands. [As soon as] he catches a demon, he cuts off its head at once. There is also a deity whose name is Depletes Oddities. [His] head is similar to a broken bamboo basket; his appearance is fearsome; his mouth is like an open net. [He looks like] a ferocious deity who does not eat the five grains but only eats demons' skins. [He] eats a thousand [demon skins] at dawn, and nine hundred at dusk. If [he] does not eat enough [demons' skins], [he will dispatch] servants to catch [more]. Quickly, quickly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances.
>
> 又有將軍字屈丘，牙形帶劍持兜鉾，出門入戶遠地游，捉得魅鬼便斫頭。又有一神字窮奇，頭如破筐發強相，口如羅披惡神祇，不食五穀食魅皮。朝食一千，暮食九百，一口不足，使來便索。急急如律令。[98]

This incantation is included in *The Book of Interdiction* for expelling "virulent magical infection" (*gu* 蠱). It is apparent that the incantation contains constituent units of the modular structure identified earlier, except for the opening phrase (Unit A in Table 1) and the command (Unit E in Table 1). Similar cases can also be found in incantations for curing other diseases, for example, "Wayward Demon-Infusion of Interdiction" (Jin zhu wu wangliang 禁注忤魍魎).[99]

It seems plausible to speculate that in the Sui and Tang dynasties, the prevalence of ritual therapies might have facilitated the shaping of incantatory language and the formulating of expressions. Under

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[98] Sun, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi*, *juan* 30, 455.

[99] It reads: "On the southern mountain, there is a person whose name is Depletes Oddities. He does not eat the five grains but only eats demons' skins. At dawn, [he] eats demons' fathers and at dusk, eats demons' mothers. His appetite is increasing. He will search for demons' sons again. Quickly, quickly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances" 南山有一人名窮奇，不食五穀，但食鬼皮。朝食鬼父，暮食鬼母。食正欲壯，復索鬼子。急急如律令. Sun, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi*, *juan* 30, 456.

such circumstances, modules of standardized structures might have gradually formed, although not every incantation contains all constituent units of the module. Within the modular structure, each unit logically connects to each of the others, and by following this structure, the goal of the threat can be maximally accomplished, and the efficacy of the incantation can be considerably reinforced.

Of the five incantations discussed, four concern the treatment of malaria-like diseases. The incantations are addressed to demons rather than to patients, and their main goal is to drive demons away instead of killing them. Furthermore, the incantations contain a modular structure that consists of six constituent units. This structure allows the incantation to unleash maximum intimidatory power. However, incantations are only part of the ritual therapy. To increase potency, auxiliary ritualistic techniques[100] or exorcistic performative acts are integrated into incantations of interdiction. Some of the ritual therapies Sun recorded in *The Book of Interdiction* for curing malaria-like diseases combine these auxiliary methods. How did the accompanying ritual performative acts assist the incantations and deliver exorcistic powers?

(b) Exorcistic Performative Acts for Warding off Malaria Demons

The final therapy for treating malaria-like diseases listed in *The Book of Interdiction* includes both exorcistic performative acts and an incantation. It reads:

> [Exorcistic performative acts:]
>
> [Prepare] a one-foot-long peach branch as a writing [implement]. When [the patient's ailment] breaks out, use it immediately. Spout at the patient's face and recite the incantation fourteen times. Tie [the peach branch] under [the patient's] head.

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[100] According to *The Six Statues of the Tang Dynasty*, there were five auxiliary ritualistic techniques prevailing in the Tang, including visualization (*cunsi* 存思), paces of Yu (*Yubu* 禹步), operation of eyes (*yingmu* 營目), practices in the palm of the hand (*zhangjüe* 掌決), and hand seal (*shouyin* 手印). Li, *Tang liudian*, *juan* 14, 411.

書桃枝一尺，欲發即用，噀病人面，誦咒文二七遍，系著頭底。[101]

[Incantation:]

The heaven's surname is Zhang, and the earth's surname is Huang. The stars and the moon's by-name are Chang, and the sun's by-name is Ziguang. There is a place on the southern mountain. In the place, there is a worm with a red head and yellow tail which does not eat the five grains but only eats malaria demons. It eats three thousand [demons] at dawn and eight hundred at dusk. [If] it does not eat enough [demons], [it will] give an authenticated command to catch [more]. I ask you to leave quickly. [By doing so, you will] receive no harm. If you do not leave, you will be tied up and sent to the Dipper. Quickly, quickly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances.

天姓張，地姓皇，星月字長，日字紫光。南山有地，地中有蟲，赤頭黃尾，不食五谷，只食虐鬼。朝食三千，暮食八百，少一不足，下符請索。語你速去，即得無殃。汝若不去，縛送魁剛，急急如律令。[102]

Although in this incantation, the creature who devours malaria demons does not live in the water, the whole structure of the incantation closely follows the modular structure we discussed.

The difference between this incantation and the ones previously introduced is the use of ritual performative acts, which are supposed to be conducted before the incanter recites the incantation. The incanter uses a peach branch as his implement. The peach branch is an ancient exorcistic weapon widely used to expel evil spirits and disease demons, especially those that were thought to cause pestilence. According to Derk Bodde, all pre-Han writings described peach wood as containing apotropaic power.[103] His suggestion is well attested in excavated materials and texts, such as *The Recipes for Fifty-two Ailments* (*Wushier bingfang* 五十二病方), a collection compiled in the third century BCE that includes a number of ritual therapies.

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[101] Sun, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi*, *juan* 29, 450.
[102] Ibid., *juan* 29, 450.
[103] Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China*, 133–134.

Besides this, *The Book of Interdiction* contains another set of exorcistic performative acts in which peach wood is used to cure malaria-like diseases. The instruction reads: "When the sun is in the middle [of the sky], stand [facing] due south; break off a peach branch [growing toward] the northwest and conjoin [the ends of the branch] around the [patient's] neck" 日正中時正南立，取西北桃枝結項.[104] In exorcism, spatial orientation is always endowed with unique significance. First, at midday, when the sun reaches its highest point in the sky, the incanter needs to stand under the sun and face the south. The south and the sun usually relate to fire, heat, and summer, all of which designate *yang* power.[105] It is thus clear that both endeavors try to take advantage of the maximum *yang* power of a day.

In addition, it places emphasis on the growing orientation of the peach branch. *The Recipes for Fifty-two Ailments* also accentuates the importance of the orientation of the peach branch, but it is a different orientation: "Perform the Pace of Yu thrice. Take a branch from the east side of a *tao* (peach). In the middle, separately fashion figurines, and fasten them above the doorway, one on each side" 禹步三，取桃東枳，中別為□□□之倡，而笄門戶上各一.[106] In the early exorcistic rituals, the east is an important orientation. As Harper notes, "a number of other magical recipes have the patient or magical operator face the east or the north while performing the treatment. This is a purposeful exorcistic orientation."[107] The east is the direction from which the sun rises, symbolizing a vibrant strength; the north is the direction of the Dipper, symbolizing longevity.

However, in *The Book of Interdiction*, the northwest develops into a new significant exorcistic orientation that challenges the status of the east and the north. The northwest is the orientation of the trigram, heaven (*Qian* 乾). "*Qian* is the trigram of the northwest" 乾，西北之卦也. *Qian* also designates the maximum *yang* power, clearly

[104] Sun, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi*, *juan* 29, 449.
[105] Joseph Needham and Ling Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China, Volume 2: History of Scientific Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 262.
[106] Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature*, 302.
[107] Harper, "The 'Wu Shih Erh Ping Fang'," 102.

reflected in its symbol ☰, consisting of three unbroken/*yang* lines.[108] Moreover, "the northwest means the heavenly gate" 西北為天門,[109] which indicates the orientation of life. In this sense, standing under the sun holding a peach branch growing toward the northwest symbolically means that "heaven" grants the incanter the intimidating power of *yang* to overcome the demons who possess the patient, and meanwhile, it opens up the gate of life to the patient. It is uncertain why the specific orientation altered and what sort of ritualistic reforms it entailed; nevertheless, all of the important orientations, the east, the north, and the northwest, are symbols of birth and life.

In addition, spouting (*xun* 噀) is performed in the ritual. Spouting and spitting (*tuo* 唾) are two more archaic exorcistic techniques that appear in *The Recipes for Fifty-two Ailments* many times. In later periods, these breath techniques became very common in Daoist and Buddhist practices. The underlying belief of the breath technique is the apotropaic power of *qi*.[110] It corresponds to the claim made by Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343) in his renowned work *Master Embracing Simplicity* (*Baopuzi* 抱樸子) that "*qi* can exorcise heavenly calamities" 炁可以禳天災也.[111] Undoubtedly, *The Book of Interdiction* preserved some archaic exorcistic techniques but meanwhile absorbed new exorcistic ideas that contain notable changes, for example, the exorcistic orientations: the east and the north, frequently utilized in the early exorcistic rituals, seemingly became less important in the Sui and Tang periods.

Another example of an exorcistic ritual for curing malaria-like diseases that is to be performed before reciting an incantation

[108] Han Kangbo 韓康伯(332–380) and Kong Yingda 孔穎達(574–648), et al., eds., *Zhouyi zhushu* 周易註疏 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), *juan* 9, 184.

[109] Yasui and Nakamura, *Weishu jicheng*, vol. 3, 1090. In the Daoist scriptures of later periods, "opening up the heavenly gate" and "shutting the earthly door" are often mentioned together, which indicates salvation. "Earthly door" designates the southeast, and the way to the earth court. For example, "when the heavenly gate is open, souls and spirits of the living and dead people will all fly up and be saved" 凡開天門，生死魂神，飛升超度. See "Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa" 靈寶無量度人上經大法, DZ 219, 40.18b.

[110] Harper, "The 'Wu Shih Erh Ping Fang'," 84.

[111] Wang Ming 王明, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱樸子內篇校釋 (Taipei: Liren shuju, 1981), *juan* 5, 103.

requires the incanter to use a brick as an exorcistic weapon. The instruction states: "Use the brick to wear down the ground. Use your hands to press on the four corners of the brick to hold it in place. Then, use your hands to hold the brick and [make] it stand [on the ground]. Facing [the brick] in front, you can draw the Northern Dipper under the brick, and besides that, draw the Three Terraces" 以磚磨地令平，以手按磚四角使不動，還以手發磚，立在前，可磚下書北斗，傍置三台.[112] *The Recipes for Fifty-two Ailments* does not mention anything about ritual use of bricks.[113]

The use of bricks in buildings has a long history in China. The oldest known bricks were the hollow blocks found in tombs of the Eastern Zhou (771–481 BCE), and solid bricks gradually emerged from the late Warring States (475–221 BCE).[114] Many rituals intended for tomb-guarding, such as tomb-quelling texts (*zhen mu wen* 鎮墓文) and tomb land contracts (*mai di quan* 買地券), required writing upon the bricks and placing them in the tombs.[115] It is likely that the use of bricks in guarding tombs led to a mystical association between bricks and the pacification of demons.

Using one's hands to press on the four corners of the brick to hold it in place is also emblematic. Four corners designate the four quarters (*siyu* 四隅 or *sifang* 四方), the most important cosmology in the Shang (1600–1045 BCE) and Western Zhou dynasties (1045–771 BCE), originally referring to the political geography of a square space.[116] It is not certain when the belief that demons hid themselves

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[112] Sun, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi*, *juan* 29, 449.

[113] But it regards roof vegetation as a type of exorcistic material. Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature*, 233.

[114] Qinghua Guo, "Tile and Brick Making in China: A Study of the *Yingzao fashi*," *Construction History* 16 (2000): 3.

[115] From the Han and Jin dynasties onwards, most tomb texts were written on brick, stone, pottery, tile, wood, or copper. Huang Jingchun 黃景春, "Zaoqi mai di quan zhen mu wen zhengli yu yanjiu" 早期買地券鎮墓文整理與研究 (Ph.D. diss., East China Normal University, 2004), 11.

[116] The *Huainanzi* reads, "He superintends the four corners. Yet always turns back to the central axis" 經營四隅，還返於樞. Gao You 高誘 (Eastern Han) comments: "*Yu*, is similar to *fang* [meaning direction]. *Shu*, means the origin" 隅，猶方也. 樞，本也. See Liu An 劉安, *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989), 6. For a translation, see Major and Queen, *The Huainanzi*, 52. As for discussion about the four quarters, see Aihe Wang, *Cosmology and Political*

in the four corners of a room became widespread, but ancient texts, including Daoist scriptures, attest to its prevalence.[117] By pressing on the four corners of the brick, it thus indicates that the incanter aims to completely expel the demons.

Furthermore, the incanter is also required to draw the Northern Dipper on the ground. The astrological and magical significance of the Northern Dipper in the Warring States, Qin, and Han dynasties is well-documented,[118] and it was common for medieval Chinese people to know this constellation. After drawing the Northern Dipper and the Three Terraces under the brick,[119] the incanter is instructed to "put the [patient's] name and age under the handle of the Northern Dipper" 患人姓名年幾置下在斗柄中.[120] Under the handle of the Dipper, it is the "Mansion of the Demon" (*Guixiu* 鬼宿), comprising four stars, which is one of the twenty-eight lunar mansions (*ershiba xiu* 二十八宿).[121] Because the "Mansion of the

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Culture in Early China (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 26; Sarah Allan, *The Shape of the Turtle: Myth, Art, and Cosmos in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York, 1991), 76.

[117] For example, there is the mysterious Fangxiangshi 方相氏. "Fangxiangshi wears a bearskin on their hands. [He has] four golden eyes, wearing a black upper garment and a vermilion lower garment, holding a lance and raising a shield. [He] leads a hundred subordinates to perform the *nuo* ritual at the right time in order to search around the tomb chamber to expel the pestilence. [Before holding] a great funeral, [the dead should be] coffined first. [Fangxiangshi] reaches the tomb and enters the grave pit, using a lance to strike the four quarters" 方相氏掌蒙熊皮，黃金四目，玄衣朱裳，執戈揚盾，帥百隸而時難，以索室驅疫。大喪先匵。及墓入壙以戈擊四隅. See Sun Yirang 孫詒讓, *Zhouli Zhengyi* 周禮正義 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), *juan* 31, 475. Besides that, *The Demon Statutes of Lady Blue* also speaks of demons of four corners. "Si Bagen, Shegu, and Yinjiu. These three demons on the right are demons of corners of four walls of the house" 已巴艮、赦姑、殷咎，右三鬼，是人屋中四壁角中鬼. See "Nüqing guilü," DZ 790, 4.2a.

[118] Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature*, 158.

[119] The Northern Dipper and the Three Terraces are closely associated with each other and often presented together. The three pairs of stars situated under the Northern Dipper are referred to as the Three Terraces (*santai* 三台) or the Celestial Staircase (*tianjie* 天階). The Three Terraces are thus under the Northern Dipper. Poul Andersen, "Walking along the Guideline," in *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 238.

[120] Sun, *Qianjin yifang jiaoshi*, *juan* 29, 449.

[121] Zhu Lei 朱磊, *Zhongguo gudai de beidou xinyang yanjiu* 中國古代的北斗信仰研究 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2018), 204–218.

Demon" is under the handle of the Dipper, the belief that the handle of the Dipper could crush the "demon" formed. This belief was prevalent in the ancient times. Excavated materials, such as the Han tomb potteries from Yaodian 窰店 of Xianyang 咸陽 (Fig.1)[122] and Sanlicun 三里村 of Chang'an 長安 (Fig.2), provide evidence to support this claim.[123]

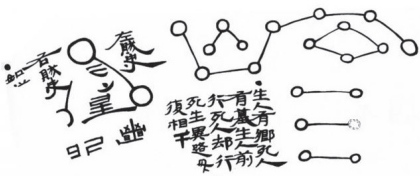

Fig. 1. Writing on pottery excavated in Yaodian

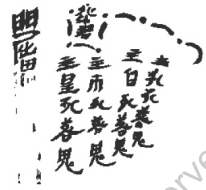

Fig. 2. Writing on pottery excavated in Sanlicun

The Dipper was associated with time and thus with one's destiny. Furthermore, the worship of the Northern Dipper to seek longevity occurred early in Chinese history. In medieval China, especially in the Tang dynasty, the popularity of astrology facilitated the proliferation of Chinese astral deities in both Daoism and Buddhism, most notably the seven stars of the Northern Dipper.[124] The Daoist text *The Authentic Scripture of the Natal Destiny of the Northern Dipper for Extending Life* (*Beidou benming yansheng zhenjing* 北斗本命延生真經) is an exemplar of this phenomenon in

[122] Picture No.3 in Liu Weipeng 劉衛鵬 and Li Chaoyang's 李朝陽 article on the pottery with vermilion writings excavated in Yaodian. See Liu Weipeng and Li Chaoyang, "Xianyang yaodian chutu de donghan zhushu taoping" 咸陽窰店出土的東漢朱書陶瓶, *Wenwu* 文物 2 (2004): 87.

[123] This is Picture No.1 in Wang Yucheng's 王育成 article on the writings in vermilion ink on pottery excavated in Sanlicun. See Wang Yucheng, "Nanliwang taoping zhushu yu xiangguan zongjiao wenhua wenti yanjiu" 南李王陶瓶朱書與相關宗教文化問題研究, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 2 (1996): 62. The inscriptions and pictures on both potteries clearly show the idea that the Dipper crushes demons.

[124] Hsiao Teng Fu 蕭登福,"Shilun beidou jiuhuang doumu yu molizhitian zhi guanxi" 試論北斗九皇、斗姆與摩利支天之關係, *Guoli Taizhong jishu xueyuan renwen shehui xuebao* 國立台中技術學院人文社會學報 3 (2004): 7; Jeffrey Kotyk, "Buddhist Astrology and Astral Magic in the Tang Dynasty" (Ph.D. diss., Leiden University, 2017), 147.

the Tang dynasty.[125] By absorbing this native belief that the Northern Dipper governs longevity and by borrowing certain ideas and even passages from the Daoist scripture mentioned above, Buddhists created *The Sutra of Life Extension by the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper* (*Beidou qixing yanming jing* 北斗七星延命經).[126]

Writing the patient's name and age under the handle of the Dipper, on the one hand, is to pray to the Dipper for longevity; on the other hand, it indicates that the demons who possess the patient will be crushed by the handle of the Dipper. Performative acts paired with incantations include ideas both from ancient times and a relatively recent period. For instance, spouting and using peach wood as an exorcistic weapon were ancient traditions. But new ritualistic ideas were also assimilated into the repository of exorcism, such as facing the northwest—an important exorcistic orientation in the Sui and Tang dynasties.

In addition, as *The Six Statutes of the Tang Dynasty* states, "there are Daoist incantations of interdiction which are from the gentlemen of recipes and techniques who dwelled in the mountains; there are incantations of interdiction which are from Buddhists" 有道禁，出於山居方術之士；有禁呪，出於釋氏.[127] Healing was never monopolized by physicians and Daoist priests. As Buddhism was transmitted to China in the first half of the first millennium CE, South Asian ideas of healing embedded in Buddhist texts were also transmitted to China, though they were repackaged and reconceptualized for a Chinese audience.[128] At the same time, Buddhism assimilated indigenous traditional healing ideas and techniques as well and situated itself in this new milieu. By and large, the cross-cultural exchange was refracted through the lens of healing in medieval China.

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[125] Hsiao Teng Fu has a detailed discussion on the date and authorship of this scripture. See Hsiao Teng Fu, "Taishang xuanling beidou benming yansheng zhenjing tanshu" 太上玄靈北斗本命延生真經探述, *Zongjiaoxue yanjiu* 宗教學研究 3 (1997): 54.

[126] Kotyk, "Buddhist Astrology and Astral Magic in the Tang Dynasty," 202–204.

[127] Li, *Tang liudian*, *juan* 14, 411.

[128] C. Pierce Salguero, "A Flock of Ghosts Bursting Forth and Scattering," in C. Pierce Salguero and Andrew Macomber, eds., *Buddhist Healing in Medieval China and Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), 23.

IV. Conclusion

This paper has focused solely on "incantations of interdiction" for treating one ailment prevalent in medieval China—malaria-like diseases. Our analysis reveals, first, that "incantations of interdiction" were aimed at demons instead of the patients themselves, and their primary goal was to expel demons by means of violent threats, not to exterminate them. The treatment is underpinned by the belief that demons or evil spirits were the cause of illnesses, and if they could be convinced to leave, patients would then recover immediately.

Second, by analyzing a series of incantations for curing malaria-like diseases, we uncover a clear modular structure running through the incantations. This structure allows six constituent units to connect closely and logically. By following it, the meanings become coherent, the threats can become optimally powerful, and the maximum potential of incantations can be unleashed. For these reasons, the incantations demonstrate formulaic characteristics.

Third, "incantations of interdiction" also incorporate exorcistic performative acts. On the one hand, traditional techniques such as spouting were passed down; on the other hand, new exorcistic techniques and ideas, for example, using a brick as an exorcistic weapon, were also adopted. By means of exorcistic performative acts, demons could be exorcised more effectively, and the potency of the "incantations of interdiction" could be ensured.

Outlining the whole array of ritual therapies and their characteristics recorded in *The Book of Interdiction* is beyond the scope of this paper, but the elements represented by incantations for expelling malaria demons show that, in medieval China, incantations were widely used for curing illnesses, not only by religious specialists but also by medical practitioners. Furthermore, largely due to this extensive use, incantations matured into more standardized forms in the Sui and Tang dynasties and became narrative-oriented and formulaic. However, as space is limited, this paper mainly focuses on the structure of incantations. Several other interesting aspects of incantations, such as the various images of demon-devourers and the sounds of incantations, also merit attention and are worthy of future discussion.

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嚇鬼：唐代對邪祟病的治療

武薇

摘要

在中古時期的中國，傳染疾病一直是人們幸福生活的巨大威脅。面對這種毀滅性的威脅，醫者採用了各種療法應對，其中就包括儀式療法。在中國，儀式療法有著悠久的歷史，例證之一就是在馬王堆出土的醫書中包含大量的「祝由方」。在隋朝(581–618)和唐朝(618–907)，太醫署設置了呪禁博士。呪禁博士是一個品級較低的職位，主要職責是培養呪禁生，傳授他們「禁呪」。根據史料記載，太醫署的學生需要研習很多經典醫書。但是由於傳世資料的匱乏，我們很難知道，作為呪禁生，他們會學習哪些專業技能，呪禁博士會傳授什麼樣的「禁呪」給他們。幸運的是，孫思邈(581–682)的《禁經》收錄了許多隋唐時期流行的儀式療法，可以讓我們了解相關情況。本文主要討論的是《禁經》中記載的唐代流行病之一「瘧病」的儀式療法。通過分析這些療法，我們可以更進一步了解，儀式療法是怎樣「治療」疾病的，為什麼中古時期的人們會相信它們的功效，以及隋唐時期的儀式療法與早期的儀式療法有哪些不同。

關鍵詞：呪、儀式療法、呪禁博士、孫思邈、瘧病