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## Building an Immortal Land: The Ming Jiajing Emperor's West Park

The retreat of the Ming-dynasty Jiajing 嘉靖 emperor (r. 1522–1566) to West Park (Xiyuan 西苑) in 1542 has been considered as the watershed of his long reign. It marks a shift of the center of Ming politics and administration from the Forbidden City to the Park, and the beginning of the emperor's twenty-five-year isolation from the bureaucracy. From 1542 until the end of the reign, he continued to rule the empire through a small group of advisors who were granted access to the restricted area of the Park. Meanwhile, he devoted himself to a pursuit of immortality by means of Daoist cultivation. Despite its political significance in mid-sixteenth-century China, West Park is little known to us. Why did the Jiajing emperor prefer it to some other location? What kind of environment did he choose to be his permanent residence? How did he change it over the course of his residency? What do these changes tell about his exceptionally long seclusion there?

Shen Defu 沈德符 (1578–1642) offers thoughts on these questions in his book *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編. Shen believes that the Jiajing emperor grew to dislike the Forbidden City after a visit to his former princedom in Anlu 安陸, Huguang 湖廣 (present Hubei) in 1539. The immediate cause of his withdrawal was, however, the assassination attempt of 1542.<sup>1</sup> On the night of November 27, a group of palace maids attempted to strangle the emperor with a silk cord while he was sleeping in the palace. Before the palace maids managed to suffocate him to

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<sup>1</sup> Shen Defu (1578–1642), *Wanli yehuo bian* (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1998; hereafter, *WLYHB*) 2, p. 51. The aim of the emperor's visit of 1539 was to decide whether his mother should be buried in Huguang.

death, however, their brutal act was exposed.<sup>2</sup> The palace maids and implicated concubines were swiftly executed; the seriously injured emperor was, after some delay, rescued. Shen suggests that the emperor was terrified by the thought that some of the maids, especially those who may have been unjustly executed, would become malicious ghosts. Therefore, he decided to move out of the Forbidden City.<sup>3</sup> Shen further proposes that he decided to live in the Yongshou Palace 永壽宮 in West Park because of its auspicious history. That palace had originally been the princely residence of the Yongle emperor (1403–1424). Unlike the Forbidden City where most of the Ming emperors lived and died, it had not witnessed the death of any emperor or concubine since the Yongle period. It was, therefore, considered an auspicious place to inhabit.<sup>4</sup> Shen's account, though convincing as far as it goes, does not explain why the Jiajing emperor undertook extensive changes at West Park and secluded himself there so completely.

This article examines the program of construction at West Park during the Jiajing emperor's rule and explores the extent to which changes in the Park's physical and cultural environment were related to his continued seclusion. My argument is that the emperor's choice of permanent residence was closely related to his lifelong belief in Daoism, which included pursuit of physical immortality.<sup>5</sup> Through ex-

<sup>2</sup> The palace maids strangled the emperor with a cord, but wrongly knotted the cord in the process. At this critical moment, one of the palace maids changed her mind and went to inform the empress about the incident. The empress thus led a group of palace guards to rescue the emperor and ordered all the involved palace maids and concubines to be caught and executed. This assassination attempt is often stated as having taken place in the night of the 21st day of the 10th mo. (November 27, 1542). However, *Zhouzai* 宙載 records the confession of one of the assassins, Yang Jinying 楊金英, who claimed that it occurred in the *mao* 卯 period, i.e., 5am to 7am, November 28; Zhang He 張合 (b. 1507), *Zhouzai* 宙載 (Congshu jicheng xubian edn.; Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1989, vol. 18) 2, p. 40. The venue of the assassination was not named. One scholar has proposed that the incident happened in the Qianqing gong 乾清宮 in the Forbidden City; Wu Yuan 無園, “‘Renyin gongbian’ de didian qiyan he shihou” 壬寅宮變的地點·起因和事後, in Beijing shi shehui kexue yanjiusuo “Beijing shiyuan” bianjibu 北京市社會科學研究所《北京史苑》編輯部, ed., *Beijing shiyuan* 北京史苑 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1985), vol. 3, p. 290. For details of the incident, see Wu Han 吳晗, ed., *Chaoxian Lichao shilu zhong de Zhongguo shiliao* 朝鮮李朝實錄中的中國史料 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), pp. 1337–39; *WLYHB* 18, pp. 502–4; *Ming Shizong Su huangdi shilu* 明世宗肅皇帝實錄, in *Ming Shilu* 明實錄 (Nangang: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1962–1968, vols. 70–91; hereafter, cited as *MSZSL*) 267, p. 5284; *Mingshi* 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974; hereafter, *MS*) 114, pp. 3531–32.

<sup>3</sup> *WLYHB* 2, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> *WLYHB* 2, p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> I am indebted to previous scholarship on the Daoist belief of the Jiajing emperor: Yang Qiqiao 楊啟樵, “Mingdai zhudi zhi chongshang fangshu ji qi yingxiang” 明代諸帝之崇尚方術及其影響, in *Ming Qing shi jue'ao* 明清史抉奧 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1985), pp. 79–119; Liu Ts'un-yan, “The Penetration of Taoism into the Ming Neo-Confucianist Elite,” *TP* 57 (1971), pp. 51–66; Cheng Sijin 程似錦, “Ming Shizong chongfeng Daojiao zhi yanjiu” 明世宗崇奉道教之研究, M. Phil. thesis (Taizhong: Sili donghai daxue, 1984).

amining the environment of West Park and activities there during his residence, I shall show that the Park was changed in accordance with his shifting religious needs, which were aimed at creating an immortal land in which he could enact the idealized life of an immortal.

I begin by introducing the idea of immortal lands as it was found among the Ming elite. Then we have an outline of the environment of West Park, as well as the Jiajing emperor's Daoist beliefs before 1542. The main analysis there treats the way the emperor turned West Park into an immortal land. In particular, this section discusses the many construction works undertaken and rites and ceremonies performed during his residence. A comparison of the Park before the 1540s with the Park subsequently will provide clues to the emperor's objectives.<sup>6</sup>

#### IMMORTAL LANDS

Ming-era concepts of immortals and immortal lands need to be understood before West Park can be properly considered in the context of the Jiajing court. The term immortal or *xian* 仙 refers to individuals who were often seen as having gained an existence free of death.<sup>7</sup> The quest for immortality had been one of the main goals of religious Daoism (hereafter simply termed Daoism) from the time it was formulated around the first century AD.<sup>8</sup> In Tang times, there had been a general understanding that everything that had form possessed a Daoist nature.<sup>9</sup> The possession of a Daoist nature enabled an ordinary man with sufficient faith and self-cultivation to undergo a spiritual and physical transformation, reaching a life beyond the mundane effects of *yin* and *yang*, and enjoying longevity and immortality.<sup>10</sup> Immortals were thought to

<sup>6</sup> In this issue of *Asia Major*, Yu Huichun writes about certain aspects of West Park during Qing times that relate to the emperor's antiquities collections; see Yu, "Qianlong's Divine Treasures: The Bells in Rhyming-The-Old Hall."

<sup>7</sup> The term "xian" is alternatively translated as "transcendent" by some scholars to emphasize the *xian*'s being transferred from the common human state to a more subtilized form of existence, closer to the nature of the Dao. Stephen Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1997), pp. 22–23.

<sup>8</sup> Qing Xitai 卿希泰, ed., *Zhongguo Daojiao shi* 中國道教史 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1996), vol. 1, pp. 59–76.

<sup>9</sup> A famous Daoist, Pan Sizheng 潘思正 (586–684) states, "Everything that has form possesses Daoist nature 一切有形, 皆含道性"; CT1128 *Daomen jingfa xiangcheng cixu* 道門經法相承次序, j. 1, p. 786. In this article, all references to Daoist texts compiled in the *Daozang* 道藏 begin with "CT" and are coded according to Kristofer Schipper's system; Kristofer Schipper, *Concordance du Tao-tsang: Titres des ouvrages* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1975). The page number of each text follows the edition of the *Daozang* jointly published by the Wenwu chubanshe 文物出版社, Shanghai shudian 上海書店, and Tianjin guji chubanshe 天津古籍出版社 in 1988.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Little and Shawn Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago and Berkeley:

be able to move freely between heaven and earth. They lived in certain lands designated as *dongtian* 洞天, or cave-heavens, which existed in the vast stretch of the Great Void between heaven and earth.<sup>11</sup> Novels and dramas dated from the sixteenth to eighteenth century portrayed such immortal lands as quiet and secluded, yet beautiful, places.<sup>12</sup> Characteristically, an immortal land was shrouded by colorful mists and clouds and planted with thousand-year-old trees, wonderful flowers, and fragrant grass. In particular, fungi of immortality and peach trees were often said to have grown there. Besides immortals, these lands were populated by fabulous birds and animals, including cranes, phoenix-like birds, deer, apes, and elephants.

They were not only immortal abodes, but also places in which earthly Daoists could pursue their own spiritual and physical transformations. It could be reached by humans through designated earthly landmarks, also called *dongtian*, in the mountains.<sup>13</sup> These caves were connected mysteriously with the real *dongtian*, or immortal lands. It was believed that the immortal lands were particularly favorable environments for pursuing immortality. There, practitioners could effectively achieve union with the Dao by refining alchemical drugs. Contemporary paintings frequently imagined this fantastic land as a court garden dotted with pavilions and halls, and populated with elegantly dressed maidens.<sup>14</sup> As Kiyohiko Munakata perceptively notes, the courtly ver-

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Art Institute of Chicago and University of California Press, 2000), p. 313. For ideas of immortals, see Anna Seidel, "Post-mortem Immortality or the Taoist Resurrection of the Body," in S. Shaked et al., *Gilgul: Essays on Transformation, Revolution, and Permanence in the History of Religions, Dedicated to R. J. Zwi Werblowsky* (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1987), pp. 230–37; Isabelle Robinet, "Metamorphosis and Deliverance from the Corpse in Taoism," *History of Religions* 19.1 (1979), pp. 37–70.

<sup>11</sup> Kiyohiko Munakata, *Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art* (Urbana and Chicago: Krannert Art Museum and University of Illinois Press, 1991), p. 111. For the concept of *dongtian*, see Franciscus Verellen, "The Beyond Within: Grotto-heavens (*dongtian* 洞天) in Taoist Ritual and Cosmology," *CEA* 8 (1995), pp. 270–73; Li Fengmao 李豐楙, *Liuchao Sui Tang xiandao lei xiaoshuo yanjiu* 六朝隋唐仙道類小說研究 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1997), pp. 191–92.

<sup>12</sup> Gou Bo 苟波, *Daojiao yu shenmo xiaoshuo* 道教與神魔小說 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 1999), pp. 134–46. Gou analyses the structure of the cosmos as described in 16th–18th c. novels. Three realms are noted: *tianjie* 天界 or Heavenly Realm where lived highest gods and deities. Then was *dijie* 地界 or Earthly Realm, the chaotic world where human beings resided. At the same time, in the *dijie* there were landmarks leading to immortal lands that resembled the Heavenly Realm but were separate from it and distinct from the Earthly Realm. These were places where immortals lived and mortals aspired to visit to cultivate themselves as they pursued immortality. The third realm was *diyu* 地獄 or Hell, where ghosts were locked up, judged, and penalized. The immortal land concerned here is referred to as a separate immortal region in the Earthly Realm. I base the following descriptions of the immortal land on Gou's analysis.

<sup>13</sup> Li, *Liuchao Sui Tang*, pp. 207–8.

<sup>14</sup> Examples include "Festival of the Peaches of Longevity" (15th c.), in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, and "Jade Cave Fairyland" by Qiu Ying 仇英 (ca. 1494–ca. 1552),

sion of the immortals' realm is likely to have developed in the society of high officials and even emperors. They patronized Daoism and "built their court gardens after the image of a luxurious paradise."<sup>15</sup> The pervasive belief in an immortal land as an ideal place for the pursuit of immortality would have underlain the Jiajing emperor's choice of West Park as the site for his practice of Daoist rituals and self-cultivation.

## BEFORE 1542

### *West Park*

West Park was a renowned imperial garden long before the Jiajing emperor took it as his residence. Adjacent to the Forbidden City in present-day Beijing, it was originally built by Khubilai Khan based on a Jin dynasty (1115–1234) construction. It was redesigned and reconstructed together with the Imperial City between 1407 and 1420 and became the imperial resort of the Ming dynasty.<sup>16</sup> Located in the western portion of the Imperial City, it occupied almost a third of the latter's total area.<sup>17</sup> (See the map provided, following page.) It was made up of three main parts. The first was a parkland covering approximately the area of present Beihai 北海 Park and Zhongnan hai 中南海. It was primarily occupied by three interconnected lakes, collectively known as Taiye chi 太液池, or Jinhai 金海. Some of the lake area was dug in the twelfth century and then greatly expanded in the early fifteenth.<sup>18</sup> The water stretched out over four *li* 里 (about 2,240 meters) from the north to the south, taking up over half the parkland.<sup>19</sup> West of the parkland was the second part of West Park, namely, Tu'er shan 兔兒山. This artificial hill was located southeast of Xi'an men 西安門, the western portal of the Imperial City. It was constructed during an earlier time, as a resort for the Yuan dynasty.<sup>20</sup> Parts one and two were renowned

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in the Palace Museum, Beijing; see Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, cat. 27; Richard Barnhart et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Haven and London: Yale U.P.; Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1997), pl. 212.

<sup>15</sup> Munakata, *Sacred Mountains*, p. 130.

<sup>16</sup> Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 1990), p. 169; Cheng Liyao 程里堯, *Huangjia yuanyou jianzhu: qinqi sheqi yuhuayuan* 皇家苑囿建築, 琴棋射騎御花園 (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 1993), pp. 130–31.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley and London: U. California P., 2000), p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Cheng, *Huangjia yuanyou jianzhu*, pp. 129–31.

<sup>19</sup> For the measurements of the lakes, see Wu Changyuan 吳長元 (fl. 1770), *Chenyuan shilüe* 宸垣識略 (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1983) 4, p. 59.

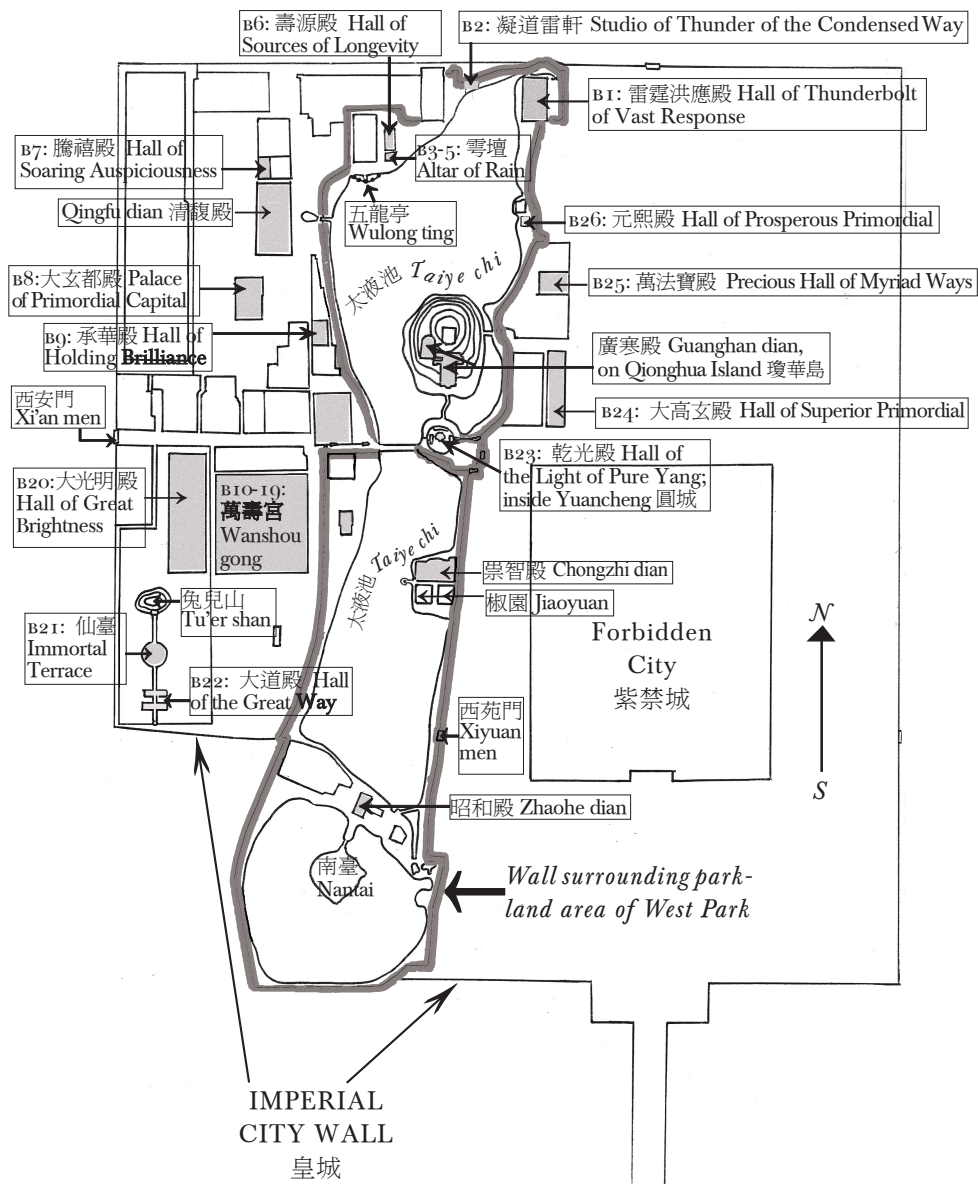
<sup>20</sup> Ren Changtai 任常泰 and Meng Yanan 孟亞男, *Zhongguo yuanlin shi* 中國園林史 (Beijing: Beijing yanshan chubanshe, 1993), pp. 159–61; Zhu Xie 朱偁, *Ming Qing liangdai gongyuan*

*Map of West Park, Final Years of Jiajing Reign*

From Hou Renzhi 侯仁之, ed., *Beijing lishi ditu ji* 北京歷史地圖集, vol. 2 (*Beijing: Beijing chubanshe*, 1985). All numbers and place names have been added by the author for the present article; many are keyed to tables 1 and 2.

Before 1542 the following names were applied:

- B6: Taisu dian 太素殿
- B9: Yingcui dian 迎翠殿
- B26: Ninghe dian 凝和殿



for scenic beauty and open only by imperial invitation. The third part of West Park was the palace complex between the parkland and the artificial hill. It was built upon the site of the old Yuan Palace, Longfu gong 隆福宮.<sup>21</sup> Together with Tu'er shan, the complex was regarded as Xinei 西內 or the Western Interior, in Ming times. The Jiajing emperor lived in this palace after he moved to West Park. It was not open for sightseeing, not even imperially-granted tours.<sup>22</sup>

In order to better understand the particularities of West Park, we can take a journey through texts.<sup>23</sup> Our journey begins at the main portal, Xiyuan men 西苑門, situated on the southeast perimeter (see map). Passing through Xiyuan men, we are immediately confronted by a vast stretch of water. It was the Lake Taiye. Coiling mist and clouds shroud the water surface. Amidst cattails and reeds, we see birds and water creatures playing and singing. Moving northward along the eastern shore, we reach Jiaoyuan 椒園, or Jiao Garden. Hidden behind leafy pines, cypresses, and fruit trees, to the north of the Jiaoyuan, is a richly adorned circular hall named Chongzhi dian 崇智殿.<sup>24</sup> Continuing northward, we encounter our first island, on which stands a high terrace known as Yuancheng 圓城. Near its gate grow fragrant flowering trees and ancient pines, which are shaped like dragons stretching their claws.<sup>25</sup> The terrace is surmounted by the Chengguang dian 承

*jianzhi yange tukao* 明清兩代宮苑建置沿革圖考 (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1947), pp. 55–58. The site is in the vicinity of today's Tuyangshan 圖樣山 Lane; Yu Deyuan 于德源, *Beijing lidai chengfang gongdian yuanyou* 北京歷代城坊宮殿苑囿 (Beijing: Shoudu shifan daxue chubanshe, 1997), p. 200.

<sup>21</sup> Zhu, *Ming Qing liangdai gongyuan*, pp. 48–50.

<sup>22</sup> Some Ming and Qing authors regarded government depots and offices in the vicinity of the three basic parts mentioned above to be part of West Park. For example, in “Xiyuan shi shishou” 西苑詩十首 by Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470–1559), a poem concerns Wansui shan 萬歲山, which was beyond the eastern boundary of West Park, as defined above; Wen Zhengming, *Wen Zhengming ji* 文徵明集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), pp. 299–300. In the *Jin'ao tui-shi biji* 金鰲退食筆記 by Gao Shiqi 高士奇 (1645–1704), the Dagaouxuan dian 大高玄殿 between the parkland and Wansui shan, and all the government buildings in the northwest corner of the Imperial City were also included in West Park; Gao, *Jin'ao tui-shi biji* (Beiping difang yanjiu congkan series [Taipei: Jinxue shuju, 1970, vol. 2.8]; hereafter, *JATSBJ*) 2, pp. 61–106.

<sup>23</sup> The following description is based on reports left by Ming officials who had visited West Park. The reports include: “Ci you Xiyuan shi xu” 賜遊西苑詩序 by Yang Shiqi 楊士奇 (1365–1444) who visited in 1433 (Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 [1610–1695], *Ming wenhai* 明文海 [SKQS edn.; Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987] 258, pp. 14a–15b); “Ci you Xiyuan ji” 賜遊西苑記 by Han Yong 韓雍 (1422–1478) (*Xiangyi wenji* 襄毅文集 [SKQS edn.] 9, pp. 1a–6b); “Ci you Xiyuan ji” 賜遊西苑記 by Li Xian 李賢 (1408–1466) (Sun Chengze 孫承澤 [1592–1676], *Chunming mengyu lu* 春明夢餘錄 [SKQS edn.; hereafter, *CMMYL*] 64, pp. 22b–25a). Both Han Yong and Li Xian visited the park in 1459; “Xiyuan shi shishou” by Wen Zhengming, who visited in 1525 (Wen, *Wen Zhengming ji*, pp. 299–304); “Xinei qianji 西內前記” by Li Mo 李默 (16th c.) (Huang Zongxi, *Ming wenhai* 355, pp. 13a–16b).

<sup>24</sup> *CMMYL* 64, p. 22b.

<sup>25</sup> *CMMYL* 64, p. 21a.

光殿, a grand building providing a vantage point for viewing the lake scenery. Here, Ming emperors used to appreciate colorful lanterns set in the Park.<sup>26</sup>

Passing the white marble bridge to the north of Yuancheng, we reach the largest island on the lakes – Qionghua dao 瓊華島 (Isle of Fine Jade). Its name is associated with certain beautiful stones from which the home of the Queen Mother of the West in Kunlun was made.<sup>27</sup> The hill is piled up with magnificent rocks of unusual shapes. At the foot of the hill is a stone wall. Passing a gate, we find a small hall surrounded by gorgeous flowers and rare plants, chess boards, stone beds, and jade screens.<sup>28</sup> Along the craggy road on the western slope are stone mounds and grottoes, one named Tiger Cave, the other called Grotto of Lü 呂 the Immortal. Higher up, resplendent halls and pavilions come into view, notably the four pavilions – Fanghu 方壺, Yingzhou 瀛洲, Yuhong 玉虹, and Jinlu 金露. The former two took the names of legendary isles of immortals in the East China Sea, whereas the latter two recalled the jade rainbow and sweet dew found there.

The pavilions flank a large building on the hilltop.<sup>29</sup> Known as Guanghan dian 廣寒殿, a name identical to the palace of the immortal Lady in the Moon, Chang E, it is an ornate hall with four sides richly decorated with colorful intricate carvings.<sup>30</sup> From this high point, we can look afar and appreciate the rosy clouds shrouding the Park. If we turn our gaze to the northeast, we immediately see a grand hall named Ninghe 凝和 standing on the shore together with a few pavilions. Gazing northwestward, we observe a set of pavilions and gates, together with a newly renovated hall, the Taisu dian 太素殿. Extending southward from there, we see a picturesque hall, the Yingcui dian 迎翠殿, standing on the western shore across the lake. Turning our gaze back to the southeast, we can enjoy the stately architecture of the Forbidden City in the distance, and even view the whole capital city.

A small bridge on the eastern slope of the island leads us back to the northeast bank. If we walk northward along the shore, we pass all the pavilions and halls that we have just seen from the hilltop. Circling around and back southward to the western bank, a white marble bridge

<sup>26</sup> Han, *Xiangyi wenji* 9, p. 2b.

<sup>27</sup> *Shizhou ji* 十洲記 attributed to Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (154–93 BC), in Ma Da 馬達, ed., *Zhongguo wenyan xiaoshuo baibu jingdian* 中國文言小說百部經典 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000), vol. 1, p. 218.

<sup>28</sup> Han, *Xiangyi wenji* 9, p. 3a.

<sup>29</sup> *CMMYL* 64, p. 23b.

<sup>30</sup> Han, *Xiangyi wenji* 9, p. 3a. For the Guanghan dian, see Edward H. Schafer, “Ways of Looking at the Moon Palace,” *AM* 3d ser. 1.1 (1988), pp. 1–13.

called the Jin'ao Yudong 金鰲玉棟 connects the Yuancheng with the palace complex and the artificial hill in the west. Farther south, passing the middle lake, we reach a long bank of earth planted with trees. On it was built a graceful hall called Zhaohe 昭和, which faces the third island, Nantai 南臺. Here we can enjoy the sight of gulls flying above the rippling surface of the lake.<sup>31</sup>

Although we manage to observe only some of the representative scenic spots in the parkland region, this excursion has shown that the Park was associated with an immortal land before the Jiajing reign. The design of West Park, with Lake Taiye and the three islands Qionghua dao, Yuancheng, and Nantai, recalled such legendary immortal islands as Penglai 蓬萊, Fangzhang 方丈, and Yingzhou 瀛洲, floating on the East China Sea.<sup>32</sup> Its fantastic landscape, with fragrant and elegant plants, magnificent rockeries, richly ornate palaces and halls, coiling mist and clouds, also resembled the courtly version of the immortal land as stated in the fifteenth and early-sixteenth-century texts discussed earlier. The otherworldly associations of some features of the Park further indicate that it was thought to be linked to immortal lands from the beginning of the Ming. However, Ming emperors before the Jiajing emperor generally viewed West Park as a pleasure garden in which they themselves and their families could relax and enjoy natural scenic beauty. It was only in the Jiajing reign that the Daoist element of immortality developed further.

### *The Jiajing Emperor*

When the Jiajing emperor came to the throne in 1521, he was only in his early teens, and there was no mention in historical records of his interest in West Park.<sup>33</sup> Being merely an indirect descendant of the previous emperor, he devoted much time and energy in the first years of his reign to establishing imperial authority and legitimacy in the succession. His struggle with grand secretaries and officials over

<sup>31</sup> CMMYL 64, p. 25a.

<sup>32</sup> Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–86 BC), *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959) 6, p. 247; 28, p. 1402. Lothar Ledderose also identifies West Park as a typical paradise garden in the Chinese tradition; "The Earthly Paradise: Religious Elements in Chinese Landscape Art," in Susan Bush and Christian Murck, eds., *Theories of the Arts in China* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1983), p. 171. For the tradition of paradise gardens in ancient China, see Rolf Stein, *The World in Miniature: Container Gardens and Dwellings in Far Eastern Religious Thought*, trans. Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1990); James Hargett, "Huizong's Magic Marchmount: the Genyue Pleasure Park of Kaifeng," *MS* 38 (1988–89), pp. 1–48.

<sup>33</sup> Only a few reconstructions were done in West Park between 1522 and 1539. For example, an old palace was turned into a hall called Wuyi dian 無逸殿 and a pavilion called Bin-feng ting 幽風亭 in early Jiajing reign.

the imperial rituals and titles proper for his late father, coined by historians as the “Great Ritual Controversy,” marked his first success in asserting supremacy. Nonetheless, his position remained tenuous without an heir, as he had not fathered a son in the first decade of his reign.<sup>34</sup> On the recommendation of a eunuch in the imperial household, Daoist prayer ceremonies for fertility were conducted.<sup>35</sup> Such ceremonies, once conducted in the preceding reign, were enthusiastically supported by the emperor, whose belief in Daoism and its rituals had been noticed and criticized by his officials shortly after accession.<sup>36</sup> In 1524, the emperor further summoned to the court Shao Yuanjie 邵元節 (1459–1539), a Daoist master associated with the Zhengyi 正一 School.<sup>37</sup> Among other duties, Shao held Daoist rituals and prayed for an imperial heir. When the emperor fathered his first son in 1533, he credited Shao and showered him with lavish gifts and honorary titles, making him the most influential religious figure of the time.<sup>38</sup> The important role of Daoism in consolidating the imperial authority of the Jiajing emperor must have thus strengthened his faith.

In this period, the emperor began to show interest in external alchemy and drugs of longevity, as shown in a personal letter of 1526 that he sent to Celestial Master Zhang Yanpian 張彥顯, requesting secret prescriptions.<sup>39</sup> In the same letter, the emperor designated himself as Yuanyang dijun 元陽帝君 (Emperor of Primordial Yang).<sup>40</sup> This extraordinary Daoist name suggests that the emperor already identified himself with Daoism and its pantheon.

A series of tragedies occurring between 1538 and 1542 has usually been considered as crucial to the Jiajing emperor’s ultimate seclusion.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Yang, “Mingdai zhudi,” pp. 80–84.

<sup>35</sup> Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett, eds., *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part I* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1988), p. 479. *MSZSL* 27, p. 760; Gu Yingtai 谷應泰, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 明史紀事本末 (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1936) 52, p. 1; Cheng, *Ming Shizong*, pp. 85–86.

<sup>36</sup> *MS* 307, p. 7894.

<sup>37</sup> Shao Yuanjie, native of Xing’an 興安 (Jiangxi province), was the disciple of Daoist masters Fan Wentai 范文泰 and Huang Taichu 黃太初. He was associated with the Zhengyi Daoist temple Shangqing gong 上清宮 on Longhu shan 龍虎山 in Jiangxi. For his biography, see Carington Goodrich and Fang Chaoying, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1364–1644* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1976), pp. 1169–70; Jiao Hong 焦竑 (1541–1620) et al., *Guochao xianzheng lu* 國朝獻徵錄 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1965) 118, pp. 5258–60.

<sup>38</sup> Mote and Twitchett, eds., *Cambridge History of China*, p. 967.

<sup>39</sup> CT 1462: *Huangming enming shilu* 皇明恩命世錄 8, p. 807.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*; Yuanyang dijun was one of the Jiajing emperor’s Daoist titles. In 1539, he wrote two other letters to the Celestial Master, signing himself as Xiangyi dijun 象一帝君 (The Emperor of the Image of the One) and Yuanyang, a short form for Yuanyang dijun; *ibid.* 8, pp. 808–9.

<sup>41</sup> For detailed discussion of the following events, see Lin Yanqing 林延清, *Jiajing huangdi dazhuan* 嘉靖皇帝大傳 (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1993), pp. 157–75.

In December, 1538, the emperor's mother died from illness.<sup>42</sup> Her death was a terrible shock to the emperor who upheld filial piety and endeavored to promote his birth-parents to the status of imperial sovereign ever since he came to the throne. This tragedy was shortly followed by a serious devastation that he experienced during his grand tour to the south.<sup>43</sup> In the spring of 1539, the Jiajing emperor made a two-month trip to his former principedom in Anlu in order to inspect the potential burial ground for his mother. That was the first and also the last long-distance journey he made during his reign. During the journey, he saw starving people and refugees in numerous places. The suffering must have been immense and impressed him so deeply that he ordered the treasury to grant 20,000 *liang* 兩 for emergency relief.<sup>44</sup> The people's misery may also have led the emperor to believe that his reform of state rituals and government bureaucracy over the past eighteen years was in vain.<sup>45</sup> Two years after the southern tour, the emperor still demanded candidates in the civil examination to explain why people's suffering did not come to an end despite his having followed Confucian teaching in upholding ethical relations and restoring ritual orthodoxy.<sup>46</sup> The frustration experienced during the southern tour contributed to his increasing disinterest in state affairs.

A huge fire happened during the same journey; this further brought the emperor to a critical juncture vis-a-vis Daoism. On the twenty-eighth day of the second lunar month of 1539, a fire broke out in the temporary quarters of the Jiajing emperor on his way to Anlu. The fire was actually specifically predicted by Tao Zhongwen 陶仲文 (ca. 1481–1560), a Daoist recommended to the emperor by Shao Yuanjue in 1538,<sup>47</sup> and fortunately the emperor was saved by one of his touring staff.<sup>48</sup> Shortly afterwards, Tao became the master of the Jiajing emperor and had profound influence in shaping the latter's religious behavior. As the emperor's concern for his own mortality grew, Tao encouraged the emperor to explore the practice of external alchemy and

<sup>42</sup> MS 115, p. 3554.

<sup>43</sup> MS; MSZSL 221, p. 4598; 223, p. 4630.

<sup>44</sup> Tan Qian 談遷, *Guo que* 國榷 (Beijing: Guji chubanshe, 1958) 57, p. 3575.

<sup>45</sup> Lin, *Jiajing huangdi dazhuan*, pp. 166–67.

<sup>46</sup> MSZSL 247, pp. 4952–54.

<sup>47</sup> MS 307, p. 7896; Mote and Twitchett, eds., *Cambridge History of China*, p. 464. Tao Zhongwen, a native of Huanggang 黃岡, Huguang, had his early career as a yamen clerk. He was a disciple of a Daoist master, Wan Yushan 萬玉山. Tao's acquaintance with Shao Yuanjue and his exorcist skills led him to be introduced to the Jiajing emperor; Jiao et al., *Guochao xianzheng lu* 118, pp. 5261–62. For Tao's biography, see Goodrich and Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, pp. 1266–68; Liu Ts'un-yan 柳存仁, "Bu Mingshi ningxing Tao Zhongwen zhuan" 補明史佞幸陶仲文傳, in *Hefengtang wenji* 和風堂文集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), pp. 924–37.

<sup>48</sup> Mote and Twitchett, eds., *Cambridge History of China*, p. 464.

*Table 1. Buildings Built or Rebuilt in the Jiajing Period*

B stands for building; nos. 1-26 are shown in map.

| YEAR OF<br>CONSTRUCTION | LOCATION | BUILDINGS                                                                                      |
|-------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1542                    | B24      | Dagaoxuan dian<br>大高玄殿                                                                         |
| 1542                    | B27      | Youguo kangmin leidian<br>佑國康民雷殿                                                               |
| 1543; rebuilt 1564      | B1       | Leiting hongying dian<br>雷霆洪應殿                                                                 |
| 1543                    | B2       | Ningdao leixuan 凝道雷軒                                                                           |
| 1543                    | B3       | Yutan 零壇                                                                                       |
| 1555                    | B29      | Zihuang dian 紫皇殿                                                                               |
| 1557                    | B20      | Daguangming dian<br>大光明殿                                                                       |
| 1558                    | B8       | Daxuandu dian 大玄都殿                                                                             |
| rebuilt 1562            | B10      | Wanshou gong 萬壽宮<br>(Originally Yongshou gong<br>永壽宮 built before the reign<br>of Jiajing)     |
| 1564                    | B36      | Yannian dian 延年殿                                                                               |
| rebuilt 1565            | B25      | Wanfa baodian 萬法寶殿                                                                             |
| rebuilt 1564            | B26      | Yuanxi dian 元熙殿 (Orig-<br>inally Ninghe dian 凝和<br>殿 built before the reign of<br>Jiajing)     |
| rebuilt 1566            | B23      | Qianguang dian 乾光殿<br>(Originally Chengguang dian<br>承光殿 built before the reign<br>of Jiajing) |
| 1566                    | B30      | Chaoyuan guan 朝元館                                                                              |
| 1566                    | B31      | Jingxi dian 淨席殿                                                                                |
| 1566                    | B32      | Zhenqing dian 真慶殿                                                                              |
| 1566                    | B33      | Zichen gong 紫宸宮                                                                                |
| 1566                    | B34      | Ziji dian 紫極殿                                                                                  |

internal alchemy for attaining immortality. Tao recommended Duan Chaoyong 段朝用 (d. 1543), who claimed to have acquired the skill of transforming metal to silver. Duan promised that if the emperor secluded himself and used silver tableware that he produced, the emperor would be transformed into an immortal. Charmed by Duan's rhetoric, the Jiajing emperor, who frequently was in ill-health, proposed to se-

clude himself for one or two years and let the crown prince, Zhu Zaihe 朱載堉 (1536–1549), oversee the state.<sup>49</sup> Although the emperor finally dropped this proposal, following fierce opposition from bureaucrats, his desire to be distant from the inner court and state affairs and to live in seclusion did not diminish.

From 1539 on, the Jiajing emperor began to live partly in West Park. He ordered his grand secretaries to remain in the Park overnight and to compose Daoist prayers for him. The assassination attempt that took place in 1542 (see above) steeled him to his plan for withdrawal. Shortly after it, he moved into West Park. From then on, he left his grand secretaries to deal with most affairs, while he devoted himself to various religious practices.

#### WEST PARK AFTER 1542

Throughout his residency in West Park, the Jiajing emperor took a series of measures to change its physical and cultural environment. These measures and activities point to a strong intention to transform the Park into an immortal land. They included

1. buildings for Daoist uses, forming quite a change in the physical setting of West Park ;
2. new designations for places, thus manipulating the collective understanding of the Park's features; and
3. ordering or encouraging various Daoist religious activities, such as rituals, alchemical practices, divination, and auspicious signs to take place there.

These measures and activities all contributed to an environment favorable to enacting an idealized life of an immortal.<sup>50</sup> At this point, we look at each one of these measures.

#### *Buildings*

The number of construction works in West Park during the Jiajing period outnumbered those of other Ming reigns. Table 1 (facing) shows a total of eighteen buildings either built or rebuilt by the Jiajing emperor in the vicinity of the Park during the last twenty-five years

<sup>49</sup> *MS* 209, p. 5516; 307, p. 7898; *WLYHB* 27, p. 749. Zhu Zaihe was the second son of the Jiajing emperor. He died at the age of 12 without succeeding to the throne.

<sup>50</sup> My discussion depends heavily on the *Zhuozhong zhi* 酌中志 by Liu Ruoyu 劉若愚 (1584–ca.1642). Liu Ruoyu, *Zhuozhongzhi* (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1994; hereafter, *ZZZ*). This text contains the most detailed non-official record about West Park written by someone who visited the place only about 35 years after the end of the Jiajing reign. I also make use of other accounts written by late Ming and Qing eye-witnesses for providing supplementary ma-

of his reign. The construction of these buildings was concentrated in three periods of time, with the first period between 1542 and 1543, the second between 1557 and 1558, and the third from 1564 to 1566. These works coincided with three important points of the emperor's religious life.<sup>51</sup>

The first period marks just the beginning of the emperor's residency. Five buildings were constructed, namely Dagaoxuan dian 大高玄殿 (B<sub>24</sub>), Youguo kangmin leidian 佑國康民雷殿 (B<sub>27</sub>), Leiting hongying dian 雷霆洪應殿 (B<sub>1</sub>), Ningdao leixuan 凝道雷軒 (B<sub>2</sub>), and Yutan 零壇 (B<sub>3</sub>). It seems obvious that the aim of the construction works was to provide the emperor with desirable venues for Daoist services, because the majority of rituals that took place in West Park for the rest of his life were held in the temples and altars from this period.<sup>52</sup> Among them, the Dagaoxuan dian was the most important. It was a grand Daoist temple completed in the fourth month of 1542, well before the Jiajing emperor moved to the Park.<sup>53</sup> In front of the temple were two inscribed steles, which read, "Palace dependents and other people reaching this point must all dismount from chariots and horses 宮眷人等至此俱下車馬." In the opinion of Liu Ruoyu, a late-Ming eunuch, this instruction indicated the Jiajing emperor's respect for Daoism.<sup>54</sup> On the front gate were four characters "Shiqing daoqing 始青道境," translated as "Daoist Realm of the Initiating Empyrean." To the left and right of the gate were two monumental archways. One was inscribed "Xiantian mingjing; Taiji xianlin" 先天明境; 太極仙林 meaning "Bright Realm of the Anterior Heaven; Immortal Forest of the Supreme Ultimate." The other read "Kongsui huangzuo; Hongyou tianmin" 孔綏皇祚; 宏佑天民, meaning "Great Stability for the Imperial Reign; Broad Support to Heaven and the People." Behind the gates were two pavilions: the Jiongming ge 晃明閣 on the left and the Yinling xuan 烟靈軒 on the right.<sup>55</sup> The main hall was installed with the statues of the Three Purities.<sup>56</sup> To its

terials: Jiang Yikui 蔣一葵 (16th c.), *Chang'an kehua* 長安客話 (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1994); *CMMYL*; *JATSB*; Yu Minzhong 于敏中 (1714–1779) et al., *Qinding Rixia jiuwen kao* 欽定日下舊聞考 (hereafter *RXJWK*) (SKQS edn. [Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987, vols. 497–99]); Wu Changyuan (fl. 1770), *Chenyuan shilüe*.

<sup>51</sup> Each building mentioned in this section is followed by "B" and a number indicating its location in table 2 and the map. However, only buildings B<sub>1</sub> to B<sub>26</sub> are shown in map 1. The locations of buildings B<sub>27</sub> to 36 are unknown.

<sup>52</sup> This topic will be elaborated below, in the section "Religious Activities."

<sup>53</sup> *MSZSL* 260, pp. 5189–90.

<sup>54</sup> *ZZZ* 17, p. 142.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* 17, p. 139; *CMMYL* 6, p. 18a.

<sup>56</sup> *WLYHB* 2, p. 50; *RXJWK* 41, p. 4a. The Three Purities or Sanqing 三清 refer to the three highest deities of Daoist pantheon. They are the Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊, the Ling-

northeast was a building called the Xiangyi gong 象一宮.<sup>57</sup> A gilt statue of the Jiajing emperor as a Daoist god was installed there.<sup>58</sup> During the inauguration ceremony, the Jiajing emperor announced that the temple was built for worshiping and praying to heaven and to the gods for the well-being of his subjects.<sup>59</sup> State ceremonies and Daoist rituals were held in the temple. The emperor also let palace maids and eunuchs live there when they were learning Daoist scriptures and rituals.<sup>60</sup>

Comparable in size and significance to the Dagaoxuan dian was the Leiting Hongying dian located at the northern end of Lake Taiye. It was an altar complex built in 1543.<sup>61</sup> Extant record provides no description of this complex, except for its fourteen name-plaques. They were Tancheng 壇城, Honglei xuan 轟雷軒, Xiaofeng shi 嘯風室, Xuxue shi 噓雪室, Yunyu shi 雲雨室, Yaodian shi 耀電室, Qingyi zhai 清一齋, Baoyuan men 寶淵門, Ling'an tang 靈安堂, Jingxin tang 精馨堂, Yuxian ci 馭仙次, Fuguo tang 輔國堂, Yanmiao tang 演妙堂, and Rusheng ju 入聖居.<sup>62</sup> These name-plaques indicate that the complex was composed of many halls for prayers of different purposes. The Jiajing emperor was recorded to have prayed for rain and snow and offered Daoist sacrifices within the Leiting Hongying dian, a topic taken up below.

The other three buildings of this period were all for religious or semi-religious purposes. Youguo kangmin leidian was a Daoist altar initiated by Tao Zhongwen in 1542.<sup>63</sup> Ningdao leixuan was a favorite private studio of the Jiajing emperor, where he prayed and frequently visited in the daytime.<sup>64</sup> Yutan was built in 1543 for praying for rain.<sup>65</sup>

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bao tianzun 靈寶天尊 and the Daode tianzun 道德天尊. The Three Purities appeared in Tang times and continue to be worshipped today.

<sup>57</sup> Xiangyi was one of the emperor's Daoist titles. Xia Yan 夏言 (1482–1548) composed a verse to commemorate the completion of this hall; Xia Yan, *Xia Guizhou xiansheng wenji* 夏桂洲先生文集 (Siku quanshu cunmu congshu edn. [Taipei: Zhuangyan wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1997]) 16, p. 55.

<sup>58</sup> ZZZ 17, p. 139; WLYHB 2, p. 50. The statue was slightly more than a foot high.

<sup>59</sup> MSZSL 260, pp. 5189–90; RXJWK 41, p. 4a. <sup>60</sup> ZZZ 17, p. 138; WLYHB 2, p. 50.

<sup>61</sup> MSZSL 273, p. 5364.

<sup>62</sup> ZZZ 17, p. 141; CMMYL 6, pp. 44b–45a.

<sup>63</sup> MSZSL 266, p. 5269; MS 209, p. 5530.

<sup>64</sup> WLYHB 2, p. 50. Ningdao leixuan was used for praying for snow in 1561 and 1565, and for rain in 1566. MSZSL 504, p. 8324; 559, p. 8983; He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠 (1558–1632), *Mingshanzang* 名山藏 (*Xuxiu siku quanshu*, vols. 425–27 [Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995]) 27, p. 144; 28, pp. 154, 156.

<sup>65</sup> Yan Song 嚴嵩 (1480–1567), *Qianshan tangji* 鈐山堂集 (*Siku quanshu cunmu congshu*, vol. 56) 18, p. 164; RXJWK 36, p. 21b; Ren and Meng, *Zhongguo yuanlin shi*, p. 158.

The second period saw the construction of the Daguangming dian 大光明殿 (B20) in 1557 and Daxuandu dian 大玄都殿 (B8) in 1558.<sup>66</sup> The former is particularly worthy of notice because it was the largest altar complex in West Park. It had, behind its front gate, a large circular altar resembling the Altar of Heaven.<sup>67</sup> It was composed of many richly ornate halls. One of them called Tianxuan ge 天玄閣 (B20k; this and various other numbers are found only in table 2) had a tablet saying “Chanxuan baozuo” 闡玄保祚, that is, “Expounding the Mysterious Way; maintaining the Good Fortune of the Nation.” The roof of the hall was covered with yellow glazed tiles and its exterior walls were covered with green glazed tiles; columns in the front were red with gilt decoration and dragon ornaments. Inside the hall, windows and ceiling were carved and painted in gold. The tablet stating *Qibao yunlong shen* 七寶雲龍神 (Cloud Dragon God of Seven Treasures) for worshipping Heaven on High was set upon three layers of white marble. It is said that the Jiajing emperor practised self-cultivation and discussed internal alchemy with Tao Zhongwen there.<sup>68</sup> Like the Daguangming dian, the Daxuandu dian was also a venue for Daoist ceremonies.<sup>69</sup>

The completion of the Da Guangming dian and the Daxuandu dian occurred one to two years after the emperor proclaimed himself a Daoist deity. In 1556, he publicly conferred upon himself three magnificent Daoist titles. They were: 1. Lingxiao shangqing tonglei yuanyang miaoyi feixuan zhenjun 靈霄上清統雷元陽妙一飛玄真君, 2. Jiutian hongjiao puji shengling zhang yinyang gongguo dadao siren ziji xianweng yiyang zhenren yuanxu xuanying kaihua fumo zhongxiao dijun 九天弘教普濟生靈掌陰陽功過大道思仁紫極仙翁一陽真人元虛玄應開化伏魔忠孝帝君, and 3. Taishang daluo tianxian ziji changsheng shengzhi zhaoling tongyuan zhengying yuxu zongzhang wulei dazhenren xuandujing wanshou dijun 太上大羅天仙紫極長生聖智昭靈統元證應玉虛總掌五雷大真人玄都境萬壽帝君. At the same time, he granted to his natural parents similarly extravagant Daoist appellations.<sup>70</sup> The emperor’s proclamation made clear to his subjects that he was not only the emperor of the Ming territories, but also a transcendent being, a Daoist god. Although written evidence to substantiate the relationship between his proclamation and the construction of the grand hall of Daguangming dian is yet to be

<sup>66</sup> For the Daguangming dian, see Zhu, *Ming Qing liangdai gongyuan*, pp. 18, 56–58; *RXJWK* 42, pp. 16b, 17a; *CMMYL* 6, pp. 51a–52a. For the Daxuandu dian, see *RXJWK* 41, p. 14b.

<sup>67</sup> *JATSBJ* 2, p. 91.

<sup>68</sup> *JATSBJ* 2, p. 92.

<sup>69</sup> Daxuandu dian was the venue for Daoist ceremonies in 1559, 1560 and 1565; *MSZSL* 478, p. 7993; 488, p. 8125; 543, p. 8776; 544, p. 8781.

<sup>70</sup> *MS* 307, pp. 7897–98.

identified, their close proximity in time implies his use of the latter as a visual, public declaration as a Daoist emperor.

The third period spanned the year 1564 to the emperor's death in 1567. At least six new buildings were constructed and three rebuilt. They include Yannian dian 延年殿 (B<sub>36</sub>),<sup>71</sup> Wanfa baodian 萬法寶殿 (B<sub>25</sub>),<sup>72</sup> Yuanxi dian 元熙殿 (B<sub>26</sub>),<sup>73</sup> Qianguang dian 乾光殿 (B<sub>23</sub>),<sup>74</sup> Chaoyuan guan 朝元館 (B<sub>30</sub>),<sup>75</sup> Jingxi dian 淨席殿 (B<sub>31</sub>),<sup>76</sup> Zhenqing dian 真慶殿 (B<sub>32</sub>),<sup>77</sup> Zichen gong 紫宸宮 (B<sub>33</sub>),<sup>78</sup> and Ziji dian 紫極殿 (B<sub>34</sub>).<sup>79</sup> (Some of the preceding numbers are given only in table 2 and are not seen on the map.) Although there is little written description, we know that some of the buildings were intended for religious purposes, and Daoist ceremonies were mentioned.<sup>80</sup> The large number of construction works in this period coincided with many Daoist rituals and auspicious occurrences ordered or fostered in West Park by the emperor in the hope of obtaining blessings.

### Designations

While buildings were mainly constructed in three periods, the names of places and buildings in West Park underwent unprecedented changes during the Jiajing period. Table 2, below, lists buildings that were named or renamed from 1542 to 1567.<sup>81</sup> An analysis of the meaning of these designations shows that they mainly revolved around four themes. The four themes correlated closely with the preoccupations and religious activities of the Jiajing emperor during different phases of his religious belief.

The first theme centers around immortals and spirits. Names linked to this theme include such words as: *xian* 仙, *ling* 靈, *shen* 神, *zhen* 真, and *ming* 明. Examples include Jiongming ge (B<sub>24a</sub>), Yinling xuan (B<sub>24b</sub>),

<sup>71</sup> *CMMYL* 6, p. 48b; *RXJWK* 36, p. 23a. <sup>72</sup> *WLYHB* 2, p. 50; *RXJWK* 41, p. 2a.

<sup>73</sup> *WLYHB* 2, p. 50; *CMMYL* 6, p. 43b; *RXJWK* 36, p. 22b.

<sup>74</sup> *WLYHB* 2, p. 50; *CMMYL* 6, p. 43a. <sup>75</sup> *CMMYL* 6, p. 50b; *RXJWK* 42, p. 20a.

<sup>76</sup> Deng Qiu 鄧球 (16th c.) et al., *Huangming yonghua leibian* 皇明泳化類編 (Taipei: Guofeng chubanshe, 1965) 41, p. 34.

<sup>77</sup> *WLYHB* 2, p. 50. <sup>78</sup> *WLYHB* 2, p. 50; Deng, *Huangming* 41, p. 37.

<sup>79</sup> *WLYHB* 2, p. 50; Deng Qiu, *Huangming* 41, pp. 34, 41.

<sup>80</sup> For examples, Qianguang dian (B<sub>23</sub>) was used for a Daoist ceremony in 1558; *MSZSL* 459, p. 7766. Wanfa baodian (B<sub>25</sub>) was the venue for Daoist ceremonies in 1558 and 1564; *MSZSL* 456, p. 7716; 464, p. 7827; He, *Mingshanzang* 27, p. 134; 28, p. 150.

<sup>81</sup> It must be noted that the list is not exhaustive because many buildings were built and rebuilt in the course of the Jiajing reign. Some records are so brief that it is hard to establish whether some buildings were in the precinct of West Park. Even more buildings were destroyed and names changed almost immediately after the end of the Jiajing reign; *WLYHB* 2, p. 50. Such buildings do not appear in later records and thus are not listed here.

*Table 2. Designations of Buildings in West Park of the Jiajing Period*

[nn/nn] stands for “[Jiajing reign yr. / Western yr.]”.

→ indicates from old designation to new designation.

Only B<sub>1</sub>–B<sub>26</sub> are shown in map. The exact locations of B<sub>27</sub>–B<sub>36</sub> are unclear.

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|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| B <sub>1</sub> | <p>[22/1543] Leiting hongying dian 雷霆洪應殿 (Hall of the Thunderbolt of Vast Response)</p> <p>a. Tancheng 壇城 (Altar City)</p> <p>b. Honglei xuan 轟雷軒 (Studio of Roaring Thunder)</p> <p>c. Xiaofeng shi 嘯風室 (Room of Whistling Wind)</p> <p>d. Xuxue shi 噓雪室 (Room of Hissing Snow)</p> <p>e. Yunyu shi 雲雨室 (Room of Clouds and Rain)</p> <p>f. Yaodian shi 耀電室 (Room of Lightning)</p> <p>g. Qingyi zhai 清一齋 (Studio of the Pure One)</p> <p>h. Baoyuan men 寶淵門 (Gate of Precious Abyss)</p> <p>i. Ling'an tang 靈安堂 (Hall of Peaceful Spirit)</p> <p>j. Jingxin tang 精馨堂 (Hall of Fragrant Essence)</p> <p>k. Yuxian ci 馭仙次 (Place for Controlling Immortals)</p> <p>l. Fuguo tang 輔國堂 (Hall of Serving the Country)</p> <p>m. Yanmiao tang 演妙堂 (Hall of Demonstrating the Ingenious)</p> <p>n. Rusheng ju 入聖居 (Home of Becoming Sages)</p> |
| B <sub>2</sub> | [22/1543] Ningdao leixuan 凝道雷軒 (Studio of Thunder of the Condensed Way)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| B <sub>3</sub> | [22/1543] Yutan 雲壇 (Altar of Rain)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| B <sub>4</sub> | [22/1543] Zhengxin zhai 正心齋 (Studio of Upright Mind)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| B <sub>5</sub> | [22/1543] Chijing zhai 持敬齋 (Studio of Holding in Reverence)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

Yuxian ci (B<sub>1k</sub>), Xiantai 仙臺 (B<sub>21i</sub>), Luxian shi 祿仙室 (B<sub>20j</sub>), Shenying xuan 神應軒 (B<sub>28i</sub>). Among them, the Xiantai (Immortal Terrace) was particular noteworthy. Originally known as the Xuanpo tai 旋坡臺 (Terrace of Revolving Slope), the terrace was renamed “Xiantai” in 1549.<sup>82</sup> On each tier a name-plaque was attached. The first tier was called “Yuguang” 玉光 (Jade Brightness), the second “Guanghua” 光華 (Brilliance), the third “Huayao” 華耀 (Magnificent Glitter), the fourth “Yaozhen” 耀真 (Glittering Realization), the fifth “Zhenjing” 真境 (Realized Realm), the sixth “Jingxian” 境仙 (Immortals of the Realm), the seventh “Xiantai” 仙臺 (Immortal Terrace).<sup>83</sup> The name-plaques marked the transformation from a lesser to a more purified realm as one moved toward the top of the terrace. The Xiantai was said to be the place where the Jiajing emperor worshiped the Northern Dipper.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>82</sup> *CMMYL* 6, p. 50a; *RXJWK* 42, pp. 19b, 20a.

<sup>83</sup> *ZZZ* 17, p. 140; *CMMYL* 6, pp. 50a–b.

<sup>84</sup> *RXJWK* 42, p. 21a

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| B6  | Taisu dian 太素殿 (Hall of the Primordial)<br>→ [43/1564] (i) Shouyuan dian 壽源殿 (Hall of Sources of Longevity)                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| B7  | Tengxi dian 騰禧殿 (Hall of Soaring Auspiciousness)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| B8  | [37/1558] Daxuandu dian 大玄都殿 (Palace of Primordial Capital)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| B9  | Yingcui dian 迎翠殿 (Hall of Receiving Kingfishers)<br>→ [23/1544] (i) Chenghua dian 承華殿 (Hall of Holding Brilliance)                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| B10 | Renshou gong 仁壽宮 (Palace of Benevolence and Longevity)<br>→ [21/1542] (i) Yongshou gong 永壽宮 (Palace of Eternal Longevity)<br>→ [41/1562] (ii) Wanshou gong 萬壽宮 (Palace of Myriad Longevity)<br>→ [42/1563] (iii) Enshou gong 恩壽宮 (Palace of Gratitude for Longevity)<br>→ [44/1565] (iv) Wanshou gong 萬壽宮 (Palace of Myriad Longevity) |
| B11 | Fuzhen ge 福臻閣 (Pavilion of Soaring Fortune)<br>→ [42/1563] (i) Zhaoxiang ge 昭祥閣 (Pavilion of Bright and Auspiciousness)                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| B12 | Longxi dian 龍禧殿 (Hall of Auspicious Dragon)<br>→ [42/1563] (i) Longhuang zhai 龍煌齋 (Studio of Brilliant Dragon)<br>→ [44/1565] (ii) Longji zhai 龍吉齋 (Studio of Auspicious Dragon)                                                                                                                                                       |
| B13 | Fengqi guan 鳳祺館 (Hall of Lucky Phoenix)<br>→ [42/1563] (i) Fengye guan 鳳燁館 (Hall of Splendid Phoenix)<br>→ [44/1565] (ii) Fengxiang guan 鳳祥館 (Hall of Auspicious Phoenix)                                                                                                                                                              |
| B14 | Xianxi gong 仙禧宮 (Palace of Immortal Auspiciousness)<br>→ [42/1563] (i) Qianqiu gong 千秋宮 (Palace of a Thousand Years)                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| B15 | Xianle gong 仙樂宮 (Palace of Immortal Happiness)<br>→ [42/1563] (i) Qianle gong 千樂宮 (Palace of Eternal Happiness)                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| B16 | Xian'an gong 仙安宮 (Palace of Immortal Peace)<br>→ [42/1563] (i) Qianjing gong 千景宮 (Palace of a Thousand Views)                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

The second theme concerns Daoist cosmology and constellations. Names related to this theme often included such words as: *xuan* 玄, or *yuan* 元, meaning the primordial, and *dao* 道, meaning the Way. Examples include Daxuandu dian (B8), Taishi dian 太始殿 (B20a), Taichu dian 太初殿 (B20b), Taiji dian 太極殿 (B20c), Tianxuan ge (B20k), Dadao dian 大道殿 (B22i), Dagaoxuan dian (B24), Yuanxi dian (B26ii), Zihuang dian 紫皇殿 (B29), Chaoyuan guan (B30), Zichen gong (B33), and Ziji dian (B34). In association with Daoist cosmology, together with the first theme concerning immortals and spirits, these names were popu-

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| B17 | Xianming gong 仙明宮 (Palace of Immortal Brightness)<br>→ [42/1563] (i) Qian'an gong 千安宮 (Palace of Eternal Peace)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| B18 | Shouyuan gong 壽源宮 (Palace of Sources of Longevity)<br>→ [44/1565] (i) Bailu gong 百祿宮 (Palace of a Hundred Emoluments)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| B19 | [44/1565] Wufu dian 五福殿 (Hall of Five Fortunes)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| B20 | [36/1557] Daguangming dian 大光明殿 (Hall of Great Brightness)<br>a. Taishi dian 太始殿 (Hall of Supreme Beginning)<br>b. Taichu dian 太初殿 (Hall of Supreme Beginning)<br>c. Taiji dian 太極殿 (Hall of Supreme Ultimate)<br>d. Tongzong dian 統宗殿 (Hall of Religious Unification)<br>e. Zongdao dian 總道殿 (Hall of Daoist Confluence)<br>f. Dishi tang 帝師堂 (Hall of the Emperor's Master)<br>g. Jide dian 積德殿 (Hall of Virtue Accumulation)<br>h. Shousheng ju 壽聖居 (Home of the Emperor of Longevity)<br>i. Fuzhen qi 福真憩 (Pavilion of the Realized Being of Good Fortune)<br>j. Luxian shi 祿仙室 (Room of the Immortal of Emolument)<br>k. Tianxuan ge 天玄閣 (Pavilion of Heavenly Primordial) |
| B21 | Xuanpo tai 旋波臺 (Terrace of Revolving Slope)<br>→ [28/1549] (i) Xiantai 仙臺 (Immortal Terrace)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| B22 | Daxiandu dian 大仙都殿 (Hall of the Great Immortal Capital)<br>→ [28/1549] (i) Dadao dian 大道殿 (Hall of the Great Way)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| B23 | Chengguang dian 承光殿 (Hall of Supporting Brightness)<br>→ [31/1552] (i) Qianguang dian 乾光殿 (Hall of the Light of Pure Yang)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

lar throughout the period and corresponded to the emperor's life-long pursuit of immortality through Daoist practices.

The third theme is thunder (*lei* 雷). This idea was invoked in building-names that were granted around 1543. Examples are Leiting hongying dian (B1), Honglei xuan (B1b), Ningdao leixuan (B2), Youguo kangmin leidian (B27), Xuanlei ju 玄雷居 (B28ii). The emphasis on thunder was closely related to the affiliation of the Jiajing emperor and his Daoist associates with the long tradition of the Daoist Thunder Rite. For example, in 1539 and 1546, the emperor granted three honorary titles to his Daoist master, Tao Zhongwen, all beginning with the phrase Shenxiao 神霄, which indicated a connection with the Thunder Rite that had come into prominence starting in the twelfth century.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>85</sup> MS 307, p.7896; MSZSL 314, p. 5874.

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| B24 | [21/1542] Dagaoxuan dian 大高玄殿 (Hall of Superior Primordial)<br>a. Jiongmíng gē 炁明閣 (Pavilion of Yang Divinity)<br>b. Yinling xuan 烟靈軒 (Studio of Yin Spirit)<br>c. Wushang gē 無上閣 (Supreme Pavilion)<br>d. Shiyang zhāi 始陽齋 (Studio of Yang Beginning)<br>e. Xiangyī gōng 象一宮 (Palace of the Image of the One)<br>f. Daolong zhāi 隆道齋 (Studio of Prosperous Dao) |
| B25 | [44/1565] Wanfa baodian 萬法寶殿 (Precious Hall of Myriad Ways)<br>a. Shouqi 壽憩 (Pavilion of Longevity) b. Fushe 福舍 (Quarter of Good Fortune) c. Lushe 祿舍 (Quarter of Emolument)                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| B26 | Ninghe dian 凝和殿 (Hall of Accomplishing Harmony)<br>→ [23/1544] (i) Huixi dian 惠熙殿 (Hall of Kindness and Prosperity)<br>→ [43/1564] (ii) Yuanxi dian 元熙殿 (Hall of Prosperous Primordial)                                                                                                                                                                          |
| B27 | [21/1542] Youguo kangmin leidian 佑國康民雷殿 (Hall of Thunder that Protects the State and Enriches the People)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| B28 | Yuanqu xuan 遠趣軒 (Studio of Distant Delight)<br>→ [34/1555] (i) Shenyīng xuan 神應軒 (Studio of Divine Response)<br>→ [34/1555] (ii) Xuanlei ju 玄雷居 (Residence of Primordial Thunder)                                                                                                                                                                                |
| B29 | [34/1555] Zihuang dian 紫皇殿 (Palace of Purple Sovereign)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| B30 | [45/1566] Chaoyuan guan 朝元館 (Hall of Worshipping the Primordial)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| B31 | [45/1566] Jingxi dian 淨席殿 (Hall of Clean Grass Mat)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| B32 | [45/1566] Zhenqing dian 真慶殿 (Hall of Genuine Celebration)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| B33 | [45/1566] Zichen gong 紫宸宮 (Palace of the Northern Dipper)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| B34 | [45/1566] Ziji dian 紫極殿 (Hall of the Purple Ultimate)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| B35 | [45/1566] Shouqing gong 壽清宮 (Palace of Pure Longevity)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| B36 | [43/1564] Yannian dian 延年殿 (Hall of Life Prolongation)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

When the emperor officially proclaimed for himself three Daoist titles in 1556, one of them was “Yuxu zongzhang wulei dazhenren” 玉虛總掌五雷大真人 (Great Realized Being in Complete Control of the Five Thunders in the Jade Void), identifying the emperor with the God of Thunder.<sup>86</sup> Closely associated with the adoption of designations denoting “thunder” was the construction project to set up altars of thunder all over the empire initiated by Tao Zhongwen in 1540.<sup>87</sup> The emperor showed enthusiasm for the plan, and an altar was built at Huanggang

<sup>86</sup> *MS* 307, p. 7898.

<sup>87</sup> *MS* 307, p. 7896. The Youguo kangmin leidian (B27) and the Leiting Hongying dian (B1) were established shortly afterwards.

黃崗, Huguang.<sup>88</sup> The assignment of names with the word “*lei*” to studios and altars between 1542 and 1543, not long after the initiation of Tao’s project, can be ascribed to the emperor’s strong commitment to the worship of thunder gods during that time.

The fourth theme is auspiciousness. It was signaled by incorporating one of the auspicious triad, namely, *shou* 壽 (longevity), *fu* 福 (good fortune), and *lu* 祿 (emolument), or auspicious words like *ji* 吉 and *xiang* 祥, into a designation. Examples include Yongshou gong 永壽宮 (B10i), Shouyuan dian 壽源殿 (B6i), Shousheng ju 壽聖居 (B20h), Fuzhen qi 福真憩 (B20i), Luxian shi (B20j), Wanshou gong 萬壽宮 (B10iv), Enshou gong 恩壽宮 (B10iii), Zhaoxiang ge 昭祥閣 (B11i), Yannian dian (B36), Longji zhai 龍吉齋 (B12ii), Fengxiang guan 鳳祥館 (B13ii), Bailu gong 百祿宮 (B18i), Wufu dian 五福殿 (B19), Shouqi 壽憩 (B25a), Fushe 福舍 (B25b), Lushe 祿舍 (B25c), and Shouqing gong 壽清宮 (B35). The growing prevalence of auspicious words in the final years of the Jiajing reign paralleled the increasing desperation of the emperor for eternal life and signs from heaven. The Jiajing emperor’s religious preoccupation and activities will be further examined in the next section. What seems obvious at this point is that the emperor manifested his shifting religious concerns through a manipulation of names.

Why did the Jiajing emperor attach so much importance to the names of buildings? A name is important as a cultural sign. By giving a physical structure a name with Daoist connotations, the emperor specified a Daoist reading of the physical setting. The proclamation of new designations and the installation of new plaques reinforced the dissemination of a Daoist conception of the place in a collective understanding. To recall an old name of a physical structure in this circumstance would have been dangerous. For it would be violating the new concept of the place and would undoubtedly have raised objections.

Shen Defu records an anecdote about mislabeling a place in West Park in 1544. He notes that grand secretary Zhai Luan 翟鑾 (1477–1546) mentioned in a petition the old name of a hall called Wuyi dian 無逸殿 (in the Wanshou Palace complex) rather than its newly granted Daoist designation of Shangxuan gaoxuan 上玄高玄 (The Superior and High Primordial) or Xuanwei xuangong 玄威玄功 (The Might and Virtue of the Primordial). The Jiajing emperor was enraged. Zhai was deprived of his office and was chased out of the palace. After narrating the story, Shen sighed and concluded, “After that, no one dared to mention the

<sup>88</sup> *MS*; *WLYHB* 6, p. 179; *MSZSL* 236, pp. 4823–24; 245, p. 4922; 305, p. 5765.

old names of either the hall and the [accompanying] pavilion! 此後并殿亭舊名無齒及者矣”<sup>89</sup>

This helps us understand two significant aspects of West Park and the way naming could relate to the Jiajing emperor. As our discussion of the names of construction works and buildings has shown, the Jiajing emperor manipulated West Park to follow the pattern of his religious beliefs. The frequent changes highlighted his concern over the Daoist elements of his living environment. More importantly, by changing building designations, he was able to make known things otherwise not easily discerned. What the anecdote above tells us, on the one hand, is the extent to which the emperor's dedicated approach towards “naming” was recognized by his contemporaries. The way in which the emperor conceived of and designated a building, and by extension an environment, had to be followed by his subjects, or penalty would be imposed. By establishing new physical structures and providing them with authorized readings, the Jiajing emperor dictated a Daoist-immortal conception of his living environment, with special emphasis on its auspicious nature. Individuals who lived and worked in West Park would, therefore, have had no choice but to accept and participate in such a concept.

On the other hand, the anecdote demonstrates how the Jiajing emperor assumed the position of Daoist emperor. According to the *Mingshi* 明史, Zhai Luan, the main character, was prosecuted for having two sons who cheated in the civil examination and tampered with examination results.<sup>90</sup> To defend himself, Zhai stated in his petition that he was on duty at West Park during the incident. His explanation enraged the Jiajing emperor who had Zhai, his sons, and the examiners removed from office and downgraded to commoners. As also noted in *Mingshi*, Zhai had not been a favorite of the emperor since becoming grand secretary in 1540.<sup>91</sup> In particular, he was involved in many petitions against the emperor's plan to confer imperial title upon his late father in the Great Ritual Controversy, and was later accused of having secret dealings with his fellow colleagues and subordinates.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, it is probable that his faults in miscalling places and mentioning his duty in West Park in his defense were used as a pretext to expel him.

<sup>89</sup> *WLYHB* 2, p. 51; *RXJWK* 36, p. 7a.

<sup>90</sup> *MS* 193, p. 5112.

<sup>91</sup> *MS* 193, pp. 5111–12.

<sup>92</sup> For his involvement in the Great Ritual Controversy, see Hu Jixun, “The Great Ritual Controversy and Personnel and Ethical Change in the Court of Ming Shizong: A Study of the Political Consequences of the Officials Who Protested at the Zuoshun Gate in 1524,” Ph.D. diss. (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2005), pp. 436–40; *MS* 193, p. 5112.

A similar case was that of Xia Yan 夏言 (1482–1548), the Jiajing emperor's once-favorite grand secretary. For various reasons the emperor's resentment against Xia Yan grew, and the latter was executed in 1548. Yet, Xia's refusal to wear the Daoist fragrant-leaf cap in rituals was used as a charge against him prior to his imprisonment.<sup>93</sup> In both cases, that of Zhai Luan and Xia Yan, the Jiajing emperor might have been genuinely enraged by their contempt for Daoism.<sup>94</sup> Nonetheless, the overriding position of the Daoist religion in West Park also gave the emperor the power to make all sorts of decision under various kinds of Daoist reasoning. Being the only person who decided what constituted any sort of contempt for Daoism and who had revealed such feelings, the Jiajing emperor placed himself in the position of a Daoist emperor, whose authority could no longer be challenged by his court officials with Confucian logic and reasons.

### *Religious Activities*

Besides manipulating the physical environment of West Park, the Jiajing emperor ordered religious activities to take place in it throughout his residency. Four practices were dominant: Daoist rituals, alchemy, spirit writing, and the making of auspicious signs. The ultimate objective of most of these practices was to assist the emperor in his pursuit of immortality. However, not only the emperor but also his court was involved. The court members referred to here were the imperial family, government officials, eunuchs, palace maidens, and religious specialists. They played crucial roles in introducing and persuading the Jiajing emperor to take up such practices. Their participation made the religious performances look grand; their cooperation contributed to giving religious rhetoric a form of "reality," as West Park was transforming into a Daoist immortal land on earth. The four practices are discussed in turn.

In records concerning Jiajing-period religious activities, Daoist rituals included performances designated as *zhai* 齋, *jiao* 醮, *zhaijiao* 齋醮, and *dadian* 大典.<sup>95</sup> In general the performance of a Daoist ritual in-

<sup>93</sup> *MS* 307, p. 7897.

<sup>94</sup> Previous scholarship has shown that the Jiajing emperor had little tolerance to whoever showed contempt for Daoist religion; see Yang, "Mingdai zhudi," pp. 104–6.

<sup>95</sup> The word *dadian* was a generic term for religious ceremonies, whereas *zhai* and *jiao* carried specific meaning in early Daoist history. The word *zhai* was referred to as a fasting ritual in which a participant would purify himself through ritualized penitence and self-denial and accumulate merit by recitations from the sacred scriptures and penitential litanies. Meanwhile the word *jiao* was referred to as an offering ritual, where the participant made offerings and celebrated his communion and covenant with celestial beings. Both types of ritual can be

volved the establishment of an altar, usually composed of three superimposed stages. The stages were furnished with colorful placards and talismans. At the center of the altar was an incense burner, together with name-plaques of celestial beings, writs, offerings, and ritual implements. In the course of a ritual, the chief Daoist priest would visualize his own return to the primordial, where he would encounter celestial beings and petition them on behalf of the community or individuals he served.<sup>96</sup> In the meantime, five or more minor Daoist priests would present incense, chant scriptures, and supervise ritual minutia. A band, which probably consisted of fifty-two musicians in the case of a grand Daoist ritual in the Jiajing court, would perform ritual music throughout the process.<sup>97</sup> Ritual as such might last for a few hours or days, and involve only several individuals to dozens of performers.

Extant Ming records note approximately 260 instances when Daoist rituals were ordered. Roughly about 30 fall in the first phase between 1522 and 1541; 120 in the second phase between 1542 and 1555; and 110 occurred in the third phase between 1556 and 1567.<sup>98</sup> The durations were mostly about 3 days in the first phase and from 3 to 9 in the second and third phases, with some exceptionally important rituals running up to 46 days in the second phase and 78 in the third. The increase in frequency and length of Daoist rituals indicates the emperor's indulgence in Daoist rituals after he moved into the Park.

West Park was the main venue for Daoist rituals in the last two phases. In the second phase, about 60 out of those 120 occasions were said to have taken place there, whereas about 70 out of 110 ritual events were held there in the third phase. The majority were held in the Dagaoxuan dian (B24) and Leiting hongying dian (B1).<sup>99</sup> Occasionally, they were also performed in the Wanshou Palace complex (B10), the

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traced back to the Eastern Han period and flourished in medieval China; Zhuang Hongyi 莊宏誼, *Mingdai Daojiao Zhengyi pai* 明代道教正一派 (Taibei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1986), pp. 145–53; Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, p. 190. By Ming times, however, the *zhai* ritual and the *jiao* ritual were much elaborated and had evolved to such an extent that it was no longer possible to draw a clear distinction between them.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>97</sup> Cheng, *Ming Shizong*, pp. 102–3.

<sup>98</sup> I base the following calculation on *ibid.*, pp. 55–76.

<sup>99</sup> Roughly 41 Daoist rituals or prayers were recorded to have been held in the Dagaoxuan dian, and about 34 Daoist events were held in the Leiting hongying dian; *ibid.*, pp. 55–76. For examples of Daoist rituals and prayers held in the Dagaoxuan dian, see *MSZSL* 260, pp. 5189–5190; 267, p. 5276; 283, p. 5498; 305, p. 5765; 308, p. 5802; 325, p. 6023; 333, p. 6108; 335, p. 6130; 347, p. 6277; 352, p. 6362; 360, p. 6435. For Leiting hongying dian, see *MSZSL* 281, p. 5464; 308, p. 5805; 318, p. 5924; 328, p. 6043; 334, p. 6116; 341, p. 6204; 347, pp. 6277–78; 352, p. 6363; 355, p. 6396. As historical records tend to note important Daoist rituals and leave out minor events, the number of Daoist rituals gathered from these sources is likely to be less than those that actually took place.

Dadao dian (B22), and other halls and altars.<sup>100</sup> These rituals were for diverse purposes. Many sought the longevity of the Jiajing emperor. In addition, there were prayers for good harvest, thanksgiving ceremonies for rain, rituals for the arrest of rebels, and for successful military action along borders.<sup>101</sup> The surge in number and diversity of rituals signaled the emperor's growing belief in the omnipotence of Daoist gods.

The Jiajing emperor presided over some of the rituals, especially Daoist prayers for rain and snow. The *Ming shilu* 明實錄 and *Mingshanzang* 名山藏 note that he offered Daoist prayers for rain and snow in 1541, 1548, 1549, 1550, 1551, 1553, and at least once a year between 1558 and 1566 except for 1563.<sup>102</sup> Xia Yan vividly describes one of the emperor's prayers for snow in his poem. It reads,

|         |                                                                                                              |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 紫極宮中北斗壇 | On the Altar of the North Dipper inside the Palace of the Purple Ultimate,                                   |
| 帝揮神劍夜星寒 | The emperor brandished the divine sword coldly in the moonlight.                                             |
| 玉杓幹轉洪鈞氣 | The jade handle [of the Dipper] mediated the vast <i>qi</i> of the cosmos,                                   |
| 散作瓊瑤萬國看 | Which dispersed and turned into jade that could be seen by ten thousand states.                              |
| 紫壇殿上日三朝 | On the Daoist altar inside the palace, the emperor worshipped three times a day                              |
| 瞻望風雲北極高 | And viewed with reverence wind and clouds and the North Pole on high.                                        |
| 獻歲元辰飄瑞雪 | Present in the morning of the first day of the year was the falling of auspicious snow.                      |
| 萬方和氣入春宵 | Harmonious <i>qi</i> from ten thousand directions appeared in a spring night.                                |
| 元始靈篇太上文 | The sonorous and powerful chanting of the Efficacious Scripture of the Primordial Beginning                  |
| 琳瑯聲振九天聞 | And the writing of the Most High could be heard in the highest realm of heaven.                              |
| 深宮秘禱民知否 | Do people know that [the emperor] secretly prayed in the secluded palace?                                    |
| 世世長瞻萬歲君 | Generation after generation will continue to pay respects to the emperor of Myriad Longevity. <sup>103</sup> |

<sup>100</sup> For the Daoist ritual held in the Dadao dian, see He, *Mingshanzang* 26, pp. 120, 122.

<sup>101</sup> *MSZSL* 292, pp. 5602–03; 428, p. 7398.

<sup>102</sup> *MSZSL* 247, p. 4961; 341, p. 6208; 355, p. 6396; 358, p. 6415; 466, p. 7857; 470, p. 7906; 486, p. 8099; 490, p. 8153; 504, p. 8324; 508, p. 8372; 516, p. 8471; 532, p. 8662; 541, p. 8755; 545, p. 8803; 559, p. 8983; He, *Mingshanzang* 25, pp. 108, 114; 26, p. 120.

<sup>103</sup> Xia, *Xia Guizhou xiansheng wenji* 6, p. 319.

When the Jiajing emperor pleaded for snow, he danced with a sword and chanted Daoist scriptures in a clear and melodious voice. Xia's poem does not mention that anyone else participated in the prayer. However, as described above, most rituals and prayers involved at least several Daoist priests and a band of musicians. In some rituals, even senior government officials would play a part. Xia was one of the grand secretaries who actively participated in Daoist rituals through composition of the *qingci* 青詞, or "blue-green paper prayers." *Qingci* were Daoist prayers written on blue-green paper that were presented to Daoist deities by the act of burning.<sup>104</sup> As early as 1523, the offering of the *qingci* was already mentioned as an integral part of the Daoist ritual held in the palace.<sup>105</sup> Gu Dingchen 顧鼎臣 (1473–1540) and Xia Yan, were among the earliest grand secretaries who won the Jiajing emperor's favor by their skillful writing of Daoist prayers.<sup>106</sup> After 1539, ministers, including Yan Song 嚴嵩 (1480–1567), Yuan Wei 袁煒 (1508–1565), Li Chunfang 李春芳 (*jinsi* 1547), Yan Na 嚴訥 (1511–1584), and Guo Pu 郭朴, acquired their high positions through their skill at writing prayers.<sup>107</sup> These ministers were assigned to West Park to supply prayers on demand. Their writings were ornate and filled with flowery and imaginative wordings. For example, *Gonghe lingfan wushou* 恭和靈幡五首, another poem by Xia Yan, describes a ritual scene as follows:

|         |                                                                                                               |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 萬歲宮中揭寶幡 | Precious banners were raised high in the Palace of Myriad Longevity.                                          |
| 青霄天女御瑤壇 | Heavenly maidens from the Blue Empyrean descended to the Jade Altar.                                          |
| 化工不作人間勝 | The transformation of non-action surpassed that in the human realm.                                           |
| 玄武青龍上下蟠 | The Dark Warrior and the Green Dragon occupied the upper and lower positions [of the banners]. <sup>108</sup> |
| 御筆揮呵黑帝符 | The emperor brandished his brush and breathed out the talisman of the Black emperor.                          |
| 天皇真炁降虛無 | The true primordial breath of the Heavenly King descended from the void.                                      |

<sup>104</sup> For the history of *qingci* and its relation with grand secretaries of the Jiajing emperor, see Liu, "Penetration of Taoism," pp. 51–66; Cheng, *Ming Shizong*, pp. 128–34.

<sup>105</sup> Bu Shichang 卜世昌 (16th–17th c.), *Huangming tongji shuyi* 皇明通紀述遺, in *Huangming zizhi tongji sanzong* 皇明資治通紀三種 (Beijing: Zhonghua quanguo tushuguan wenxian suwei fuzhi zhongxin, 1997) 10, p. 801.

<sup>106</sup> *MS* 193, p. 5115; 196, p. 5195.      <sup>107</sup> *MS* 193, p. 5118.

<sup>108</sup> "Dark Warrior" in this line and the "Black Emperor" in the next are both referred to as the god Xuanwu 玄武. Xuanwu, a deity of the north, was represented by a tortoise entwined by a snake in the Warring States and the Han period. From the early Northern Song, it trans-

靈幡曉結瓊花帶 The winding spirit-banners brought jade flowers.

仙苑春呈瑞雪圖 In the spring the immortal park showed [a scenery like] the painting of auspicious snow.<sup>109</sup>

The poems praise the ritual banners in the Wanshou Palace complex for attracting the heavenly maidens to descend to the altar; the movement of the banners in the air was viewed as an indicator of the coming of deities. Poems and prayers as such artfully delineated invisible deities and their responses to the emperor's Daoist arts.<sup>110</sup> The imaginative scenarios these writings offered constituted an indispensable part of the Daoist rituals.

In addition to Daoist rituals, the Jiajing emperor dedicated himself to two types of alchemy: *waidan* 外丹 (external alchemy) and *neidan* 內丹 (internal alchemy). External alchemy referred to a practice that aimed at achieving the elixir of immortality by using laboratory techniques to refine minerals and metals in accordance with an ancient theory of cosmology. The story of the false alchemist Duan Chaoyong mentioned earlier indicates that the Jiajing emperor was strongly committed to alchemical drugs as early as the 1540s. During the rest of the reign, he continued to bestow presenters of alchemical drugs with valuable goods and high official ranks.<sup>111</sup> Further, he ordered elixirs to be produced in West Park. In one of Xia Yan's poems, there is a line regarding the Jiajing emperor's participation in the refinement of alchemical drugs. It reads,

閭閻沴氣未全消 The foul air from the neighborhood has not yet completely disappeared.

和藥祈靈聖主勞 The emperor has labored to blend the medicines and pray for efficacious spirits.

試煉神丹已如意 The immortal cinnabar from the trial refinement has been ready as one wished.

formed into the anthropomorphic god, known as Zhenwu (Perfected Warrior). Here in the first line, the Dark Warrior and the green dragon symbolize respectively the deities of the north and the east. Meanwhile, the second line says that the "Dark Emperor" (better known as the "Supreme Emperor of Dark Heaven"), that is, the anthropomorphic god together with his celestial soldiers, was invoked when the Jiajing emperor chanted the charm; Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, pp. 291-311.

<sup>109</sup> Xia, *Xia Guizhou xiansheng wenji* 8, p. 432.

<sup>110</sup> For examples of Xia Yan's *qingci*, see Xia, *Xia Guizhou xiansheng wenji* 17, pp. 102-6.

<sup>111</sup> Drug-presenters included Gong Kepei 龔可佩, Lan Daoxing 藍道行 (d. 1562), Wang Jin 王金, Hu Dashun 胡大順, Hu Yuanyu 胡元玉, Lan Yutian 藍玉田, Tao Shiwen 陶世文, Tao Shi'en 陶世恩, Tao Fang 陶倣, Guo Xun 郭勛, He Tingyu 何廷玉, Luo Wanxiang 羅萬象, Zhao Ying 趙盈, Liu Wenbin 劉文彬, Gao Shouzhong 高守中, Gu Kexue 顧可學, and Sheng Duanming 盛端明, plus probably many more. *MS* only records those of importance; *MS* 307, pp. 7897-903.

洗天甘雨續仙瓢 Sweet rain that has washed the sky was passed  
on to an immortal gourd.<sup>112</sup>

According to the work *Nuanshu youbi* 暖姝由筆 by Xu Chong 徐充 (fl. sixteenth to seventeenth centuries), in 1544, the Jiajing court granted drugs to some people living in the capital. The medicine, including thirty-five pills together with related prescriptions, coins, and silver, were put in a small white silk bag on which was a stamp with the phrase “*Ningdao leixuan*” 凝道雷軒.<sup>113</sup> Ningdao leixuan was a studio (B2) on the northern shore of Lake Taiye in West Park. In 1566, when the emperor discovered some drugs at his bedside in the Wanshou Palace complex (B10), he had little doubt that heaven had granted immortal drugs to him and gratefully ordered the offering of thanksgiving rituals.<sup>114</sup>

There are few records about the emperor's practice of internal alchemy, probably due to its esoteric nature. Internal alchemy was a technique that combined meditation and breath control with the intention that the practitioner should visualize the creation of elixirs in the inner landscape of his own body; it aimed to lead the practitioner to spiritual perfection and to reunite him with the Dao.<sup>115</sup> The accomplishment of internal alchemy was a prerequisite for any believer to accomplish the goals of major Daoist rituals and prayers. In one of Xia's poems on a *zhai* ritual held in West Park, the Jiajing emperor was described as having “secretly said prayers to deities in the highest realm of heaven, securely sealed the mysterious pearl that formed in a jade tripod, filled the Yellow Court with the harmonized Golden Liquor, and given birth to the immortal embryo in the tenth month. 祕禱九天靈, 結固玄珠封玉鼎, 保和金液注黃庭, 十月證仙嬰”<sup>116</sup> Such esoteric terms as *jinye* 金液, *huangting* 黃庭, and *xianying* 仙嬰 were often used in the discourse of internal alchemy.<sup>117</sup> They were referred to as important parts of the body of the practitioner, that is, the Jiajing emperor, in

<sup>112</sup> Xia, *Xia Guizhou xiansheng wenji* 6, p. 326.

<sup>113</sup> Xu Chong (16th–17th c.), *Nuanshu youbi*, in *Cangshuo xiaocui* 藏說小萃 series (rpt. 1606 edn. [Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1998]) 3, p. 145.

<sup>114</sup> Xu Xueju 徐學聚 et al., *Guochao dianhui* 國朝典彙 (Siku quanshu cunmu congshu edn. [Tainan: Zhuangyan wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1996]) 113, p. 767.

<sup>115</sup> Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, p. 337. For more about internal alchemy, see Fabrizio Pregadio, *Great Clarity: Daoism and Alchemy in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2006).

<sup>116</sup> Xia, *Xia Guizhou xiansheng wenji* 7, p. 346.

<sup>117</sup> *Xuanzhu* 玄珠 and *jinye* referred to *neidan*, that is, the invisible golden elixir produced in the body after repeated refinement of human essences. The terms, *yuding* 玉鼎 and *huangting*, were referred to as the *dantian* 丹田 or cinnabar-fields inside the human body. Meanwhile, the term, *xianying* or immortal embryo, designated the practitioner whose body was renewed and filled with *yang* energy after going through a final purification. It is important to note that these terms carry different meanings in Daoism when contexts of discussion change.

his return to the primordial during the ritual.<sup>118</sup> As noted before, the Jiajing emperor discussed internal alchemy with Tao Zhongwen in the Daguangming dian (B20). As the goal of external alchemy and internal alchemy was to assist the adept to achieve longevity and immortality, it is little surprise that the Jiajing emperor was dedicated to these and reserved spaces in West Park in which to perform them.

Spirit writing was the third kind of religious activity held in West Park. By spirit writing, I refer to the practice known as *fúji* 扶乩 (or *fúluan* 扶鸞) or “wielding the planchette,” “automatic” or “passive” writing supposedly produced by otherworld beings such as gods, immortals, and spirits communicating with this world.<sup>119</sup> The writing could be done either by sticking an implement in a sieve and tracing characters in sand, ashes, or powders, or by fastening a brush on a Y-shaped wooden implement and producing traces with ink on paper.<sup>120</sup> The characteristic emphasis of the practice was that immortals and gods could take possession of a writing implement, be it a brush or a stick, and compose what they wished, with or without the assistance of spirit mediums. Hence, man could have direct access to these intangible beings, inquiring into every mortal issue through the medium of writing.

The Jiajing emperor’s interest in spirit writing became manifest around 1540. A passage in *Mingshi* notes that the emperor set up a special terrace for consulting the planchette, known as Jixian tai 乩仙臺, or Terrace for Immortal Divination, in the inner court.<sup>121</sup> He occasionally rewarded or punished his subjects in line with information obtained through spirit writing. For example, three officials were arrested and imprisoned for submitting memorials which offended the emperor. Af-

<sup>118</sup> For the internal alchemical practice of the Jiajing emperor, see Maggie Wan, “Motifs with an Intention: Reading the Eight Trigrams on Official Porcelain of the Jiajing Period (1522–1566),” *Artibus Asiae* 63.2 (2003), pp. 191–221. The Jiajing emperor was also involved in a separate type of internal alchemy, known as *shuangxiu* 雙修 or dual cultivation; Mote and Twitchett, eds., *Cambridge History of China*, p. 481; Hu Fuchen 胡孚琛 and Lü Xichen 呂錫琛, *Daoxue tonglun: daojia, daojiao, xianxue* 道學通論, 道家道教仙學 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 1999), pp. 340–41.

<sup>119</sup> Judith Zeitlin, “Spirit Writing and Performance in the Work of You Tong 尤侗 (1618–1704),” *TP* 84 (1998), pp. 102–3.

<sup>120</sup> For the procedure of the practice, see J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China: Its Ancient Forms, Evolution, History and Present Aspect, Manners, Customs and Social Institutions Connected Therewith* (rpt. Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1989), pp. 1295–97; Lothar Ledderose, “Some Taoist Elements in the Calligraphy of the Six Dynasties,” *TP* 70 (1984), p. 258. For the history of spirit writing, see Xu Dishan 許地山, *Fuji mixin di yanjiu* 扶乩迷信底研究 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yin shuguan, 1966); David Jordan and Daniel Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1986); Terry Kleeman, *A God’s Own Tale: The Book of Transformations of Wenchang, the Divine Lord of Zitong* (New York: State U. New York P., 1994).

<sup>121</sup> *MS* 197, p. 5216.

ter being imprisoned for five years, they were released in 1545. Their release, according to *Mingshi*, resulted partly from the information that the emperor obtained through spirit writing.<sup>122</sup> In the same year, following a séance of spirit writing, the emperor also ordered a bridge to be built at Liangxiang 良鄉 across the River Liuli 琉璃.<sup>123</sup> Since these events happened after the emperor secluded himself in West Park, it is most likely that the emperor and his medium practised spirit writing in one of the halls there. However, the absence of a precise record makes it impossible to pin down exact sites.

A record in *Mingshi* allows us to have a glimpse into the way in which the emperor practised spirit writing. It describes the procedure as follows:

Lan Daoxing won imperial favor by his skill in wielding the planchette. Whenever the emperor had a question, he put it into a sealed envelope, and dispatched a eunuch to the altar, to burn it there. The answers usually were irrelevant to the content [of the imperial writing]. The emperor blamed this on the bad conduct of the eunuch. The eunuch was scared and colluded with Daoxing. The eunuch then opened and read the [emperor's] questions before burning them. From then on, the answers tallied well with the content [of the imperial writing].<sup>124</sup> 藍道行以扶鸞術得幸，有所問，輒密封遣中官詣壇焚之，所答多不如旨。帝咎中官穢褻，中官懼，交通道行，啓視而後焚，答始稱旨

The Jiajing emperor presented his questions to gods through the burning of sealed questions. It is possible that Lan Daoxing was, in this case, a medium who was supposed to have been possessed by gods, holding the writing instrument and producing divine answers to the emperor's questions. Successful communication with gods and immortals through planchette had an important implication in West Park. Although gods and immortals were invisible and intangible, the planchette attested that they existed and could be reached there.

The last religious activity is concerned with the making of auspicious signs. There had been a long tradition in China of interpreting

<sup>122</sup> *MS* 209, p. 5526.

<sup>123</sup> Zha Jizao 查繼佐 (1601–1676), *Zuiweilu* 罪惟錄 (Xuxiu siku quanshu edn.; Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995) 22, p. 177. In 1563, the emperor again decided to expel his once favorite grand secretary Yan Song from the court. This decision followed spirit writing, which stated that Yan was the cause of the unrest of the Empire; *MS* 307, p. 7899. Since the Jiajing emperor had grown to distrust Yan Song well before this example of the practice of spirit writing, it is probable that the spirit writing was taken as a pretext for expelling Yan Song from the court.

<sup>124</sup> *MS* 307, p. 7899.

unusual phenomena as auspicious signs. The appearance of strange plants and beasts and the sighting of strange natural phenomena were interpreted as manifestations of heaven's approval of the enlightened rule of the emperor. During almost every reign, the Ming emperors received their fair share of reports of auspicious phenomena from all parts of the empire.<sup>125</sup> What, however, was exceptional in the Jiajing period was that a large number of auspicious signs were reported as appearing inside West Park, rather than throughout the rest of the empire.<sup>126</sup> Moreover, the Jiajing emperor repeatedly attributed auspicious signs to the Daoist Supreme Primordial.

The first appearance of auspicious signs in West Park was reported in 1543, less than a year after the emperor established the Park as his permanent residence. In the eighth month of 1543, auspicious grain was found in the Park.<sup>127</sup> In the eighth month of the following year, the Park again yielded auspicious grain. Within a month came another report of a sighting of sixty-four auspicious grains on one stalk with two ears. Meanwhile, millet with five tassels was also found at the Yutan (B<sub>3</sub>). Responding to these auspicious phenomena, the emperor granted to his ministers an instruction, as follows:

Double-eared wheat is seen in the imperial field. This is bestowed upon us by heaven and earth, and is different from grains of the Zhou and wheat of the Han. Moreover, the number of the grains is sixty-four, which is exactly the same as that of the hexagrams. Also, in the Altar of Rain there is a plant of millet with five tassels... All these are signs given by the Most High. Furthermore, there is little rain this year, and the barbarians also attacked several times. We cannot be ignorant of the kindness of the Primordial and should worship the Way of Heaven.<sup>128</sup> 帝田內見雙穗穀，仰天地所賜，與周禾漢麥不同。且六十四數，卦之正也。又雩壇內黍五出者一...皆太上垂示。且今年非多雨，則虜又逞犯數者，不可不知玄恩，以崇天道

<sup>125</sup> Peter Sturman, "Cranes above Kaifeng: the Auspicious Image at the Court of Huizong," *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990), pp. 33–68; Maggie Bickford, "Emperor Huizong and the Aesthetic of Agency," *Archives of Asian Art* 53 (2002–2003), pp. 71–104.

<sup>126</sup> Carney Fisher, "Ming Shizong and Daoism," *Bulletin of Ming-Qing Studies* 4 (1999), p. 45.

<sup>127</sup> For a detailed record of auspicious events in the sixteenth century, see Xu et al., *Guochao dianhui* 113, p. 767; Fisher, "Ming Shizong and Daoism," pp. 43–68. As early as the Han dynasty, one stalk of plant, such as wheat, with many ears of grains had been considered as an auspicious sign, a belief that prevailed in subsequent times; Wu Hung, "A Sanpan Shan Chariot Ornament and the Xiangrui Design in Western Han Art," *Archives of Asian Art* 37 (1984), pp. 38–59.

<sup>128</sup> *MSZSL* 289, p. 5562.

From the emperor's viewpoint, the number of grains yielded was comparable to that of the hexagrams making up the *Yijing* 易經 classic. The appearance of the auspicious grain and millet was a manifestation of the Most High, Laozi, and they were different from those obtained in the past. The Jiajing emperor defined the unusual plants in West Park as Daoist signs. The variety and frequency of auspicious phenomena that appeared in West Park grew toward the end of the reign. For instance, in the fourth month of 1562, an auspicious rabbit in the Park was said to have given birth to two offspring.<sup>129</sup> In the fifth month of 1564, a peach was found behind the imperial throne while the emperor was sitting in the garden. The Jiajing emperor considered it a gift sent by heaven and ordered a thanksgiving ritual to be held for five days. On the next day, again, a peach was said to have descended from heaven.<sup>130</sup> Shortly afterwards, two deer were born. The emperor was so grateful for such blessings from heaven that he wrote all the congratulatory documents with his own hand.

As Carney Fisher rightly points out, "auspicious omens" as recorded to have appeared in the Jiajing reign included the presentation of a large number of natural and ordinary products, such as beasts and plants.<sup>131</sup> Other auspicious signs, such as pills, were obvious fabrications that eunuchs and officials around the emperor had a hand in their discovery. In the occurrence of either kind of auspicious omen, grand secretaries in power never failed to lead high officials to flood the emperor with congratulatory hymns and prose once an auspicious sign was reported. Many of these writings are still preserved.<sup>132</sup> The affirmative attitude of their testimonies rendered the appearance of auspicious signs an indubitable "reality." The choice of West Park as the venue for auspicious phenomena further echoed the conscious effort of the Jiajing emperor to turn the Park into a sacred space. Here, the appearances of auspicious signs were visual confirmations of heaven's approval of the otherworldly character of the Park. At the same time, they might have been considered as heaven's positive response to the good governance

<sup>129</sup> *MSZSL* 508, p. 8372.

<sup>130</sup> *MSZSL* 534, p. 8680; Xu et al., *Guochao dianhui* 113, p. 767.

<sup>131</sup> Fisher, "Ming Shizong and Daoism," pp. 44–49. Fisher agrees that West Park was "a place made sacred by the presence of the emperor" and that the fertility of animals, such as rabbits, "were identified as auspicious signs because they live in the confines of the palace or the Western Garden."

<sup>132</sup> Some of the panegyrics can still be seen in the collected works of grand secretaries. For Xia Yan's panegyrics, see Xia, *Xia Guizhou xiansheng wenji* 6, pp. 315, 319, 323; 7, pp. 347–48; 10, pp. 484–85; for Yan Song's works, see Yan, *Qianshan tangji* 1, pp. 25–26; 18, pp. 165–68; for Yuan Wei's works, see Yuan Wei 袁煒 (1508–1565), *Yuan Wenrong gong wenji* 袁文榮公文集 (rpt. 1573 edn. [Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1970]) 7, pp. 345–69, 400–6.

of the Jiajing emperor, as had long been so understood in the Confucian tradition.<sup>133</sup> As the emperor grew old and his health worsened, nothing was more reassuring to the emperor than knowing that he was already living in an immortal world and that blessings from the Most High upon his mortality and his empire were within reach.

## CONCLUSION

The Jiajing emperor had a definite objective in his use of West Park. From the early Ming period, West Park, with its three interconnected lakes and islands, had been regarded as resembling the immortal islands in the sea off China's east coast. This characteristic of West Park must have attracted the attention of the Jiajing emperor. He used the large area to create landscape features that afforded the possibility of realizing the Daoist concept of immortality. He ordered ritual complexes to be constructed inside the Park, and rebuilt many halls to serve religious and semi-religious purposes. He urged palace maids and eunuchs to receive Daoist teachings and wear Daoist costume. Even officials serving in the Park were given Daoist robes and caps.<sup>134</sup> To ensure the recognition of this landscape the emperor granted to many buildings new names with Daoist and immortal connotations. Through the installation of new name-plaques he specified a Daoist reading of the whole geography. Inside these buildings Daoist rituals and ceremonies were held; various practices for achieving immortality were performed; auspicious animals and plants were orchestrated to appear in various places in the Park. This was a setting in which the Jiajing emperor took on his role as an immortal.

I have stressed the importance of the Jiajing emperor's pursuit of immortality over other factors in explaining his seclusion in West Park in an attempt to demonstrate that the emperor's choice for his permanent residence was not simply a Park but an immortal land. He prepared for himself a *dongtian*, an ideal place for him as a human being to cultivate physical immortality and as an "immortal on earth" to reside. This dual approach – the recognition of a specific setting and the creation of a role – offers a promising way through which to inter-

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., pp. 44–49. Fisher has elaborated on the reading of the auspicious omens in the Jiajing reign in relation to the Confucian tradition.

<sup>134</sup> Palace poems of the Jiajing period also mention that palace maids serving in West Park wore Daoist robes and special ritual shoes; Li Gun 李袞 (*jinshi* 1553), *Li Zitian shiji* 李子田詩集 (preface dated 1601) (Congshu jicheng xubian edn. [Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1989]), vol. 170, j. 1, p. 502; Zhang Yuankai 張元凱 (16th c.), *Fatan zhajiji* 伐檀齋集 (SKQS edn., vol. 1285) 12, p. 2b.

pret Daoist activities as well as artefacts of the Jiajing emperor in the last twenty-five years of his life.<sup>135</sup>

As the identity of West Park with a Daoist realm for the pursuit of immortality was so well recognized by people of the time and after, it became an obvious target of destruction to whoever wanted to express publicly their negation of the emperor's Daoist belief and behavior. As Shen Defu notes, a few month after the emperor's death, many of the buildings in West Park were destroyed and tablets removed, such as the Leiting hongying dian and the Ningdao leixuan.<sup>136</sup> By the end of the seventeenth century, when Gao Shiqi (1645–1704) wrote about West Park, most of the buildings first established by the Jiajing emperor had already disappeared except for the two major temples, Dagaoxuan dian and the Daguangming dian.<sup>137</sup> Today, the Dagaoxuan dian is the only architecture still extant. Unfortunately it has been occupied by military units since the mid-twentieth century and badly damaged. It is no longer accessible to anyone without special approval.

#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|               |                                                                         |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>CMMYL</i>  | Sun Chengze 孫承澤, <i>Chunming mengyu lu</i> 春明夢餘錄                        |
| <i>MS</i>     | <i>Mingshi</i> 明史                                                       |
| <i>MSZSL</i>  | <i>Ming Shizong Su huangdi shilu</i> 明世宗肅皇帝實錄                           |
| <i>JATSBJ</i> | Gao Shiqi 高士奇, <i>Jin'ao tuishi biji</i> 金鰲退食筆記                         |
| <i>RXJWK</i>  | Yu Minzhong 于敏中 <i>et al.</i> , <i>Qinding Rixia jiuwen kao</i> 欽定日下舊聞考 |
| <i>WLYHB</i>  | Shen Defu 沈德符 <i>Wanli yehuo bian</i> 萬曆野獲編                             |
| <i>ZZZ</i>    | Liu Ruoyu 劉若愚, <i>Zhuozhong zhi</i> 酌中志                                 |

<sup>135</sup> For the use of this approach to explicate artefacts of the Jiajing reign, see Maggie Wan, "Motifs with an Intention"; and idem, "Jiajing Emperor and His Auspicious Words," *Archives of Asian Art* 57 (2007), pp. 95–120.

<sup>136</sup> *WLYHB* 2, pp. 50–51.

<sup>137</sup> *JATSBJ* 2, pp. 91–92.