


Article

The Daoist Art of the Bedchamber of Male Homosexuality in Ming and Qing Literature

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Abstract: The Daoist art of the bedchamber (*fangzhong shu* 房中術) constitutes a form of cultivation practice with the objective of promoting health and longevity through sexual techniques, generally applied within heterosexual contexts. However, with the evolution of male homosexuality culture during the Ming and Qing dynasties, depictions of the art of the bedchamber related to male homosexuality emerged in the literature of that era. This art was imaginatively traced back to Laozi and his disciple Yin Xi 尹喜. The sources explained the beneficial outcomes of these techniques by referring to classical Chinese cosmology: underage males were considered to have *yin* energy in their bodies, a condition similar to that in females, aligning with the fundamental principles of the heterosexual art of the bedchamber. Serving as a religious interpretation of emerging cultural trends rather than representing a new cultivation technique, this fictive art legitimizes homosexual practices among males, particularly those adhering to Daoism.

Keywords: the art of the bedchamber; male homosexuality; Daoism; Ming and Qing literature

1. Introduction

The connection between sexuality and physical health has long been significant in Chinese cultural discourse, which is particularly evident in the evolution of the art of the bedchamber (*fangzhong shu* 房中術)—a form of cultivation practice aiming to attain sexual pleasure, progeny, and longevity, and even to become immortal. It can be traced back to the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220) and has persisted to the present day, and the fundamental principle lies in the harmonious integration of *yang* 陽 and *yin* 陰 energies. Even though the art of the bedchamber has long been considered a cultivation practice in Daoism, Daoist priests generally hold an ambiguous attitude toward it (Robinet 1988; Gai 1996; Lin 2001). Despite being viewed as a method for achieving immortality by Daoist priests like Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–363), it has remained in a relatively marginal position in the Daoist cultural system. Although the Quanzhen 全真 prohibited the sexual activity of Daoist priests living in monasteries, the terminology of *neidan* 內丹 (inner alchemy), the current's most representative technique, was widely used in texts about the art of the bedchamber. Laypeople, such as fictionists, often fantasized about the mysterious lives of Daoist priests and fox spirits or ghosts, imagining them achieving immortality through sexual cultivation. Fictionists often assumed that these methods for cultivating were initiated by Daoist masters like Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 (ca. 8th century), Zhang Sanfeng 張三丰 (ca. 13th century), or unnamed immortals. We can find more detailed descriptions of the art of the bedchamber in various novels of the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1912) dynasties (Wan 2001, pp. 83–95; S. Liu 2003; Gou 2010, pp. 369–419),¹ especially the rise of erotic novels led to an imaginative portrayal of sex, and male literati dreamed of possessing extraordinary sexual powers, trying to achieve such fantasy in their novels by employing theories and methods of the art of the bedchamber.

In addition to the art of the bedchamber, another prominent cultural phenomenon related to sexuality during the Ming and Qing dynasties was the prevalence of male homosexuality. Despite moral criticism and a law dated to 1740 banning the practice, male



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homosexuality continued to prevail throughout the Qing period. The cultural phenomenon of male homosexuality in the Ming and Qing dynasties has garnered scholarly attention over the past three decades. Scholars like Wu Cuncun 吳存存 and Giovanni Vitiello have studied it from a literary perspective (C. Wu 2004; Shi 2008; Vitiello 2011), while Mathew Sommer and others approached it from a legal perspective (Sommer 2000). By contrast, the religious perspective has received scant attention in academic discourse.²

Elements such as the conspicuous presence of the Daoist art of the bedchamber and the prevalence of male homosexuality during that period beg the question: Were these two phenomena intertwined? If so, in Ming and Qing literature, who were considered as the creators of Daoist art of the bedchamber of male homosexuality, and how does the art of the bedchamber express the idea that homosexual intercourse can benefit the body? In *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, Robert van Gulik (1910–1967) conducted a thorough and fruitful analysis of the art of the bedchamber. He suggested that literary sources generally adopt a neutral attitude as long as adults engage in it. It is taken that intimate contact between two *yang* elements cannot result in a total loss of vital force for either of them (van Gulik [1961] 2003, p. 48). However, it is noteworthy that Robert van Gulik did not provide textual evidence to support his assertions.

Challenging van Gulik's assumptions, the article explores how Daoist concepts of self-cultivation intersected with homosexuality in late imperial China by examining a large body of literature containing homosexual content, including works such as *Chanzhen yishi* 禪真逸史, *Yinshuwu shuying* 因樹屋書影, *Feng shuangfei* 鳳雙飛, and *Yichun xiangzhi* 宜春香質, which have descriptions of the art of bedchamber between male practitioners. I argue that in literary sources, sexual intercourse between two adults causes physical harm, whereas intercourse between an adult man and an underage boy is considered beneficial. Richard Wang emphasized the religious elements in erotic novels (R. Wang 2011), and Mark Meulenbeld discussed the possibility of novels describing Daoist rituals and described these novels as ritual paratexts (Meulenbeld 2015). However, the fictional nature of the novels cannot be entirely disregarded. Therefore, I examined the pertinent discourses in religious and medical texts.

The reason why the constructed term of the Daoist art of the bedchamber is used herein is that most of the sources of the art of the bedchamber between males that we have seen so far involved immortals and Daoist priests. Although the term “homosexuality” was not used in ancient China, this article uses it to refer to same-sex sexual relationships following the convention established by scholars since the twentieth century when studying pre-modern Chinese sexual culture. It does not imply that the practitioners are homosexuals (Hinsch 1992, p. 7). Since the art of the bedchamber is mainly concerned with the interaction of energies within the bodies of both parties during sexual intercourse, this paper refers to the individuals in the relationship as the penetrator and the penetrated.

By combining fragments from the novel with traditional medical texts, we can construct a basic framework of the Daoist art of the bedchamber of male homosexuality during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. This article first describes the sacred origin of this technique, which was believed to have been created by the founder of Daoism and passed down from generation to generation. It then examines why it is physically beneficial for the penetrator to have homosexual intercourse with men under the age of twenty and the harm caused by having sex with men over twenty. Finally, it explains how the penetrated male, in turn, benefited from this technique. This article not only contributes to the study of the history of homosexuality and the art of the bedchamber but also sheds light on how Daoism has been employed to interpret emerging cultural trends connected to male homosexuality.

2. Legend of Origin

A sacred origin was constructed to justify intercourse between men in *Chanzhen yishi*. The *Chanzhen yishi* 禪真逸史 (*Forgotten Tales of Dhyana Masters and Perfected Beings*) traces the fictive Daoist art of the bedchamber of male homosexuality back to Laozi and his disciple Yin Xi 尹喜. *Chanzhen yishi* was written by Fang Ruhao 方汝浩 (fl. early 17th

century, also known as Qingxi Daoren 清溪道人) and published during the Tianqi 天啓 era (1621–1627). During the Ming dynasty, there were two editions: one from the Tianqi era and one from the Chongzhen 崇禎 era (1628–1644). These editions are collected in the National Library of China, Jigendō (Ciyan tang 慈眼堂) in Japan, and other locations. In the Qing dynasty, six editions were reprinted (K. Sun 1982, p. 208; M. Li 2006, pp. 74–77; Xu 2022, pp. 8–15). Considering that the various editions have no significant differences in the main text and only minor variations in prefaces, variant characters (*yitizi* 異體字), and illustrations, I chose to use the remake print version of *Shuangge cangban* 爽閣藏板 in Hangzhou 杭州 in the late seventeenth century published by Shanghai *guji chubanshe* 上海古籍出版社 (Shanghai classics publishing house), which is easily accessible (Fang 1990, p. 7, the preface of Jiang and Li). Very little information about the author's identity is available, apart from the pseudonym "Gushui Fang Ruhe Qingxi Daoren 澱水方汝浩清溪道人" in the edition of Ciyan Tang (K. Sun 1982, p. 208; Jia 2013). This novel narrates the tale of two generations of masters and disciples led by Lin Danran 林澹然, who fought for justice and chivalry. Though set in the Northern and Southern Dynasties period (420–589), this novel mirrors the religious culture of the Ming Dynasty (McMahon 1987; M. Li 2006, pp. 74–77; Fang 1990, p. 4, the preface of Jiang and Li). Apart from Lin Tanran and the disciples, this novel shaped various roles of monks and Daoist priests, some of whom served the state and possessed extraordinary powers, while others indulged in ordinary desires.

In Chapter Thirteen, Fang Ruhao uses the character of Du Zixu 杜子虛 to describe the sexual lives of Daoists. Du Zixu was a regular Daoist in a temple called Yuhua Temple 玉華觀. Du first introduced the two ways Daoists satisfy their sexual desires: the wealthy enjoyed visiting prostitutes, while the poor engaged in homosexual intercourse with other Daoists. He then uses his personal experience as a case to describe the latter. Du narrated two homosexual relationships. The first relationship was between Du Zixu and his master:

"We poor Daoist priests take the posterior path. I'm not afraid of you teasing me. I was only twelve years old when I entered the Daoist temple. My late master loved me like a precious treasure, and we slept in the same bed. One day, my master was drunk, put his arms around me to kiss me, and penetrated my anus (the flowers in the courtyard behind is a metaphor). I had never expected this old man's penis to be majestic, so I burst into tears immediately. The master hastened to explain. [...] I (your stupid uncle) just had to put up with it. It is known as the side gate of Daoism. The wealthy Daoists goes straight to the main gate and don't enter through the side gate.

俺們窮的道士，另開一條後路。不怕你笑話，我當初進觀時，年方一十二歲。先師愛如珍寶，與我同榻而睡，一日先師醉了，將我摟定親嘴，幹起後庭花來。怎當這老殺才玉莖雄偉，我一時啼哭。先師忙解道。[...] 愚叔只得忍受。這喚做道教旁門，富足的逕進正門，不入旁門了" (Fang 1990, p. 190).

The second was the legend of Laozi and Yin Xi. The master recounted this legend to Du Zixu to persuade him to accept this form of sexual intercourse:

"This is a long-standing Daoist custom that has been passed down from generation to generation. If you want to become a Daoist priest, you cannot escape from it even if you bury yourself in the ground. Taishang Laojun 太上老君 (Supreme Lord of the Great Dao), is the ancestor of Daoism. He stayed in his mother's womb for many years before being born. This elderly man was full of essence and pneuma, with golden skin and iron bones. Skilled at gathering the *yin* energy and replenishing the *yang* energy, he was victorious in a hundred battles. Later, when he passed through Hanguan, he met the official Yin Xi, who possessed a stunning figure deserving of affection, and fell in love with him. He taught Yin Xi Daoist practices, and eventually, they flew into the heaven in broad daylight. If a Daoist priest has sex with a woman, it's called *fuyin*, and if he engages in lascivious sexual relations with a young man, it is called *chaoyang*.

This has been passed down from ancient ancestors to the present day and is the same for everyone.

這是我道教源流，代代相傳的。若要出家做道士，縱使鑽入地裂中去，也是避不過的。太上老君是我道家之祖，在母腹七十餘年，方得降生。這老頭兒金皮鐵骨，精氣充滿，善於採陰補陽，百戰百勝。後過函谷關，見關吏尹喜，丰姿可愛，與之留戀，傳他方術修煉，竟成白日飛昇。凡道家和婦人交媾為伏陰，與童子淫狎為朝陽，實係老祖流傳到今，人人如此” (Fang 1990, p. 190).

Fang Ruhao, through the words of the master of Du Zixu, provided a sacred origin as justification for homosexual practices among Daoists. Fang deliberately used terms like *caiyin buyang* and *baizhan baisheng* 採陰補陽，百戰百勝 typical of the Daoist art of the bedchamber, to emphasize that sexual intercourse of Daoist priests was of a cultivated nature.

Laozi was portrayed as the founder of the homosexual art of the bedchamber in stories to underline its lengthy history and authority. When describing something with a protracted history, it is customary in Chinese culture to attribute the origin to a well-known figure from the pre-Qin era. For example, Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724–1805) mentioned in his *Yuewei caotang biji* 閱微草堂筆記 (*The Thatched Study of Close Scrutiny*) that “loving underage males began with the Yellow Emperor 變童始黃帝 (Ji 1988, vol. 12, p. 358)”.³ The Yellow Emperor is revered as the progenitor of Chinese culture, and Laozi is honored as the founder of Daoism, among the oldest and most respected figures in their respective traditions, and, in the literary works of the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Yellow Emperor was considered to be the creator of homosexuality, while Laozi was regarded as the originator of the Daoist art of the bedchamber of male homosexuality.

According to the *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 (Biographies of Immortals, 1st century BC, DZ294⁴) by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 BC), Yin Xi was an official guarding the Hanguguan 函谷關 (in present-day Sanmenxia 三門峽, Henan 河南 Province), who excelled in physical training: “he excelled in the inner study of Daoism, often taking essence (from heaven and earth) and practicing in secret. 善內學，常服精華，隱德修行” (DZ294, vol. 1, 5a6–7). Yin Xi asked Laozi to teach him the *Daode jing* 道德經 (*Book of the Way and Virtue*) when Laozi passed through Hanguguan on his westward journey. Recognizing his exceptional nature, Laozi wrote it and imparted knowledge to him (老子亦知其奇，為著書授之, DZ294, vol. 1, 5a8–9). As a follower of Laozi, Yin Xi was held in high esteem as the founder of the Louguan dao 樓觀道 (Way of the Watchout Tower), an early Daoist school active from the 4th century to the 8th century in northwest China. However, in *Chanzhen yishi*, this sacred master–disciple relationship, centered originally on the transmission of scriptures, was transformed into a sexual relationship. Laozi expressed his appreciation of Yin Xi’s capacity for Daoist practice in his biography, but Fang Ruhao turned the story into a different one where Laozi taught him the practice because he was attracted to Yin Xi’s physical appearance and desired to have a homosexual relationship with him. Fang adapted this story specifically to justify homosexual practices among poor Daoist priests, especially those between masters and disciples.

The master–disciple relationship is one of the most essential forms of Daoist transmission, which is a type of Fictive kinship comparable to the Confucian father–son relationship in which “one must treat (the master) with ritual propriety as one’s parents 如父母禮” (*Zhengyi weiyi jing* 正一威儀經, *Scripture on the Liturgy of the Zhengyi Masters*, DZ791, 9a). The master must be prudent not to treat disciples with excessive affection to maintain equity among disciples and avoid the master–disciple connection from becoming too close. The *Laojun shuo baibashi jie* 老君說百八十戒 (*the Hundred and Eighty Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao*) mentions that “One should not mistreat their disciples or immorally favor them, thus destroying the true master–disciple relationship. 不得輕慢弟子，邪寵以亂真” (*Taishang laojun jinglü* 太上老君經律, *Canonical Rules of the Supreme Lord of the Great Dao*, DZ786, 5a4). The word *xiechong* 邪寵 used here is most likely to denote the master’s immoral favoritism towards the disciple, akin to a homosexual relationship. The *Dongxuan lingbao yulu jianwen sanyuan weiyi ziran zhenjing* 洞玄靈寶玉錄簡文三元威儀自然真經 (*Tablets of the Jade Register*,

for the *Ceremonial of the Three Principles*, ca. 5th century, DZ530) also states that the disciple must show respect and treat the master seriously in both words and deeds, and the disciple should not expose their body in front of the master (DZ530, 5b2–5; 6a4–). Regarding the precepts of the Quanzhen school, Wang Changyue 王常月 (1522 ?–1680) discussed how the disciple and the master should behave in the temple in *Chuzhenjie* 初真戒 (Precepts for those Starting on the Path of Transcendence) by saying that “The disciple cannot sleep in the same room as the master or in the same bed in the same room. When the master is not sleeping, the disciple cannot sleep first. If the master is already asleep, the disciple cannot speak or undress to sleep. 不得與師同房臥。或同房不得同榻臥。師未臥不得先臥。已臥不得言語。不得脫小衣臥” (C. Wang 1992 and 1994, vol. 12, p. 26, 52a10–b1). This is not only to show respect to the master but also to avoid sexual intercourse. Precepts regarding sexuality are not only for the improvement of cultivation but also for the maintenance of the order and stability of the monastery. In a closed, hierarchical, and gender-segregated environment of the temple, homosexual behavior is very likely to occur. The master may abuse his authority and seduce his disciple. Therefore, the intimate relationship between Du Zixu and his master was not allowed according to the disciplinary traditions of Daoism. However, by adapting the story of Laozi and Yin Xi, homosexual practices between masters and disciples were endowed with a sacred origin and a cultivation function.

Special designations, *fuyin* 伏陰 and *Chaoyang* 朝陽, were given by Fang Ruhao to the Daoist’s relationships with people of different sexes. Whether Fang coined these terms or if they were common expressions remains uncertain. Similar terms can only be found in the *Zhuibaiqiu* 綴白裘 (*White Fox Fur Coat*, ca. 18th century), a collection of operas compiled by Qian Decang 錢得蒼 (?–?). A young Daoist priest went to a house for a ritual and took advantage of the opportunity to have sex with a woman, and then he was found by a man and penetrated by him (Qian 1930, p. 31). Qian Decang used the term *fuyin* 伏陰 to refer to the Daoist priest’s sexual intercourse with a woman and *fuyang* 伏陽 for intercourse with a man. Apart from these, we see no specific term in classical literature to designate the art of the bedchamber between two men. Intercourse with women is called *fuyin* 伏陰 (downwards to *yin*) because women are considered *yin*, which corresponds to the earth and is oriented downwards, so one stoops to make contact with *yin*. Sexual intercourse with men is called *chaoyang* 朝陽 (upwards to *yang*) since men are considered yang, which corresponds to heaven, and people are therefore oriented upwards to make contact with *yang*. Since the penetrated male is always positioned at the bottom, it can also be termed as *fuyang* 伏陽 (downwards to *yang*). It is possible that *fuyang* and *chaoyang* refer to different roles or positions in homosexual intercourse. *Yin* and *yang*, in these terms, are more likely to refer to women or men rather than the energies within the body. As we will discover in the next section, the principles of the Daoist art of the bedchamber are to absorb the *yin* energy rather than *yang* energy from young men’s bodies.

3. Real *yin* in Underage Males

This section will attempt to explain why sexual intercourse between males is thought to be physically beneficial to the penetrator and the conditions for the benefit; that is, the penetrated male should be in his teens, under the age of twenty (the age of adulthood in ancient China). Throughout the more than a millennium-long history of the art of the bedchamber, perspectives on positions, frequency, and other issues may vary among different sources. However, they broadly agree on a fundamental principle—that the *yin* essence acquired from a woman’s body benefits men. The source on homosexuality suggests that underage males were considered to have *yin* energy in their bodies, a condition similar to that in females, aligning with the fundamental principles of the heterosexual art of the bedchamber. This section will examine this point of view by combining discussions from the texts about traditional Chinese medicine with examples of the Daoist Ma Zhenyi and the literary work *Feng Shuangfei*.

Numerous cases of homosexuality involving Buddhist monks and Daoist priests can be found in the archives of the Ministry of Justice of the First Historical Archives of China

(Dong 2013). These cases only account for instances where deaths occurred, and there may be more diverse cases documented in provincial and municipal archives and collections, such as the *Xing'an huilan* 刑案匯覽 (*Conspectus of Judicial Cases*, ca. 19th century). However, in these records, Daoist priests do not explicitly interpret their homosexual intercourse as the art of the bedchamber but merely for sexual desire or money. Ma Zhenyi 馬真一 is the only historically verified Daoist priest considered for practicing the homosexual art of the bedchamber that we know so far. According to the research by Wang Guiping 汪桂平 (G. Wang 2014), Ma Zhenyi, also known as Ma Xiangqian 馬象乾, and alternatively, as Ma Yizhen 馬一真, was active in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties (the first half of the 17th century). He belonged to the sixth generation of the Quanzhen Longmen lineage, well-known in the northern regions for numerous legendary tales of spirituality. He was also called Ma Fengdian 馬峰巔 (the summit of a mountain), Ma Fengdian 馬瘋癲 (the insane), Ma Fengzi 馬風子 (the madmen), Ma Dianxian 馬顛仙 (the mad immortal), or Ma Xiutou 馬繡頭 (the disheveled hair). These names suggest that Ma Zhenyi was viewed as insane or perhaps as unintelligible to the laypeople and that his actions may have deviated from societal norms or religious conventions.

Zhang Yi 張怡 (1608–1672) recorded his observations about Ma Zhenyi in the *Yuguang jianqi ji* 玉光劍氣集 (*Collection of Jade Light and Sword Qi*), a collection of literati *Biji* 筆記 (miscellanies, or sketchbooks) (Y. Zhang 2006, p. 916). Zhou Lianggong (1612–1672) adapted it and included it in the *Yinshuwu shuying* 因樹屋書影 (*The Shadow of the Book in the House Next to the Tree*, 1667), also a collection of literati *Biji*. At the conclusion of the piece, Zhou Lianggong commented on Ma Zhenyi, pointing out that Ma had practiced the art of the bedchamber of male homosexuality:

“This Daoist priest commanded wind and thunder as easily as turning his hand, and predicted good and bad luck as clearly and intelligibly as if it were under his eyebrows. He held arrogance against dukes and other high officials as if he watched the theater, and he preserved himself like a transformed person from heat, coldness, hunger and satiety as if he were immortal. However, he did not shun filth, traveled with lascivious old women, and was intimate with *wantong*, who, he said, contained the true *yin* to pick and replenish the body. This is so false and absurd. Is there really anyone in the world like the ten types of immortals indicated in the *Surangama Sutra* and the foxes passing through the heavens of the Tang dynasty?

道人嘯命風雷如反掌，預議休咎如列眉，傲慢公卿如觀變場，絕寒暑饑飽如化人，而獨不避穢行，與淫嫗遊，且比及頑童，曰中有真陰，可采補也。此大悖謬也，豈世上自有一種如楞嚴所稱十種仙或唐人通天狐屬耶？” (Zhou 2008, pp. 11a6–b4).

In Zhou Lianggong's narrative, Ma Zhenyi claims that the reason he had sex with young men was because they had true *yin* in their bodies, and he could absorb their *yin* to nourish his own body through sexual intercourse. The term *wantong* 頑童 has a long history of being used to refer to young homosexual males, appearing in the *Shangshu* 尚書 (*The Book of Documents*) and *Guoyu* 國語 (*Discourses of the States*) (Z. Zhang 2001, p. 13). The phrase *bi wantong* 比頑童 was initially used to describe kings who were intimate with their male homosexual favorites (*nanchong* 男寵). Later, in literary works from the Ming Dynasty, *bi wantong* was used to describe a variety of groups, primarily literati and merchants, who usually had sexual relations with young males, especially those of lower social status. Ma Zhenyi's sexual partners are relatively special; they were older women and young men, rather than young beauties. In addition to the term *yinyu* 淫嫗, Zhou Lianggong also used the expression *yinyu baomao* 淫嫗鴛鴦 (Zhou 2008, pp. 8a8–b6) to describe the women with whom Ma Zhenyi practiced the art of the bedchamber. *Yu* 嫗 can be used to refer to all women, but it primarily refers to older women, while *bao* 鴛 refers to the manager of a brothel, usually an older woman, and *mao* 鴦 also refers to older women. It is uncommon since not many sex manuals discuss elderly women's sexuality, whether in terms of their sexual needs or their state during intercourse. Ma Zhenyi's characterization

is somewhat similar to that of Jigong 濟公 (Crazy Ji), a Buddhist monk renowned for his non-observance of precepts and his unconventional behavior (Shahar 1998). As a Daoist priest of the Quanzhen, Ma Zhenyi should have adhered to the Quanzhen's ban on sex, yet he incorporated sexual intercourse into his cultivating practice.⁵ This state of madness was not merely a spectacle for the world; it also was integral to his way of life and cultivation.

Zhou Lianggong was against Ma Zhenyi's practices. He cited the ten types of immortals in the *Surangama Sutra* and the fox spirits in the Tang dynasty (618–907). The *Surangama sutra* (Lengyan jing 楞嚴經, full title: Dafoding rulai miyin xiuzheng liaoyi zhupusha wanxingshou lengyan jing 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經, T.945 1924–1932) is one of the major texts of Mahayana Buddhism. It is said that it was translated into Chinese by Bocimidi 般刺蜜帝, a monk of the Tang dynasty (618–907), but its veracity is debatable. It was revered by all schools of Chinese Buddhism as early as the Tang dynasty and much commented on in later centuries, particularly in the late Ming dynasty. The ninth of the ten types of immortals in the *Surangama Sutra* is the *jingxing xian* (精行仙 immortals of essence), who is defined as “anyone who practices coitus steadily, never rests, and feels full success 堅固交邁而不休息, 感應圓成, 名精行仙” (T.945 1924–1932, p. 145). According to *Fojiao dacidian* 佛教大辭典 (*Dictionary of Buddhism*) of Ding Fubao 丁福保 (1874–1952), “in the world, there is the technique of gathering *yin* to replenish *yang*, which is known as *jiaogou* (coitus). If it endures, it will be successful. [The partners] feel each other, absorb the essence of the other, and use it to strengthen their own bodies, which is named *jingxing xian*. 世有採陰補陽之術, 名為交媾, 久而功成, 則此感彼應, 吸彼之精氣, 以固吾身, 是名精行仙” (Ding 1922). The *Surangama Sutra* listed the ten types of immortals, which originated from Daoism, to refute Daoist doctrines of bodily immortality (Z. Li 1998). The fox spirit is also often considered to become immortal through the technique of sexual intercourse (Hammond 1996; Kang 2005). Zhou Lianggong was not convinced that immortality could be achieved by employing this method. His critique was directed at the art of the bedchamber itself but not specifically at the art of the bedchamber of male homosexuality.

The idea that homosexual intercourse with underage males is beneficial to health and longevity also appears in the case of Zhang Fengyi 張鳳翼 (1527–1613), also known as Master Boqi 伯起先生, a playwright of the Ming dynasty. His story is told in *Qingshi* 情史 (*History of Love*) by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1646), one of the most famous litterateurs of the Ming dynasty:

“Master Boqi also indulged in homosexuality. If he heard of a handsome young male, he would do all he could to invite him home, caress him and take care of him, and did everything that we could expect. He was still in good health condition when he was over eighty. He was asked by someone, “How is it that you’ve had homosexual intercourse so often and haven’t lost your essence and spirit?”. He replied with a smile, “In the way that I do, the heart meridian is depleted the most and the kidney meridian the least, so they will not cause illness.” There was a young man named Ni who was particularly favored by Master Boqi. He personally taught Ni Sheng to sing and had him perform in several plays he wrote. When Ni reached the age of 20 and became an adult, Master Boqi assisted him in marrying a wife. However, after that, Ni’s beauty quickly faded.

伯起先生亦好外, 聞有美少年, 必多方招至, 撫摩周恤, 無所不至. 年八十餘猶健. 或問: “先生多外事, 何得不少損精神?” 先生笑曰: 吾於此道, 心經費得多, 腎經費得少, 故不致病. 有倪生者, 尤先生所歡, 親教之歌, 使演所自編諸劇. 及冠, 為之娶妻, 而倪容驟減” (Feng 2011, p. 660).

According to Zhang Fengyi, the reason why he stayed healthy was that the *jing* 經 of the kidney was not exhausted during homosexual intercourse. Here, *jing* may refer to meridians (*jingluo* 經絡), which are pathways facilitating the life-energy flow (pneuma and blood). The degree of aging in an individual is more directly correlated with the kidney.

The age of twenty was considered adulthood, known as *jiguan* 及冠 (reaching the age of wearing a cap and gown). Zhang Fengyi's companions were all underage males, and when they reached adulthood, he would assist them in getting married. In contrast, Feng Menglong mentioned that Ni Sheng, Boqi's favorite young male, was aging rapidly because of his marriage after he became an adult. Although Zhang Fengyi was not a Daoist priest, and he did not mention *yin* and *yang*, his story expressed the benefits of men having sex with underage men, and in contrast to Ma Zhenyi, he was more explicit about twenty as a dividing line of age.

The idea of 20 years as the dividing line for the age of the penetrated males also appears in the *Feng shuangfei*. The *Feng shuangfei* 鳳雙飛 (*Two Phoenixes Flying Together*), a homosexual novel from the Qing dynasty, explains why a man can engage in sexual intercourse with underage males but not with adult males from the perspective of *yin* and *yang*, which can be seen as a supplementary and developmental perspective to that of Ma Zhenyi. *Feng shuangfei* was written by Cheng Huiying 程蕙英, almost unknown in history. The only information about her is that she was a private school teacher for girls (*nüshushi* 女塾師) who lived in Changzhou 常州 at the end of the Qing dynasty (ca. 19th century) (Hu 1985, p. 647). This book belongs to the genre of *Tanci* 彈詞, which is a form of oral ballad in the Wu 吳 dialect of Suzhou 蘇州 in Jiangsu 江蘇 Province, similar to novels, mainly popular among women in the Qing dynasty. It is the only known complete novel about male homosexuality written by a woman in ancient China, with 52 chapters and 1.8 million words (Bao 2001; Sui 2017). The word *feng* 鳳 means male phoenix, and *huang* 凰 means female. The title *Feng shuangfei* means two phoenixes flying together, which has a powerful male homosexual implication. The book, set in the middle of the Ming dynasty (15th–16th century), describes the legendary love between Guo Lingyun 郭凌雲 and Zhang Yishao 張逸少, interspersed with various homosexual stories of other people, including one story about Prince Wei Xiong 衛熊, a member of Yunnan 雲南 ethnic minority.

In chapter thirteen, Zhang Qihu 張起鵠, a homosexual general, introduced the homosexual custom of the Han 漢 nationality homosexual custom to Wei Xiong. After hearing the pleasures and positions of homosexual intercourse described by Zhang Qihu, Wei Xiong became sexually aroused and attempted to penetrate him, but Zhang refused:

“Regarding the pleasure of male homosexuality, only young teenage boys are allowed to be penetrated. It is known as “playing with *xiaoguan*”. No one is permitted to do so with a boy of twenty years old or above, which is probably because teenage boys are youthful and physically frail, and have not developed their *yang* energy yet. They are originally the same as women, so it is convenient to do with them like what you do with women. Once they reach the age of twenty, boys are strong men. If we do such things with them, it will be like two *yangs* fighting each other and like two tigers's fighting, and they must both lost. So if I, the young general, obey you today, I am afraid both our lives will suffer in the end.

凡到男風之樂，只有十幾歲小廝可以供人作耍，所以叫做弄小官。一到滿了二十歲，就斷斷不可的了。大凡孩子家年輕體弱，陽氣未升，原與女人一般，便好做那女人之事。一到年交二十，便是個偉岸丈夫，若再與人做起這勾當來，是謂兩陽相斗，二虎相爭，未有不兩敗俱傷者也。故是今朝小將如從順，只恐登時兩命傷 (Cheng 1996, pp. 558–59).

Men under the age of twenty can be penetrated because they have *yin* energy in their bodies. Cheng Huiying used the term *xiaoguan* 小官 to refer to young men who offered sexual services to males in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Before reaching adulthood, men were considered similar to women in that they did not have enough *yang* energy, whereas after reaching their twenties, their *yang* energy rises and becomes dominant. Hence, when two adult men have sex, their *yang* energy will form a state of confrontation, causing physical harm to each other.

The view of Ma Zhenyi and others about the *yin* in underage males evidently disproved Robert van Gulik's assertion that the intimate contact between two *yang* elements can not result in a total loss of vital force for either of them (van Gulik [1961] 2003, p. 48). Medical texts from the Ming and Qing dynasties state that sexual intercourse between two men will result in excessive *yang* energy. Zhang Jiebin 張介賓 (1563–1642, also known as Zhang Jingyue 張景岳), a famous physician of the late Ming dynasty, discussed fertility issues in detail in Volume 39 of his work *Jingyue Quanshu* 景岳全書 (*Complete Books of Jingyue*), pointing out that too much sexual intercourse with women as well as with men could result in male infertility: "Some men suffer from sex addiction to women, leading to *yin* deficiency. The *yin* deficiency can result in pain and fatigue in the back and kidneys. Some men suffer from sex addiction to men, leading to *yang* excessive, which will ultimately cause the depletion of *yin*. 或好色以致陰虛, 陰虛則腰腎痛憊. 好男風以致陽極, 陽極則亢而亡陰" (Jiebin Zhang 1730, vol. 39, pp. 42b9–a6). Engaging in sexual intercourse with men can cause an overabundance of *yang* energy in the body because of the effect of other men's *yang* energy. Since the male body is naturally dominated by *yang* energy, an excess of *yang* can result in the depletion of *yin* energy.

The *Zhulin nüke zhengzhi* 竹林女科証治 (Treatment of Gynecological Diseases in the Bamboo Grove, with a preface dated 1827) is a well-known work of women's medicine from the Qing Dynasty, originating from the women's monastery in the Bamboo Grove (Zhulin Nüsi 竹林女寺) of Xiaoshan 蕭山 in Zhejiang 浙江 Province. This monastery made notable contributions to gynecology via the generations of monks who studied medicine there (Chen 1998; Y.-L. Wu 2000). The book referenced Zhang Jingyue's discourse titled *Nanzi jiansi bingyuan* 男子艱嗣病源 (*The Origin of the Disease of Men Having Difficulty in Bearing Children*), which explains the causes and treatments of over ten kinds of men's infertility issues, including *Nanzi Yangji Jiansi* 男子陽極艱嗣 (*Excessive Yang in Men Leads to Difficulty in Bearing Children*): "The *xianghuo* in a man is hot and robust. It harms the true *yin* and leads to an excessive *yang*, which is the ailment of *kang*. [...] So, he does not have son. 男子相火熾盛, 燥傷真陰, 以致陽極, 陽極則亢 [...] 是以無子" (Zhulin si seng [1895] 1915, vol. 4, pp. 21a10–b2). The *xianghuo* 相火 refers to the fire in the kidney and liver. The excessive vigor of *xianghuo* jeopardizes the *yin* energy in the body, leading to an imbalance between *yin* and *yang*. The *Yilince* 宜麟策 (*Strategies Beneficial for Progeny*) from the Qing Dynasty, compiled by an unknown editor at an unknown date, has two volumes, one of which reproduces volume 39 in *Jingyue quanshu*, and the other of which adds to the knowledge of his time on fertility and sexuality. There is a brief article titled *Sejie nanyin* 色戒男淫 (*Prohibition of Debauchery with Men*) which includes:

"Chen Chengqing said, "Experts in the art of nurturing life assert that indulging in lust with men harms the spirit, several times more severely than indulging with women." This is most likely due to the fact that men are *yang*, and when two *yangs* collide, their *jing* will undoubtedly be depleted, which will cause their bodies to become cold and prevent them from becoming parents. Therefore, the first step toward having a son is to stop engaging in homosexual relationships.

陳成卿曰 養生家言男淫損人尤倍於女. 蓋男為陽, 兩陽相亢, 必竭其精, 精竭則寒, 寒則不能生育, 故求嗣者當首戒男淫" (Yilince [1936] 1986, p. 14).

This phrase proposed by Chen Chengqing was mentioned in many morality books to illustrate the dangers of male homosexuality, aiming to persuade men to cease such behavior, such as *Renpu leiji* 人譜類記 (Z. Liu n.d., vol. 2, pp. 14b8–15a1), *Sejielu* 色戒錄 (Fu 1864, p. 70a9), and *Quanren juyue* 全人矩矱 (N. Sun 1800, pp. 30a2–3). Chen Chengqing 陳成卿 (fl. early 17th century), also known as Chen Zhixi 陳智錫, is a scholar from the Ming dynasty. Despite repeated failures in the imperial examinations, he aimed to address moral issues by disseminating moral books. His masterpiece, titled *Quanjie quanshu* 勸戒全書 (*Complete Works of Exhortation*, 1641), was compiled with a collection of many popular morality books from that period. By employing Zhang Jingyue's theory on excessive *yang* to elucidate Chen Chengqing's statement, the author of *Yilince* strengthened the logical

connection between excessive yang and infertility. In particular, it was suggested that excessive yang would deplete the essence, which is crucial for producing sons. This idea held significance in the patriarchal society of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Therefore, authors of morality books also cited the harm to the body as one of the reasons for opposing male homosexuality.

Concerning the *yang* energy in the underage male body, here it is necessary to mention the concept that a child's body is pure *yang* (*chunyang zhi ti* 純陽之體) in traditional medicine, which was first mentioned in the *Luxin jing* 顛囟經 (*Text on the Head*, late Tang and early Song dynasties, ca. 10th century): "People under the age of three are called pure yang. 三歲以內, 呼為純陽" (*Luxin jing* n.d., vol. 1, p. 1a3). However, this does not mean that a child's body is uniquely *yang* without *yin*. Instead, it refers to a state of rapid development in the early years of a child's life, which does not conflict with the views presented in novels such as the *Feng shuangfei*.

Both the novels and medicine texts oppose excessive *yang*, but the age distinction at 20 years old does not appear in the medical literature. According to Yan Maoyou 顏茂猷 (1578–1637), there were three types of male homosexuality at the time, namely relationships between friends of the same age and social class, relationships between adults and adolescents, and relationships spanning social classes (servants, actors) (Yan 1992 and 1994, vol. 3, pp. 63–64, 9b7–10a4). Bret Hinsch and Wu Cuncun also made similar classifications (Hinsch 1992, pp. 11–14; C. Wu 2004, p. 8). The fundamental tenet of the bedchamber art is that underage boys' bodies contain *yin* energy, which serves as a justification for the second type of male homosexuality.

4. Technique of the Penetrated Male

After discussing the notion of how the penetrator obtains physical benefits, we switch our attention to the penetrated male. Zhang Jie 張傑 collected traditional medical texts on homosexuality and physical health (Jie Zhang 2015), most of which focus on the body of the penetrator. There is limited literature about the penetrated male, particularly those of low social status, except *Yichun Xiangzhi* 宜春香質 (*Fragrant Essences of Spring*, ca. 17th century), one of the most renowned homosexual erotic novels from the Ming Dynasty. The author called himself the Zui Xihu Xinyue zhuren 醉西湖心月主人 (Master Moon-Heart of West Lake-Crazed), and he has also created another famous homosexual novel titled *Bian'er chai* 弁而釵 (*Cap and Hairpins*). *Yichun Xiangzhi* consists of four sections, each named after the themes of wind, flowers, snow, and moon, respectively, narrating various homosexual stories. The section named Flower (*hua* 花) unfolds the story of Shan Xiuyan 單秀言, also known as Ying'er 迎兒. Ying'er leveraged his male beauty to entice men for financial gain, engaged in multiple relationships, seized those men's properties, and eventually faced fatal retribution. At the story's beginning, Shan Ying'er is guided by a Daoist priest in a perilous mountain inhabited by immortal women. The Niangniang 娘娘, an unidentified goddess, provided insights into Shan Ying'er's past life and explained the reason for teaching him the technique of sex. Shan Ying'er was originally a female immortal and was reincarnated as a man on the earth. The Niangniang wanted Shan to return to the immortal world by practicing the art of the bedchamber: "I have a secret technique to teach you—one that allows you to draw upon *yin* from front and *yang* from back. You must practice it with kindness and sincerity. 我有一秘法 [傳於你及之]. 前可採陰, 後可採陽 [...] 但要忠厚行之" (Zui 1994, p. 166). When Shan Ying'er came home that night, he dreamed of the technique:

"Ying'er looked up to the sky, prayed to the gods and then fell asleep. He dreamed of a man teaching him how to move *qi* and lift *jing*, to gather *yin* and replenish *yang*, to absorb fire from the furnace and extract *jing*, to move *jing* back to the valley, and to refine *qi* into spirit. He let his anus feel the *qi*, exhaling, and inhaling, which made him feel better than having sex with a woman.

迎兒望空拜祝就寢。夜夢一人, 教他運氣提精。採陰補陽。吸爐渡精, 運精歸谷, 化氣歸神, 令後庭交感, 自呼自吸, 美過女色" (Zui 1994, p. 169).

With this technique, he could obtain *yin* energy through the penis when having sex with women and *yang* energy through the anus when having sex with men. By contracting and relaxing the anus, *qi* 氣 (pneuma) and *jing* moved and concentrated in the body and were then transformed into *shen* 神 (spirit). According to the model of teaching the Dao of the human–god love during the Sixth Dynasty (ca. 222–589) (F. Li 2010), Ying'er probably learned this technique in sexual intercourse with the person he dreamed of. The words *yunjing* 運精, *huaqi* 化氣, and *guishen* 歸神 are all terms related to *neidan*, but the Xinyue zhuren's description is so vague that it is hardly in line with the texts of *neidan* of the time. The art of the bedchamber, traditional medicine, and inner alchemy are closely related to each other and do not completely overlap, seeming to share the same set of terms for *yin* and *yang*, *jing* and *qi*, but presenting different features in terms of specific details (Wan 2001, pp. 40–49; Gou 2010, pp. 372–75). The Quanzhen tradition stands as the primary contributor to the field of internal alchemy, yet it explicitly prohibits sexual relations. Consequently, there is no direct discourse on the relationship between homosexuality and physical practice. According to the *Xuanfeng qinghui lu* 玄風慶會錄 (Record of the Celebrated Encounter with Daoism, 1232, DZ176) of Yelü Chucai 耶律楚材 (1190–1244): “Men are *yang* and belong to fire, while women are *yin* and belong to water. Only *yin* can destroy *yang*, and water can subdue fire. Therefore, those who study the Dao must first refrain from lust. 夫男陽也，屬火。女陰也，屬水。唯陰能消陽，水能剋火，故學道之人首戒乎色” (DZ176, 2a4–6). Because the female is *yin*, the male Daoists must stay away from the female. However, this text does not address whether one should avoid men since the male is also *yang*.

Xinyue zhuren praised homosexual male couples who pursue true love while criticizing money-grubbing and lustful *xiaoguan* (Nong 2003). The Niangniang specifically advised Ying'er to maintain moral conduct, cautioning of potential divine punishment. Bestowing upon him two taels of silver and one hundred copper coins 白銀二兩，銅錢一百，she warned him of the necessity of possessing a virtuous character for a favorable outcome. Consequently, after Shan Ying'er caused harm to another family through his male homosexual relationships and found a new lover, the Niangniang reclaimed the funds, which essentially signified the conclusion of her assistance, leaving Shan Ying'er to face his own punishment as his intestines were drawn out (Zui 1994, p. 219). It underscores the importance of morality in the practice of the art of the bedchamber. The emphasis on morality in practice aligns with a principle in Daoist teachings that can be dated back to over a thousand years before in Ge Hong's *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (DZ1185) from the 3rd century.⁶

Shan Ying'er experienced the pleasure of anal sex through cultivation practice:

“Ying'er used to be teased by his friends, but he found it very painful. Somehow, at this time, when (the penis) entered the anus, he felt no pain. After a few thrusts (of the penis), (the anus) produced lubricated water that was very slippery and pleasurable.

迎兒雖常把同起朋友戲弄，卻十分苦楚。不知此番怎麼放進去也不知疼，略加抽送，便津津有水，滑溜快活” (Zui 1994, p. 171).

As per our previous understanding, the art of the bedchamber was mainly practiced by men, and women were rarely taught to enjoy the pleasures of intercourse. Only the female fox spirit's technique of absorbing men's energy through sexual intercourse can barely be considered a female's art of the bedchamber. Therefore, this technique primarily concentrates on controlling the penis during intercourse and, more importantly, on not ejaculating, aside from explaining the various positions. However, the art of the bedchamber in *Yichun xiangzhi* was depicted from the perspective of the penetrated male. In the second chapter, the author described in great detail the process of sexual intercourse between Shan Ying'er and a man, especially how to use the contraction of the anal muscles to bring both great pleasure and induce rapid ejaculation (Zui 1994, pp. 182–83). This description also explains why the art of the bedchamber is occasionally called *caizhan* 採戰 (battle of absorption).⁷

Sexual intercourse is a combat between two individuals, with the penetrator wanting to prolong it and the penetrated wanting to shorten it.

The case of Shan Ying'er, in a way, illustrates that the penetrated male is not an object being drained in sexual vampirism (van Gulik [1961] 2003, pp. 316–17; Goldin 2006). The concept of sexual vampirism entails drawing energy from the one being penetrated without considering satisfying their sexual needs or engaging in energy exchange. Shan Ying'er can absorb the energy of the penetrator and even return to the immortal world by this technique. There is an interesting case in the *Yesou puyan* 野叟曝言 (*Humble Words of a Rustic Elder*), a Qing Dynasty novel. A Daoist priest from Mount Longhu 龍虎山 taught a wealthy man named Master Li (Li Ye 李爺) a technique of *xi yangjing* 吸陽精 (sucking sperm). Master Li often used drugs to render strong male passers-by, merely aiming to obtain sperm, so he only sucked male semen with his mouth, with the help of his concubines, rather than through anal sex (Xia 1994, pp. 1813–39). Although the tradition of the art of the bedchamber concentrates on the act of sexual intercourse, Master Li's goal of acquiring sperm suggests that male sperm can be beneficial for men as well. Suppose we attempt to consider the possible benefits to the penetrated male from the female perspective. In that case, it can be found that male energy–essence is considered to have a nourishing effect on women, which is particularly evident in legends of fox spirits who attained immortality by absorbing male energy.

5. Conclusions

The emergence of the Daoist art of the bedchamber of male homosexuals is closely related to the flourishing of male homosexual culture and the popularity of erotic novels in the late Ming and Qing dynasties. It is challenging to determine whether this is a real Daoist technique or an imagined one within the world of novels. While *Chanzhen Yishi* and *Yichun Xiangzhi* contain elements of fiction, Ma Zhenyi's anecdotes in the *biji* might be somewhat credible. We can only suggest that certain Daoist priests and laypersons believed in the existence of such a technique. They provided fragments of information about this technique from various perspectives, such as its origins and functions, which are not contradictory and can construct a coherent system of the Daoist art of the bedchamber of male homosexuals in the Ming and Qing dynasties. *Chanzhen yishi* named this technique *chaoyang*, which can be traced back to the master–disciple relationship between Laozi and Yin Xi, providing it with a sacred origin. The case of Ma Zhenyi manifests the beneficial outcomes of these techniques by referring to classical Chinese cosmology: underage males were considered to have *yin* energy in their bodies, a condition similar to that in females, aligning with the fundamental principles of the heterosexual art of the bedchamber. Sexual intercourse between two adult men, however, leads to an excess of *yang* energy. According to *Yichun Xiangzhi*, the penetrated male can also gain pleasure and energy. This argument disproves van Gulik's assumption that there is no physical risk associated with sexual intercourse between two adult men.

The Qing government had already enacted laws prohibiting sodomy around 1740 (Sommer 2000, pp. 114–65). The religious morality books maintained a critical attitude toward male homosexuality, and the Daoist scriptures did not show support for this technique. The Daoist art of the bedchamber was a creative response to oppression against homosexual behavior. However, Daoism was used as an influential cultural resource through which to reinvent the socio-cultural significance of homosexual behavior. Daoism offered an escape from secular life for people who could not find their place within societal norms. Daoism provides salvation for marginalized groups while cooperating with state power (Schipper [1982] 1993, pp. 14–15). The teachings of Daoism cover not only spiritual cultivation but also bodily cultivation. Through this crucial aspect of the body, Daoism was connected with homosexuality. The art of the bedchamber of male homosexuals is not an exploration of a new cultivation technique but rather an attempt to provide a rationalization of homosexual practices among males, especially those who adhered to Daoism.

In Buddhism, there seem to be more discourses on homosexual practices among Buddhist monks in novels and criminal records from the Ming and Qing dynasties than in Daoist ones (Xue 2017, pp. 88–107; Dong 2013, p. 92). There are even frequent imaginings of sexual techniques attributed to barbarian monks (*Mimi da xile chanding* 秘密大喜樂禪定) in erotic novels (Shen 2015, pp. 84–117; Durand-Dastès 2016). However, among the various sources available, there seems to be no evidence of Buddhism being used to justify the physical benefits of homosexual intercourse.

In terms of the connection between lesbianism and the art of the bedchamber, van Gulik believes that female masturbation and sapphism intercourse are tolerated since women's *yin* supply is considered to be unlimited in quantity. It is also recognized that when several women are obliged to live in continuous and close proximity, the occurrence of sapphism can hardly be avoided. The sapphic act within the family was even considered conducive to harmony among wife and concubines (van Gulik [1961] 2003, pp. 48, 109, 274). Unfortunately, a paucity of available literary sources has impeded our comprehensive examination of this issue. Further scholarly investigation is needed to elucidate this issue fully.

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Notes

- ¹ Wan Qingchuan 萬晴川 presented in greater detail the use of the art of the bedchamber in the erotic fiction of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Despite dedicating a chapter to homosexual fiction, Wan did not address the art of the bedchamber of homosexuals (Wan 2001, pp. 83–95). Liu Shucheng 劉書成 analyzed the creative mindset, expression techniques, moral indoctrination, and the pursuit of sexual abilities in these works, yet there is also no discussion of the art of the bedchamber of male homosexuality (S. Liu 2003). Gou Bo 苟波 examined the Daoist elements in the art of the bedchamber, including cultivation technique, immortals, spirits, and ordinary people, emphasizing its reflection of the “secularization” of Daoism (Gou 2010, pp. 369–419).
- ² The relationship between homosexuality and Chinese religion is addressed in only a few works. In the field of Daoism, Liu Ts'un-yan 柳存仁 (1917–2009) published an article titled “Daojiao kan tongxinglian” 道家看同性戀 (Homosexuality from the Daoist Perspective, 2000), which is only a short article that briefly outlines the history of homosexuality in China, with very few references to Daoism, and only a discussion on *yin* and *yang* at the end of the article (C. Liu 2000). In the field of Buddhism, Bernard Faure's *Sexualités bouddhiques: Entre désirs et réalités* (1994), an important work on Buddhist sexual culture, contains two chapters on homosexuality, precepts, as well as Buddhism in China and, particularly, in Japan (Faure 1994, pp. 76–77, 195–215). Yang Hui-nan 楊惠南 has examined Buddhist precepts regarding the issue of whether pandaka can become monks (Yang 2002). Moreover, regarding the religious beliefs of homosexuals, Michael Szonyi studied the belief in Hu Tianbao 胡天寶 in the Fuzhou 福州 region during the Qing dynasty, as well as the Qing government's prohibition and destruction of its temples (Szonyi 1998). In 2018, the journal *Zhongwai yixue zhexue* 中外醫學哲學, based in Hong Kong, published a special issue dedicated to the legalization of homosexuality in China, with many articles stemming from Confucianism.
- ³ The word *luan tong* 變童 is translated as “loving underage males”, meaning an intimate relationship with underage males, not pedophilia. The term *tong* 童 is commonly used in the context of homosexuality, such as *wantong* 頑童, *jiaotong* 狡童, and *juntong* 俊童, all referring to handsome adolescent males. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, adolescent males under the age of twenty were referred to as *tong*, with fifteen-year-olds called *chentong* 成童. In the Qing law on sodomy, boys under the age of 12 were specifically referred to as *youtong* 幼童. In discourses of homosexuality, the young males are mostly teenagers. For instance, in Wu Jing 吳敬所's novel *Guose Tianxiang* 國色天香 (ca. 16th century), a person referred to as *aitong* 愛童 was fifteen years old. The term *tong* also means “servant”, often seen in morality books as a potential sexual partner for the male head of the household. Moreover, the marriage age was often in the teenage years during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Therefore, we cannot equate *luan tong* with the modern Western concept of pedophilia.
- ⁴ DZ refers to works in *Zhengtong daoang* (1988) 正統道藏, with the text number being recorded in *Daozang suoyin* 道藏索引 (Shi and Chen 1996, pp. 258–348).
- ⁵ Vincent Goossaert pointed out the existence of Lay Quanzhen in Beijing and Jiangnan 江南 in the late Qing Dynasty (Goossaert 2007, pp. 310–18; Goossaert 2021). They did not reside in monasteries but lived in their own homes, and many of them were married. Though they did not adhere to the Quanzhen's celibacy rule, they at least followed societal norms. Moreover, unlike Ma Zhenyi and Ji Gong, they did not make a spectacle of violating the precepts.

- ⁶ “Those who pursue immortality must first uphold loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, and sincerity. If one neglects the cultivation of virtue and only focuses on techniques and methods, longevity will not be attained. 欲求仙者，要當以忠孝和順仁信為本。若德行不修，而但務方術，皆不得長生也” (Ge 1996, p. 53).
- ⁷ For example, the *Sanfeng caizhan fangzhong miaoshu mijue* 三峰採戰房中妙術秘訣 (Duan and Liu 2001, p. 1308).

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