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# LUNAR MANSION, SOLAR PALACE, AND GOLDEN STAR

## The Key to Decoding Kim-Mun Yao's Esoteric Manuals

WU CHIA-YUN 吳佳芸\*

*Kim-Mun Yao (also known as Lanten-Yao) are a group of the Yao people whose religion borrowed Daoist ritual practices. Many religious manuscripts are extant, including the “esoteric manuals” (miyu; [Mun] pei-pui) which are also the most representative of the Kim-Mun religion. This article argues that the three key terms “Lunar Mansion” (yuefu; [Mun] not-pou), “Solar Palace” (rigong; [Mun] nat-kəŋ), and “Golden Star/Venus” (jinxing; [Mun] kjam-θiŋ) can be used to decode the contents of the esoteric manuals. The Kim-Mun people used these terms to construct a framework that combined texts and visual representations in religious texts, enabling ritual specialists to form a “mental picture” to visualize while performing. As almost all of the esoteric manuals include these three key terms, they form the basis of all the rituals in the Kim-Mun Yao religion.*

KEYWORDS: *Kim-Mun, Lanten-Yao, esoteric manuals, visualization, celestial realms*

### ABBREVIATIONS

BSB Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library)  
DZ Daozang 道藏 (Daoist Canon)

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## INTRODUCTION

Kim-Mun Yao<sup>1</sup> (also known as Lanten-Yao 藍靛瑤) is a branch of the Yao ethnic group, and they have preserved a wide corpus of ritual and non-ritual texts written in Chinese script. Among the ritual texts, “esoteric manuals”<sup>2</sup> (*miyu* 秘語; [Mun] *pei-nui*) are the most secret type. This article explores frequently-used terms in “esoteric manuals” to shed light on the core concept of constructing Kim-Mun Yao’s various rituals and to help us gain insight into the interrelationship between their indigenous beliefs and Daoist liturgy.

The Yao people, one of the ethnic groups in China, also reside in neighboring Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos, and many have relocated even further to the USA, France, or Canada.<sup>3</sup> In terms of language, custom, and faith, the Yao can be subdivided into four branches, or groups: the Yao-speaking (the largest group), the Miao-speaking,<sup>4</sup> the Dong-Sui-speaking, and the Chinese dialect-speaking. The Kim-Mun Yao, a sub-group of the Yao-speaking group, live in Guangxi, Yunnan, and Hainan Island in China; some Kim-Mun Yao also reside in the highlands of Vietnam and Laos due to migration during the Ming dynasty.<sup>5</sup> Figure 1 shows the geographical distribution of the Kim-Mun Yao.

The religion of the Kim-Mun Yao is a highly literate system and is often described as a composite of Daoism, ancestor worship, shamanism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. There is still a debate about exactly when the Yao “converted” to Daoism. Michel Strickmann (1942–1994) theorizes that the Yao were exposed to the rapidly expanding stream of Daoist practices and became Daoists by the thirteenth century.<sup>7</sup> As described earlier, the Yao were not a homogenous ethnic group and migrated frequently, so it is challenging to isolate a single moment of religious conversion for the Yao. It should be noted that there were many incidents of contact between Yao peoples and the Chinese Empire long before Strickmann’s suggested moment of

<sup>1</sup> “Kim-Mun” is the endonym of this group, which means “mountain people.” The term “Mun” 門 is used in self-reference and simply means “people.” The term “Yao” as an ethnic marker has been gradually constructed through the governance of the imperial Chinese states and the communist Chinese government. See Cawthorne 2015, p. 10; Chen Meiwen 2016, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Other scholars, such as Lucia Obi and Jacob Cawthorne selected “secret instructions,” “secret manuals,” or “secret words” to describe and translate the term *miyu* 秘語. See Obi 2010, p. 19; Cawthorne 2020, p. 140. Here I want to emphasize that this kind of religious text contains esoteric knowledge restricted to a particular small group, namely, the ritual specialists. Hence, I argue that “esoteric manuals” would be a more appropriate term to describe this kind of ritual text.

<sup>3</sup> Pourret 2002, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> There is a long-standing unresolved debate between Chinese linguists and Western linguists as to whether the Yao and Miao (Hmong-Mien) language belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family or not (Ramsey 1987, p. 279; Chen Meiwen 2016, p. 43). Also, a survey regarding the reconstruction of Proto-Miao-Yao by Herbert C. Purnell suggests that there has been a span of about two thousand years since the divergence of Yao and Miao. See Purnell 1970, p. 194.

<sup>5</sup> Pourret 2002, pp. 11–24. It should be noted that the Kim-Mun in Hainan 海南 Island in China are classified under the Miao ethnic group (*Miaozu* 苗族) despite having linguistic ties to the Mienic branch of the Hmong-Mien language family and similar cultural and religious practices (Ramsey 1987, p. 285; Huang Guiquan 2009, p. 302). Hence, I have included Hainan in the geographical distribution of the Kim-Mun Yao.

<sup>6</sup> References: Ramsey 1987, pp. 278–285; Pourret 2002, pp. 34–45; Huang Guiquan 2009, pp. 10–16; Yuenan Laojiesheng wenhua tiyu lüyou ting 2011, pp. 9–14.

<sup>7</sup> Strickmann 1982, pp. 23–30.



FIGURE 1. Geographical Distribution of the Kim-Mun Yao.<sup>16</sup>

Yao exposure to Daoism. Jacques Lemoine mentions that “the Yao collective priesthood would appear to be based on ancient practices known to have been popular among Chinese Taoists in the V<sup>th</sup> and VI<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.”<sup>8</sup> These ancient practices could be traced back to the earliest politico-religious trend – *Tianshi dao* 天師道 (Way of the Celestial Master) – in the late Han dynasty which gradually became a crucial part of the Daoist Ordination ceremony. One text titled “*Xiaren siyi shou yaolu*” 下人四夷受要錄 (Certificate for the Conferral of the Essential Registers to Lowly People and the Four Yi) in the fifth- or sixth-century book *Zhengyi fawen taishang wailu yi* 正一法文太上外籙儀 (Ceremony for External Registers of the Most High, from the Zhengyi Canon) shows a model document for the initiation of border peoples as Daoist adepts.<sup>9</sup> It alludes that these non-Han peoples (*yi* 夷) could become Chinese, by becoming Daoists. This idea might have influenced the Yao people. More precisely, for the Yao people, the adoption of Daoism was not a religious conversion but rather an adoption of political culture.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Lemoine 1982, p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> Alberts 2006, pp. 118–121. More discussions for the *Zhengyi fawen taishang wailu yi*, see Schipper 1994, pp. 61–81.

<sup>10</sup> Ter Haar 2006, p. xvi.

According to current studies, the Yao ethnic groups adopted many different Daoist traditions following the politico-religious trends in mid to late imperial China.<sup>11</sup> Zhang Youjun claims that the Yao adopted the earlier *Tianshi dao* when they dwelled in Wuling 武陵.<sup>12</sup> During their southward migration in the Yuan and Ming reigns, the Yao blended *Zhengyi dao* 正一道 (Way of Orthodox Unity) into their religion. After the Yuan dynasty, only two Daoist schools – *Quanzhen dao* 全真道 (Way of Completeness and Truth) and *Zhengyi dao* – were officially recognized, while other Daoist traditions characterized by talismans and registers, such as *Lingbao* 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure), *Shenxiao* 神霄 (Divine Empyrean), *Qingwei* 清微 (Pure Tenuity), and *Tianxin zhengfa* 天心正法 (True Rites of the Heart of Heaven), were regarded as branches of the *Zhengyi dao*.<sup>13</sup> This could explain why there are plenty of elements of the above-mentioned Daoist traditions in the Yao religious manuscripts. Furthermore, rituals of the *Lüshan* 閩山, *Meishan* 梅山, and *Maoshan* 茅山 traditions belonging to *fajiao* 法教 (Local Ritual Traditions)<sup>14</sup> or *shijiao* 師教 (Teaching of the Masters)<sup>15</sup> are also prominent in the Yao manuscripts. The *Zhengyi dao* and the *fajiao* were mainly of Southern provenance, and these Daoist traditions play an essential role in the religions of other ethnic groups in southern China, too.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the Yao religion should be understood as part of a coherent cultural framework.

In this context, the Kim-Mun Yao borrowed Daoist ritual practices and beliefs and had many religious manuscripts concerning Daoist texts. The manuscripts available to scholars for study today were mainly made during the 19th and 20th centuries. According to the research by Lucia Obi and Shing Müller, the religious manuscripts of the Kim-Mun Yao can be divided into the five following groups: “canonical texts” (*benwen* 本文 / *jing* 經), “liturgical texts” (*ke* 科), “petition and declaration documents” (*biaozou* 表奏), “esoteric manuals” (*miyu* 秘語), and “minor rites” (*xiaofa* 小法). Esoteric manuals, also titled “golden words” (*jinyu* 金語) or “celestial secrets” (*tianji* 天機), are proscribed dialogues between the ritual specialist and the deities and ancestors present during the ritual. These dialogues must be mumbled in the Kim-Mun vernacular language, confirming that esoteric manuals are far more indigenous than canonical and liturgical texts, which are

<sup>6</sup> References: Ramsey 1987, pp. 278–285; Pourret 2002, pp. 34–45; Huang Guiquan 2009, pp. 10–16; Yuenan Laojiesheng wenhua tiyu lüyou ting 2011, pp. 9–14.

<sup>11</sup> Xu Zuxiang 2002, pp. 12–77; Obi – Müller 1997, pp. 44–45; Alberts 2017, pp. 156–172.

<sup>12</sup> Zhang Youjun 1986.

<sup>13</sup> These Daoist traditions are said to belong to the Talisman and Registers Tradition (*Fulu pai* 符籙派), but the use of talismans and registers is not restricted to these traditions. See Qing Xitai 1988–1995, pp. 360–382. For more details on the early development of *Zhengyi dao* and its scriptures, see Bokenkamp 1997, pp. 1–23.

<sup>14</sup> The term *fajiao* (Local Ritual Traditions), according to Liu Zhiwan’s argument, was created by *fashi* 法師 (ritual masters). Generally, there are neither doctrines nor scriptures in the *fajiao*; the ritual priests mainly use vernacular rituals, including talismans and spells, to expel evil spirits and treat patients. See Liu Zhiwan 1996, pp. 1–7. For a more detailed discussion on *fashi* and vernacular rituals, see Schipper 1985, pp. 21–57.

<sup>15</sup> The term *shijiao* (Teaching of the Masters), proposed by Huang Jianxing, refers to all kinds of rituals performed by *fashi* and the whole set of religious culture related to them. See Huang Jianxing 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Zhang Zehong 2010, pp. 74–80.

usually chanted or sung aloud in a southern Chinese dialect.<sup>17</sup> The contents of these esoteric manuals contain many secret instructions to amend corresponding liturgical texts, which can thus be adjusted based on specific ritual needs. The manuscripts of esoteric manuals are seldom shown to other people, and the contents are even intentionally “encoded” so that the esoteric manuals can retain their secrets.<sup>18</sup> A unique feature of the esoteric manuals is the presence of three key terms: “Lunar Mansion” (*yuefu* 月府; [Mun] *not-pou*), “Solar Palace” (*rigong* 日宮; [Mun] *pat-kəŋ*), and “Golden Star / Venus” (*jinxing* 金星; [Mun] *kjam-thij*). When read in conjunction with corresponding diagrams and charts, these three key terms enable us to decode Kim-Mun Yao’s esoteric manuals.

This article explores how the three terms “Lunar Mansion,” “Solar Palace,” and “Golden Star” constructed a framework of texts and diagrams in Kim-Mun Yao’s esoteric manuals and deciphers the implication of texts and visual representations concerning the three terms above. The four critical directions of this study are: 1) to explore the functions of the texts; 2) to clarify the roles of the three key terms in the texts; 3) to analyze the collaboration and interconnection of the texts and the diagrams; 4) to figure out the implication of the structure of the Kim-Mun Yao’s esoteric manuals. In the following section, I briefly introduce the Kim-Mun Yao’s priesthood and their ordination rituals to provide background knowledge and context for the applications of the esoteric manuals.

## PRIESTHOOD AND ORDINATION RITUALS

The Kim-Mun Yao have two different scriptural and ritual traditions: “Daoist priests” (*daogong* 道公; [Mun] *taau-kəŋ*) and “ritual masters” (*shigong* 師公; [Mun] *θai-kəŋ*). This classification is based on the scriptures, patron deities, and functions of the ritual as prescribed by each tradition. The religious manuscripts owned by Daoist priests are similar to scriptures in the *Daozang* 道藏 (Daoist Canon) which bear the textual traits of the Daoist schools of *Zhengyi*, *Lingbao*, and *Shenxiao*. Conversely, the manuscripts of ritual masters are more related to “Local Ritual Traditions,”<sup>19</sup> especially the *Meishan* tradition.<sup>20</sup> The main deities worshiped by Daoist priests are “Three Pure Ones” (*Sanqing* 三清; [Mun] *θam-teŋ*), while the ritual masters revere the celestial “Three Generals” (*Sanyuan* 三元; [Mun] *θam-pon*) and the “Mother of Emperors” (*Dimu* 帝母; [Mun] *tai-mu*).<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the two priesthoods are responsible for different religious affairs: the rituals by the Daoist priests manage affairs of the afterlife, while the rituals by the ritual masters manage affairs of the living. Since caring for the ancestors in the afterlife is paramount in the religious life of the Kim-Mun Yao, the rank of Daoist priest is superior to that of ritual master.<sup>22</sup> The males of the

<sup>17</sup> Obi – Müller 1997, p. 48; Cawthorne 2015, p. 14.

<sup>18</sup> Estévez 2022, pp. 87–91.

<sup>19</sup> The difference between the two priesthoods of the Kim-Mun Yao is similar to that Kristofer Schipper provides in his article on classical and vernacular Daoist rituals. See Schipper 1985, pp. 21–37.

<sup>20</sup> More details about the *Meishan* tradition in the Southern China, see Zhang Zehong 2010, pp. 74–80.

<sup>21</sup> Höllmann – Friedrich 2004, pp. 14–15; Huang Guiquan 2009, pp. 81–82.

<sup>22</sup> Cawthorne 2015, pp. 14–15.

Kim-Mun Yao can be ordained as either or both.<sup>23</sup> A man who has been ordained as a Daoist priest will receive the title *Shangqing tianshi menxia chuzhen dizi* 上清天師門下初真弟子 (the initial genuine disciple who studied under the celestial masters of *Shangqing* school), and one who has undergone the ordination of a ritual master is titled *Sanyuan menxia xin'en/xiuzhen dizi* 三元門下新恩/修真弟子 (the newly-ordained/genuine disciple of *Sanyuan* school).<sup>24</sup>

“Ordination rituals” (*shoujie* 受戒; [Mun] *tsai seil' dau kaai*) are necessary in Kim-Mun Yao’s religious life; only after undergoing an ordination ritual can an individual become a complete persona and enter the cycle of reincarnation. A Kim-Mun Yao ordination ceremony requires the cooperation of both priesthoods. Xiao Xi claims that, in general, the ritual masters deal with the affairs of the living, which belong to the *yang* 陽 side, whereas the Daoist priests are responsible for the affairs of the afterlife, whose nature belongs to the *yin* 陰 side. The cooperation of the two priesthoods in ordination rituals is thought to interconnect the living world and the spiritual world and build the socio-cosmological relationships between a male of the Kim-Mun Yao and his patrilineal ancestors.<sup>25</sup> To be more specific, harmony between a person and the spiritual world is the ultimate goal of Kim-Mun Yao religious life.

The two aforementioned priesthoods of the Kim-Mun Yao, that is, Daoist priests and ritual masters, use different genres of manuscripts when performing rituals: the canonical texts are mainly used by Daoist priests; the texts of minor rites belong to the tradition of ritual masters; both priesthoods have religious texts classified as “the liturgies,” “petition and declaration documents,” and “esoteric manuals.”<sup>26</sup> As we can see, esoteric manuals play a critical role, whether in the rituals of Daoist priests or ritual masters, as they contain secret instructions for ritual specialists on the performance of rituals. In the following section, I introduce the application of esoteric manuals in Kim-Mun Yao’s rituals and analyze their function in depth.

## ESOTERIC MANUALS AND INNER VISUALIZATION

The manuscripts of esoteric manuals are conceptualized as divine ritual artifacts prohibited to non-specialists. Fortunately, the Yao manuscripts in public libraries or private collections contain plenty of esoteric manuals which can be accessed.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Although many ritual specialists are ordained in both priesthoods, within a specific ritual one can only take on the role of either “ritual master” or “Daoist priest.” See Cawthorne 2015, p. 14; Xiao Xi 2018, p. 196.

<sup>24</sup> Huang Guiquan 2009, p. 82; Chen Meiwen 2016, pp. 91–92. It should be noted that there are three levels of proficiency for a Kim-Mun ritual specialist; higher ranks are achieved through the accumulation of ritual knowledge and proficiency in the requisite practices. See Cawthorne 2015, p. 13, n. 21.

<sup>25</sup> Xiao Xi 2018, pp. 196–206.

<sup>26</sup> Höllmann – Friedrich 2004, pp. 16–19.

<sup>27</sup> During the second half of the twentieth century, many manuscripts and ceremonial paintings were made available for sale in Northern Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand, partly due to the war and worsened economic conditions of the Yao communities in these countries and partly due to the erosion of the traditional religious beliefs. This drew the attention of Western historians and anthropologists, some of whom tried to collect the extant manuscripts and preserve them. Due to their efforts, Yao collections can now be found in several libraries and institutes such as the Institute of Han-Nom Studies in Hanoi, the Tribal Research Center in Chiang Mai, the Bodleian Library

Such esoteric manuals were not intended to be the sole guidance; they contain additional secret instructions and are usually used along with other canonical and liturgical manuscripts. According to the observation of Jacob Cawthorne, Kim-Mun Yao's rituals, especially those requiring the presence of texts, can be divided into three sub-routines, each involving the ritual specialist in a different area: first, direct communication with the deities and ancestors; second, reciting canonical and liturgical texts aloud for both human and non-human participants to hear; third, ritual performance through ritual gestures and movements and the deployment of ritual objects. The manuscripts of esoteric manuals that record instructions and dialogues between the ritual specialists and the deities and ancestors present are usually used in the primary (first) sub-routine.<sup>28</sup> Generally, the manuscripts of esoteric manuals correspond to liturgies used in "offering rituals" (*jiao* 醮; [Mun] *θiu*), "purification rituals" (*zhai* 齋; [Mun] *t̄cai*) and ordinations.<sup>29</sup> For instance, *Qingjiao miyu* 清醮秘語 (Esoteric Manuals for Cleansing of Offering Rituals) and *Dazhajibiao miyu* 大齋醮秘語 (Esoteric Manuals for Great Purification and Offering Rituals) are used with the corresponding liturgical texts of offering rituals; *Sangjia miyu* 喪家秘語 (Esoteric Manuals for the Family of the Deceased) and *Zhaiwang miyu* 齋亡秘語 (Esoteric Manuals for Purification of the Deceased) for purification rituals; *Shoujie miyu* 受戒秘語 (Esoteric Manuals for Ordinations), *Chuzhen shoujie miyu* 初真受戒秘語 (Esoteric Manuals for Ordinations of Initiates) are used in ordination of Daoist priests, but there is an overlap between the esoteric manuals for ordinations of both Daoist priests and ritual masters.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, certain manuscripts are often bound together. For instance, a manuscript entitled *Anlong shendou jieyuan jiujuan miyu* 按龍伸斗解冤救患秘語 (Esoteric Manuals for Retaining the Dragon, Extending Life with the Help of the Northern Dipper, Dissolving Injustice and Treating Patients) consists of four texts of esoteric manuals. However, it is still unclear whether it indicates a mandatory combination of the manuscripts or they have to be performed sequentially or alternately.<sup>31</sup> In a similar vein, some esoteric manuals include *baijie* 百解 (hundred solutions) in their title, such as *Xiao baijie* 小百解 (Small Hundred Solutions) and

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at the University of Oxford, the Bavarian State Library (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, BSB) in Munich, and the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. See Volkov 2012, pp. 241–242; Obi 2010, pp. 12–24; Wu Chia-Yun 2019, pp. 18–28.

<sup>28</sup> Cawthorne 2020, pp. 138–140.

<sup>29</sup> Obi – Müller 1997, p. 45. It should be noted that, though I translate *jiao* (*θiu*) as "offering," and *zhai* (*t̄cai*) as "purification," in Kim Mun religion both contain sacrifices and offerings. The difference between the two is that the *jiao* (*θiu*) is focused simply on offerings to the pantheon and the ancestors. In contrast, the *zhai* (*t̄cai*) concentrates on the salvation of the ancestors. See Cawthorne 2020, p. 116, n. 10.

<sup>30</sup> Höllmann – Friedrich 2004, p. 17.

<sup>31</sup> Jacob Cawthorne mentions a ritual called "Treating Patients and Retaining the Dragon at Noon" (*Riwu jiujuan anlong* 日午救患安龍; [Mun] *nat-ŋu kjau-wan ɔn-lɔŋ*), which is to give a name to a newborn baby and introduce him/her to the deities and ancestors. The ritual actually consists of two parts: one is "Treating Patients at Noon" (*Riwu jiujuan* 日午救患; [Mun] *nat-ŋu kjau-wan*) performed by ritual masters; the other is "Retaining the Dragon at Noon" (*Riwu anlong* 日午安龍; [Mun] *nat-ŋu ɔn-lɔŋ*) performed by Daoist priests. In this case, the two texts of esoteric manuals are bound together because they are portrayed as a complete ritual. However, it is still not clear if other combinations are also based on specific ritual needs. See Obi – Müller 1997, p. 47; Cawthorne 2020, p. 132.



*Baijie miyu* 百解秘語 (Esoteric Manuals of Hundred Solutions).<sup>32</sup> These are collections of secret instructions for various rites including healing rituals, funerals, problems in marriages, and so on, areas that are usually the provenance of Daoist priests.

Even though there are many different kinds of esoteric manuals, over eighty percent of them mention the three key terms, “Lunar Mansion,” “Solar Palace,” and “Golden Star.” Examining the contents of esoteric manuals, we find that most of them are used as graphic depictions for ritual specialists to visualize or imagine.<sup>33</sup> For instance, a text titled “Kou shi shi shou le zhuangshen fa” 叩師什收了莊身法 (Bow down to the Master and *zhuangshen*) in the manuscript Cod. Sin. 925 shows the visualization of the ritual specialists. *Zhuangshen* 莊身 ([Mun] *tʰɔŋ-θin*) is a religious action whereby the ritual specialist constructs a small amulet which is placed behind the ear; it will protect him throughout the ritual and invoke the protector-spirits to guard the ritual specialist and the ritual area.<sup>34</sup> Since the esoteric manuals should be chanted in the Kim-Mun vernacular language, the sentences and phrases in the texts of the esoteric manuals are slightly different from Daoist scriptures in literary Chinese. However, the meaning can still be roughly understood. The text reads as follows:

[The ritual specialist] visualizes the figures and facial features of the Three Generals. The three *hun* 魂 on the left side and the seven *po* 魄 on the right side flash into the ritual specialist’s left foot and hide in bones and muscles. Three pieces of liver and lungs mean three masters. Three layers of Primordial Beginning cover the heart, where Yang Fazheng sits, and a jingling silk skirt covers the liver. [The ritual specialist] visualizes his bones and muscles as three copper, iron, gold, and silver armors on his body. Then he flashes into Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star, and to the abdomen of the Primordial Beginning.<sup>35</sup>

This excerpt describes a vivid image to guide the ritual specialist’s visualization and mentions several organs, such as liver, lungs, and heart. Another example can be seen in the text titled “Youshou menghu fa” 又收猛虎法 (Rite to Subdue the Tigers) in *Shou liuxiong fanxiu zhuban miyu* 收六凶犯脩諸般密語 (Esoteric Manuals for Exorcising Six Evils, Cod. Sin. 1059), which is a rite to expulse evil spirits. The text reads as follows:

[The ritual specialist] visualizes one hundred *jin* of rice and one hundred twenty *jin* of pig and sends them to the Lunar Mansion, the Solar Palace, and the Golden Star in the

<sup>32</sup> Höllmann – Friedrich 2004, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> Visualization, known as *cun* 存 or *cunsi* 存思, is an essential method in various Daoist rituals such as rituals of purification (*zhai*) and offerings (*jiao*). Meditation and visualization were viewed as a practical method of achieving “longevity and nourishing life” (*yangsheng* 養生) that was popular in the Han dynasty. Later, Daoists adopted the method in self-cultivation and then gradually applied it to perform rites. For more discussions concerning visualization in Daoist rites, see Zhang Zehong 1999, p. 21; Verellen 2006; Kohn 2011, pp. 118–120.

<sup>34</sup> Cawthorne 2020, p. 152.

<sup>35</sup> The passage is cited from the manuscript Cod. Sin. 925 in Bavarian State Library (BSB): 存取三元三个影容，伝左三魂、右七魄閃入伝左边脚同骨肉里藏。三塊肝肺是三个三師、三層元始蓋過心头，是陽法正坐過，肝並是叮嚀裙蓋過。想伝身骨肉是三層銅甲、鉄甲、金甲、銀甲披過伝身，閃入月府、日宮、金星，元始腹内。

Nine Heavens (Three Heavens in Three Realms). Inside the dragon's open mouth, there are organs of his mother's abdomen; the red cloud in the western sky is his food [...] [The ritual specialist] passes the two ponds of water and fire and at the Scarlet Palace, he stops and reads in silence: "Yang Faying, Zu Fazheng, Zu Dengdian." [The ritual specialist] visualizes that he wears the Golden Star on his head; he places his left foot on the Solar Palace and his right foot on the Lunar Mansion, which is the Netherworld.<sup>36</sup>

Two terms in the text cited above, "the two ponds of water and fire" (*shuihuo erchi* 水火二池) and the "Scarlet Palace" (*jiangong* 絳宮), are frequently mentioned in inner alchemy and Daoist refinement. In Chinese philosophy, water and fire are two of the "Five Agents" (*wuxing* 五行). The heart corresponds to "fire" (*yang* 陽), and the kidneys correspond to "water" (*yin* 陰).<sup>37</sup> So, "two ponds of water and fire" might refer to heart and kidneys. Two ponds of water and fire also relate to the rite of refinement popular during Song-Yuan times. Daoists believed that once the soul undergoes refinement by fire and water, they can achieve salvation and become immortal.<sup>38</sup> The "Scarlet Palace," also known as the middle Cinnabar Field,<sup>39</sup> is an orifice situated below the heart. It is a vital part of the human body in traditional Chinese medicine, inner alchemy, and Daoist rituals.

In addition to the human body and organs, the frequently-mentioned term "a precious pearl the size of a grain of millet" (*shumi baozhu* 黍米寶珠) in Kim-Mun Yao's esoteric manuals is also worth noting as it refers to the "Original Pneuma" (*Xiantian yiqi* 先天一氣) or the Pneuma of Real One (*Zhenyi zhi qi* 真一之炁) and is a metaphor for the origin of the cosmos.<sup>40</sup> The term "millet pearl" (*shuzhu* 黍珠) is widely applied in inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) and self-cultivation texts in the later dynasties, as are the terms "twelve-storied tower" (*shi'er chonglou* 十二重樓)<sup>41</sup> and

<sup>36</sup> The text is cited from the manuscript Cod. Sin. 1059 in BSB: 想米為一百、豬个々百二斤，送上月府日宮金星九重天。交龍口開是他母腹內臟，西天一界紅雲是他吃食。... 過水火二池、降（絳）宮，攔過了黑（默）念：陽法應、祖法正、祖登殿。想伝頭帶金星、左腳踏日宮、右腳月府，地府也。There are some variants or errors in the Chinese characters, such as 降宮 (should be 絳宮) and 黑念 (should be 默念).

<sup>37</sup> The correspondence of Five Agents and viscera can be traced to the Warring States Period (481–221 BC) and then was widely applied in traditional Chinese medicine and inner alchemy. For more discussions regarding the Fire of the Heart and the Water of the Kidneys, see Despeux 2018, pp. 209–218.

<sup>38</sup> *Lingbao yujian* 靈寶玉鑑 (DZ 547), 38: 1b; *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 (DZ 1221), 59: 1a–31a.

<sup>39</sup> The statement in *Baopu zi neipian* 抱朴子內篇 (Inner Chapters of *Baopu zi*) reads as follows: "Below the heart is the Scarlet Palace and the Golden Gate (*Jinque* 金闕) which is also named middle Cinnabar Field." 心下絳宮金闕，中丹田也。 *Baopuzi neipian* (DZ 1185), 18: 1b.

<sup>40</sup> It was first depicted in *Duren jing* 度人經 (Scripture on Salvation) that the Heavenly Worthy of the Primordial Beginning (*Yuanshi Tianzun* 元始天尊) used a millet pearl to contain all things on earth, showing the magical power of the millet pearl. In the Yuan dynasty, Chen Zhixu 陳致虛, a Daoist of the *Quanzhen* school, explained it as: "The *qi* of Real One is condensed into millet pearl." 真一之炁而凝為一黍米之珠也。 See *Ziyang zhenren wuzhen pian sanzhu* 紫陽真人悟真篇三注 (DZ 142), 1: 6a. For more discussion concerning "millet pearl," see Xiao Jin-ming 2015, pp. 337–396.

<sup>41</sup> Twelve-storied tower is a metaphor for the throat, see Despeux 2018, pp. 138–139; Huang Shih-Shan 2012, p. 67.

“thirty-six joints” (*sansbilu gujie* 三十六骨節),<sup>42</sup> all of which are also found in the texts of esoteric manuals. Many of them can be traced back to *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Book of the Yellow Court) in the Wei-Jin Period (220–420). They also form part of the standard vocabulary in Song-Yuan inner alchemy.<sup>43</sup>

Although in this case the rites are not for inner alchemy, the contents are still highly relevant to the inner visions concerning Daoism’s macrocosmic/microcosmic tradition. In Daoism, the human body is considered a microcosm meant to correspond to the outer macrocosm. Through visualization, the ritual specialists can invoke the body gods to cope with affairs in the outer macrocosm.<sup>44</sup> In other words, these texts of meditative visualization can assist the ritual specialists of the Kim-Mun Yao in establishing a connection between the human body (microcosm) and the spiritual world (macrocosm). Besides the specific vocabularies of inner alchemy, the three key terms are mentioned repeatedly in the texts discussed earlier and chanted in rituals. Jacob Cawthorne says that the ritual specialist should cleanse the body and soul of the youth of any harmful entities during the process of rebirth in the ordination. The order of the cleansing is as follows: “First to cleanse the feet (First Lunar Mansion 一品月府; [Mun] *jet blam jot pou*), second the torso (Second Solar Palace 二品日宮; [Mun] *ji blam jat kəŋ*), and third the head and all space extending up to the heavens (Third Golden Star 三品金星; [Mun] *θam blam kjam θiŋ*).”<sup>45</sup> This shows not only the connection between the human body and the Celestial Realms but also indicates the vital role played by the three terms in Kim-Mun Yao’s esoteric manuals. In the following two sections, I state the functions and implications of the three terms.

### LUNAR MANSION, SOLAR PALACE, AND GOLDEN STAR AS A STRUCTURE OF CELESTIAL REALMS

The esoteric manuals that mention Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star mainly use them as graphic depictions to aid visualizations that are related to Daoism’s macrocosmic/microcosmic tradition. A close reading of the application of the three terms gives us an insight into the Kim-Mun Yao view of the Celestial Realms. Some of the charts and diagrams in the manuscripts of esoteric manuals support this argument.

There is a detailed and beautiful chart in the manuscript *Gongyan hong’en mi* 貢筵洪恩秘 (Esoteric Manuals of Great Grace of Offering Banquet, Cod. Sin. 925 of the BSB). The chart is used as a guide to pace the “cosmic pattern of the Dipper” (*bugang* 步罡)<sup>46</sup> and visualize the journey to Celestial Realms (see Fig. 2). It belongs to the rite of ordination for ritual masters, highlighting the concept of rebirth.

<sup>42</sup> According to the context in the texts of Kim-Mun Yao’s esoteric manuals, thirty-six joints are probably the metaphor for the whole human body. The statement is slightly different from Daoist or ancient Chinese books; they claimed that three hundred and sixty joints refer to the entire human body. See Despeux 2018, p. 117.

<sup>43</sup> Huang Shih-Shan 2011, p. 43.

<sup>44</sup> Boltz 1983, p. 496; Zhang Zehong 2010, p. 21.

<sup>45</sup> Cawthorne 2020, p. 130.

<sup>46</sup> This chart and corresponding texts do not mention the procedure of pacing the cosmic patterns; however, a text called “Youlun songbiao zhifa” 又論送表之法 (Rite for Sending Petitions [to the Heavens]) in the manuscript Cod. Sin. 1041 records the procedure of pacing. Ritual specialists



FIGURE 2. Chart of the Journey to Rebirth. (Photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Cod. Sin. 925, folios 73-75)

As we can see, there are several circles on the chart; they represent different Realms. The *Dalu* 大路 (big road), which is actually a river, connects all realms. Squares beside the circles contain some supplementary information as well as the related places of each Realm, such as *Fenmaoling* 分茆嶺 (Peak to Divide Couch Grasses) and *Luodu diyu* 羅都地獄 (Hell of Luodu). Similar charts are also recorded in the manuscripts Sinica 3430 and Sinica 3481 in the Bodleian Library. Here I cite the text corresponding to the chart from the manuscript Sinica 3481 which explains how to visualize the rebirth journey:

[The ritual specialist] paces on the diagram of Northern Dipper through stars named *Tanlang* (Ferocious Wolf), *Jumen* (Wide Gate), *Lucun* (Prosperous Life, *Wenqu* (Literary Song), *Lianzhen* (Pure Modesty), *Wuqu* (Martial Song), and *Pojun* (Ruined Army). [The ritual specialist] first circles around the altar, which means the Lunar Mansion, also named Mansion of Original Female located in Desire Realm; [the ritual specialist] secondly circles around the altar, which means the Solar Palace, also called Mansion of Nine Dragons, situated in Form Realm; [the ritual specialist] thirdly circles around the altar which means the Golden Star, as well as named Mansion of Responsive to Heaven, located in Formless Realm. [The ritual specialist] makes the finger gesture not changing during incantation and worships on bended knees at the door [...] [He] goes up to the Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and

start by pacing the scheme of the trigrams, starting from the middle at the Central Palace (*zhong-gong* 中宮), and moving through the eight trigrams: *Qian* 乾 – *Dui* 兌 – *Gen* 艮 – *Li* 離 – *Kan* 坎 – *Kun* 坤 – *Chen* 震 – *Sun* 巽 – Central Palace. And then the pacing of the Northern Dipper starts from *Tanlang* 貪狼 and through all other Dipper stars as follows: *Jumen* 巨門 – *Lucun* 祿存 – *Wenqu* 文曲 – *Lianzhen* 廉貞 – *Wuqu* 武曲 – *Pojun* 破軍. For more discussions for the paces of the cosmic pattern in the Yao manuscripts, see *Obi* 2013, pp. 50-61; *Zavidovskaia* 2017, pp. 102-129.

Golden Star in the Nine Heavens (Three Heavens in Three Realms), higher than the four Heavens. [The ritual specialist] sets a command token at the end of the bridge. It is the Palace of Millet Pearl on the Lost River (*Mihe*). [The ritual specialist] rebuilds the bridge [...] he builds a copper-branch bridge in Lunar Mansion to the Solar Palace. He rebuilds a silver bridge with silver branches and pillars, up to the golden bridge with golden pillars and the Golden Dragon in the Golden Star. [The ritual specialist] crosses the four pillars of the bridge and goes up to the golden bridge. There is a brilliant pearl in the dragon's mouth. [He passes through] the Nine Heavens (Three Heavens in Three Realms) on the golden tortoise's back and to Single Golden Star. [And then he] goes through the Water Court of the Kingdom of Zhang, the Coast of Three Rivers, and the Palace on the Turtle Mountain. [The ritual specialist] invites the Mother of Emperors Huang Tianbao, Luo Wanshou, Bureau of Forest, youths and ladies of the courtyard, Three Generals, deities of the Incense Fire, Nine Temples, to search for the Primordial Beginning from the golden bridge in the Scarlet Palace, and goes down to the Palace of Millet Pearl to set the command token at the end of the bridge, [the disciple] then is reborn.<sup>47</sup>

The depiction of the visualization journey of the ritual master includes the “Three Realms” (*Sanjie* 三界), the “Heaven in the *wu* Direction”<sup>48</sup> (*Wutian* 午天), the “Palace on the Turtle Mountain” (*Aoshan dadian* 鰲山大殿), and the “Water Kingdom” (*Shuiguo* 水國). After traveling to the places mentioned above, the disciple finally reaches the “Palace of Avalokiteśvara” (*Guanyin dian* 觀音殿) to be reborn.<sup>49</sup> It should be noted that the right part of the chart shows the Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star arranged as a hierarchy. Simplified charts including this hierarchy can be found in the manuscripts Sinica 3324 (see Fig. 3) and Cod. Sin. 1119 (see Fig. 4) as well. They provide a hint towards understanding the meaning of the esoteric manuals. Therefore, in the following paragraph, I focus on the part of the chart that includes the three key terms.

According to the chart and corresponding text, the Lunar Mansion is also named the “Mansion of Original Female” (*Kunyuan fu* 坤元府),<sup>50</sup> located in the “Desire Realm” (*Yujie* 欲界; [Sanskrit] *Kāmadhātu*); the Solar Palace is also called

<sup>47</sup> The text is cited from the manuscript Sinica 3481 in Bodleian Libraries at the University of Oxford: 踏上貪狼、巨門、祿存、文曲、廉貞、武曲、破軍星，川壇第一邊是月府混元府欲色界，第二邊是日宮九龍府色界，第三邊金星應天府無色界，指決不移，出到門口一叩...重上月府、日宮、金星，三三九重天，高過四天。安當令牌在橋頭，即是迷河水黍米寶珠殿。重架橋樑...造月府銅枝宣橋一架至日宮。重造銀枝銀柱銀橋，架上金星柱金喬金龍。交過橋樑四柱，交上金橋，龍口含珠光朗。金龜背上三三九重天、金丹星，過張國朝水院、三江江海岸、鰲山大殿。持接帝母黃天寶、羅萬壽、林曹、合院郎娘、三元、香火眾聖、九廟，各尋元尸(始)，降宮金喬，下黍米殿，安當令牌在橋頭，即是降生。

<sup>48</sup> *Wu* 午 is one of the twelve Earthly Branches. The system of Earthly Branches was used to represent the twelve directions, especially in ancient Chinese astrology and navigation. *Wu* is the sixth Earthly Branch and refers to the south. See Höllmann – Friedrich 1999, p. 86.

<sup>49</sup> Höllmann – Friedrich 1999, pp. 86–87. It is worth mentioning that the chart seems to evolve from the “Chart of the flowing out of the Primordial guideline” (*Yuangang liuyan tu* 元綱流演圖) which is a patterned path of *Lingbao* tradition. See *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 (DZ 1222), 4:3a–15b; *Shangqing lingbao dafa* (DZ 1221), 39b–49a.

<sup>50</sup> In some Kim-Mun manuscripts, the Mansion of Original Female (*Kunyuan fu*) is also called the Mansion of Primordial Chaos (*Hunyuan fu* 混元府). The above-cited text in Sinica 3481 is an example.

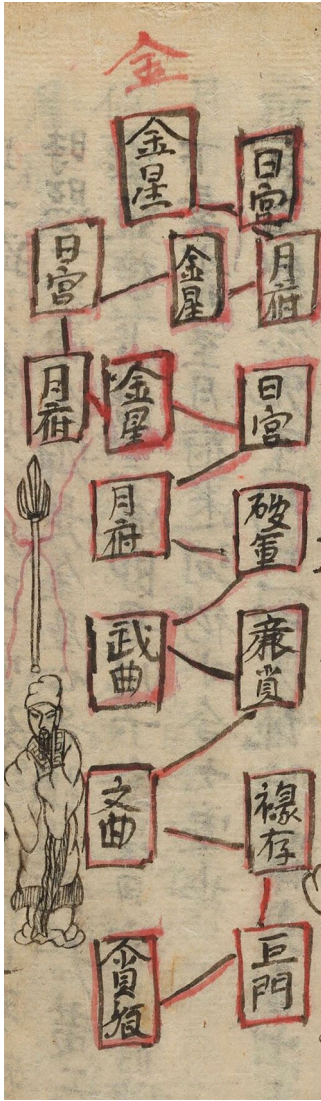


FIGURE 3. Celestial Chart of the Kim-Mun Yao. Photo: The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Sinica 3324, folio 65.



FIGURE 4. Celestial Chart of the Kim-Mun Yao. Photo: BSB, Cod. Sin. 1119, folio 18.

“Mansion of Nine Dragons” (*Jiulong fu* 九龍府), situated in the “Form Realm” (*Sejie* 色界; [Sanskrit] *Rūpadhātu*); the Golden Star, also known as the “Mansion Responsive to Heaven” (*Yingtian fu* 應天府), is in the “Formless Realm” (*Wuse jie* 無色界; [Sanskrit] *Ārūpyadhātu*). To be more precise, the three terms, Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star, represent the celestial courts of the “Three Realms.” There is

a water gate and a heaven gate in each Realm, and a river connects all of the Realms.<sup>51</sup> The term “Three Realms” was first adopted from Buddhism in the fifth-century *Lingbao* texts, such as *Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhutian neiyin ziran yuzi* 太上洞玄靈寶諸天內音自然玉字 (Lingbao Scripture on the Esoteric Sounds of the Spontaneously Created Jade-Characters in the Various Heavens) and was frequently used in medieval Daoism.<sup>52</sup> However, the Kim-Mun Yao did not exactly adopt the Daoism cosmology. Indeed, the number of heavens in the Three Realms is different from the widespread concepts of Celestial Realms in Daoism.<sup>53</sup> This chart exhibits that each Realm can also be divided into the Lunar Mansion, the Solar Palace, and the Golden Star. Statements written in the diagrams of the Three Realms of the chart attest to this. The text written in the Desire Realm reads as follows: “There are three heavens in the Mansion of the Original Female (*Kunyuán fu*) of the Desire Realm; they are: the Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star.”<sup>54</sup> Similar texts can be seen in the other two realms of the chart. These indicate that the Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star designate not only the Three Realms but also the heavens inside the realms, thus constructing a vertical cosmography featuring nine heavens.

Above the Three Realms, there is the highest celestial domain called the “Heaven in the *wu* Direction,” also known as the “Single Golden Star” (*Jindān xīng* 金單星). A text in the *Zhai miyu* 齋秘語 (Esoteric Manuals of Purifications) reads as follows:

Rite to send a petition for flying through Blood Lake. The ritual specialist should first visualize the petition as a golden dragon ascending to the Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star in the Nine Heavens (Three Heavens in Three Realms), finally arriving at the Single Golden Star at the end of Heaven in the *wu* Direction.<sup>55</sup>

I suggest that the “Single Golden Star” might be the “Grand Veil Heaven” (*Daluotian* 大羅天) in Daoism for two reasons. One reason is the popular phrase in Daoist scriptures since the sixth century: “The vast Grand Veil beyond the Three Realms.”<sup>56</sup> The charts (Fig. 2 and Fig. 4) depict the “Single Golden Star” above

<sup>51</sup> A text in the manuscript Cod. Sin. 925 reads as follows: “[The ritual specialist] paces on the diagram of the Three Terraces (*Santai* 三台). [The ritual specialist] first steps onto the Lunar Mansion, also named Mansion of Original Female, from the water gate to the heaven gate; [he] secondly steps onto the Solar Palace, also called the Mansion of Nine Dragons, from the water gate to the heaven gate; [he] thirdly steps onto the Golden Star, also named Mansion Responsive to Heaven, from the water gate to the heaven gate. [He goes through] three-ranked Administrative Offices (*Yamen* 衙門) and finally arrives at the Single Golden Star, Mansion of Conforming to Heaven.” 踏三台，第一上月府坤元府水門天門；第二上日公九龍府水門天門；第三上至午地金星應天府水門至天門，三品衙門至金單星順天府。For more on the river connecting the Three Realms, see Sun Jiayue 2021, p. 13, n. 9.

<sup>52</sup> Huang Shih-Shan 2012, pp. 99–100.

<sup>53</sup> There are several systems of the Heavens in Daoism, whose number varied. The most notable systems were the thirty-two heavens of the *Lingbao* school and the thirty-six heavens of the *Shangqing* school. Both systems adopted the Three Realms from Buddhism, including the four heavens of Formlessness, the eighteen of Form, and the six of Desire. See Mugitani 1988; Huang Shih-Shan 2012, p. 99.

<sup>54</sup> 欲界坤元府各有三天：月府日公金星。The Chinese character 公 (*gong*) is a homonym of 宮. So here the original character 宮 might have been wrongly copied as 公.

<sup>55</sup> The text is cited from the manuscript Cod. Sin. 247 in BSB: 飛血湖章法，先想其章是金龍，昇送上月府、日宮、金星三三九重天，至金單星午天盡處。

<sup>56</sup> *Wushang biyao* 無上秘要 (DZ 1138), 4:3b: 三界之上，渺渺大羅。

the Three Realms, so it might refer to the Grand Veil Heaven in Kim-Mun Yao's esoteric manuals. The other reason is the deity named "Jade Emperor" (*Yudi* 玉帝)<sup>57</sup> written in the diagram of the Heaven in the *wu* direction. According to *Gaoshang Yuhuang benhang jijin* 高上玉皇本行集經 (Combined Scriptures of the Founding Acts of the Jade Emperor on High), the Jade Emperor resides in the Grand Veil Heavens:

[The Heaven] upon the Nine Heavens is named Grand Veil (*Daluo*). In the Gold Tower of the Jade Capital on the bank of clouds lived the Emperor of Heaven, benevolent and harmonious.<sup>58</sup>

A comment recorded in *Huangjing jizhu* 皇經集註 (Collected Commentaries on the Noble Scripture)<sup>59</sup> also mentions:

The Heaven where the Jade Emperor lives is the most honored Heaven above the three thousand chiliocosms. It is the supreme Heaven, so it is called the Grand Veil (*Daluo*).<sup>60</sup>

Based on the two reasons mentioned above, I presume that the "Single Golden Star" represents the Grand Veil Heaven. In addition to the vertical celestial structure, the cosmology of Kim-Mun Yao contains a plane structure of Five Directions arranged horizontally. The Five Directions in Kim-Mun Yao's esoteric manuals are represented by the combination of two of the key elements: the Lunar Mansion and the Solar Palace, together with the "Golden Earth Star" (*jintu xing* 金土星), plus the "Early Star" (*zaoxing* 早星) and "Late Star" (*wanxing* 晚星). Interestingly enough, the combination still includes the first two key elements, with the adjustment that the usual third element, Golden Star, has become "Golden Earth Star." The text "You dafan fa" 又大反法 (Rite of Great Return), which is intended to thank invoked deities and send them back to the spiritual world, records a combination of Five Directions and five celestial objects presented in parallel grammatical form:

[The ritual specialist] constructs a small amulet placed behind the ear and visualizes that Jin Tiegou takes iron and thirty-six joints, arms, and legs of the original spirit to make the ironsmith Tie Tailan, who takes thirty-six joints, arms, and legs of the original spirit to make spears and knives and occupy the Beijing city. [The ritual specialist] reads it in silence: "Taking the stars of the realm of the Early Star in the East and making the arms and legs of the original spirit as sharp spears and knives; taking the stars of the realm of the Solar Palace in the South and making the arms and legs of the original spirit as sharp spears and knives; taking the stars of the realm of the Late

<sup>57</sup> The deity residing in Heaven in the *wu* direction recorded in the manuscript Cod. Sin. 925 is the "Great Jade Emperor" (*Yudi dadi* 玉帝大帝). However, he is the "Jade Emperor" (*Yudi*) in two similar charts in Sinica 3430 and Sinica 3481. Here I adopt the term "Jade Emperor."

<sup>58</sup> *Gaoshang Yuhuang benxing jijin* (DZ 10), 2:16b: 九天之上，謂之大羅。玉京金闕，雲層峨峨。中有天帝，仁慈惠和。

<sup>59</sup> The full name is *Gaoshang Yuhuang benxing jing jizhu* 高上玉皇本行經集註 (Collected Commentaries to the Combined Scriptures of the Founding Acts of the Jade Emperor on High).

<sup>60</sup> *Gaoshang Yuhuang benxing jing jizhu* (DZ 1440), 1:20a: 玉帝所居，為三千大千世界天宗，永無退轉。至高無比，故云大羅。



Star in the West and making the arms and legs of the original spirit as sharp spears and knives; taking the stars of the realm of the Lunar Mansion in the North and making the arms and legs of the original spirit as sharp spears and knives; taking the stars of the realm of the Mansion of the Golden Earth Star in the Center and making the arms and legs of the original spirit as sharp spears and knives” [...] The original spirit of the master goes to the Solar Palace, where [his original spirit] is refined as gold and silver treasure – paying tribute to the patriarch to thank the Nine Emperors. Thus, every deity is replete and happy.<sup>61</sup>

Also, an identical combination of the Five Directions and five celestial objects presented as parallelisms can be seen in the text “Youlun leifu jieyuan fa” 又論雷府解冤法 (Rite of Thunder Palace to Release Victim Spirit) in the manuscript Cod. Sin. 876:

[The ritual specialist] carries the sword to release Li Duzao of the Early Star in the East by eliminating the flower roots of his original spirit including liver, lungs, tongue, teeth, neck [...] to release Li Duyuan of the Solar Palace in the South by eliminating his flower roots of the original spirit including liver, lungs, tongue, neck, four limbs [...] And then to release Li Duke of the Late Star in the West by eliminating the flower roots of his original spirit including liver, lungs, eyes, teeth [...] And to release Li Duzhi of the Lunar Mansion in the North by eliminating the flower roots of his original spirit including liver, lungs, eyes, tongue, mouth, four limbs [...] And to release Li Du Mie, Li Dudui of the Golden Earth Star in the Center by eliminating the flower roots of his original spirit including liver, lungs, eyes, tongue, and four limbs, and finally to release all victim ghosts.<sup>62</sup>

According to the two texts cited above, it is clear that the pairings of the Five Directions and the celestial objects are as follows: East – Early Star; West – Late Star; Center – Golden Earth Star; South – Solar Palace; North – Lunar Mansion. The plane structure of the Five Directions and the vertical celestial system, including nine heavens, construct the cosmology in Kim-Mun Yao’s esoteric manuals (see Fig. 5). The identical cosmology can be found in the book by Huang Guiquan, a scholar of Kim-Mun ethnic background and a ritual specialist in Yunnan. In his

<sup>61</sup> The text is cited from the manuscript Cod. Sin. 1119 in BSB: 莊身想，金鐵姑養鉄，除三十六骨節、手腳元世，造成打鉄之人鉄太藍，除他三十六骨節，手腳元世是鎗刀，佔釵北京城黑（裡），默：收取東方早星一界星斗，手腳元世為鎗刀利害；收取南方日宮一界星斗、手腳元世為鎗刀利害；收西方晚星一界星斗，手腳元世為鎗刀利害；收北方月府一界星斗，手腳元世為鎗刀利害；收中央金土星一界星斗，手腳元世為鎗刀利害。…師主元世脫入日宮，煉成粉，成金銀寶貝納伝師，政謝九帝，各々飽滿了也。

<sup>62</sup> The text is cited from the manuscript Cod. Sin. 876 in BSB: 又拎鋤去鮮東方早星李都造，除他元世花根糞子，肝、肺、舌、呀吐、脛…又除南方日宮李都冤，除他花根元世，肝、肺、舌、脛、四足…又除西方晚星李都窠，除他花根元世，肝、肺、眼、吐、脛…又除北方月府李都執，除他花根元世，肝、肺、眼、舌、口、手腳四足…又除中央金土星李都滅、李都对，元世花根糞子，肝、肺、眼、舌、手腳四足，除么冤鬼了。The term “flower roots” (*buagen* 花根; [Mun] *wa-kan*) refers to the souls of children. In southern China, flowers are metaphors for children. Thus, many ethnic groups living in the area adopt the flower symbolism and an imagined garden (or grotto or valley or mountain) to explain a cosmological dimension of how a person is formed. For more discussion concerning Kim-Mun Yao’s flower symbolism, see Huang Guiquan 2009, pp. 90–102.

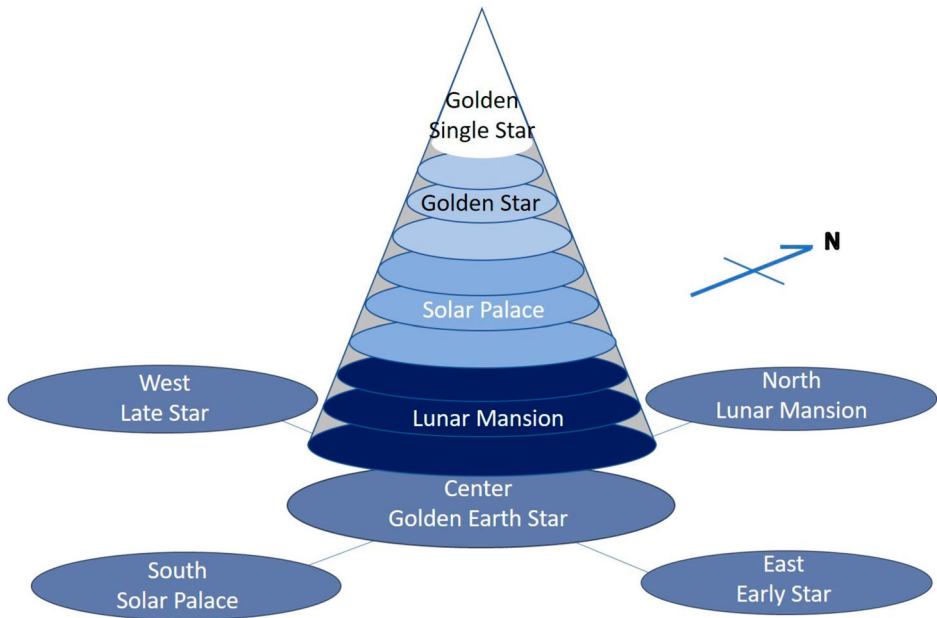


FIGURE 5. The hypothetical scheme of the cosmology in Kim-Mun Yao's esoteric manuals

book, he mentions that Kim-Mun Yao's cosmological space is constructed by the vertical space of "Three Realms" (*sanjie* 三界; [Mun] *θaam-kaai*) and the horizontal plane of "Five Directions" (*wufang tiandi* 五方天地; [Mun] *ηupuun tindi*). It should be noted that the Three Realms here are not equal to the above-mentioned Three Realms (i.e., Desire Realm, Form Realm, and Formless Realm), but refer to the "Kingdom of Heaven" (*Tianfu* 天府; [Mun] *tin-pu*), the "human world" 陽間 (*yang-jian*; [Mun] *jaan-kaan*) and the "netherworld" (*yinfu* 陰府; [Mun] *jam-pu*).<sup>63</sup> The concept of the Three Realms seems to deviate from the original Buddhist definition and is replaced by Kim-Mun Yao's own interpretation. Even though the two seem to be different, in another chapter of his book, Huang Guiquan also mentions that the kingdom of Heaven contains the vertical Nine Heavens.<sup>64</sup> Thus, we can say that the cosmology shown in the manuscripts of esoteric manuals matches closely field research from Yao villages. Both exhibit that Kim-Mun Yao's cosmological structure is constructed by a horizontal plane of the Five Directions and a vertical celestial system.

<sup>63</sup> Huang Guiquan 2009, pp. 75–76. The data from fieldwork in the Kim-Mun villages in Laos indicates there are two systems of cosmology. The first system conventionally includes the invisible world (i.e., netherworld) and the visible world (i.e., human world); the second system is the Three Realms, namely the Upper Realm, the Middle Realm, and the Lower Realm (Sun Jiayue 2021, p. 13, n. 8–9). There are some variations in Kim-Mun Yao's cosmology along regional lines.

<sup>64</sup> In a Kim-Mun Yao funeral, the deceased's offspring should prepare a miniature nine-storied building and burn it at the end of the funeral. Kim-Mun people believe that the deceased's soul has to go through the Nine Heavens to the spiritual world. Nine stories of the building symbolize the Nine Heavens; by burning the nine-storied building, the deceased's soul can thus return to the spiritual world. See Huang Guiquan 2009, p. 161.

The idea of Nine Heavens was a traditional Chinese view of the Celestial Realms, which can be traced to the Eastern Zhou (Dong Zhou 東周, 770–256 BC).<sup>65</sup> Later, it was inherited by Daoism. In the ancient *Lingbao* scripture named *Shengshen jing* 生神經 (Scripture of the Life-Giving Spirits),<sup>66</sup> the Nine Heavens are represented in a vertical and hierarchical arrangement and are said to constitute a stage in the progressive differentiation of the original pneuma (*yuanqi* 元氣) as it gives birth to the cosmos.<sup>67</sup> In some ancient *Lingbao* scriptures, the Nine Heavens were further connected with the plane of Five Directions. According to Kunio Mugitani's study, the system of Celestial Realms shown in *Xianren yifu wufang zhutianqi jing* 仙人挹服五方諸天氣經 (Scripture of the Immortality Ladle of Medicine from the Five Directions and the Various Heavens' Qi) in *Taishang dongxuan lingbao wufu xu* 太上洞玄靈寶五符序 (Prolegomena to the Five Talismans of the Numinous Treasure) seems to be similar to the Kim-Mun celestial system. This *Lingbao* text mentions four heavens in the four directions and one mountain in the center.<sup>68</sup> The vertical Nine Heavens are located on the upper layer, the four horizontal heavens are arranged under the Nine Heavens, and the central mountain is connected to the Nine Heavens.<sup>69</sup> In later dynasties, the system of thirty-two heavens gradually became popular throughout the *Lingbao* scriptures. It should be noted that the concept of Nine Heavens was revived because of the popularity of the "Thunder Rites" (*leifa* 雷法) during the Song dynasty and was then applied in the scriptures of the *Shenxiao* school. However, at that time, the concept of Nine Heavens had changed and was different from the old one in the *Lingbao* Scriptures and the one adopted by the Yao people.<sup>70</sup> Due to the reasons above, I propose that the cosmology of Kim-Mun Yao might be more related to the system of Celestial Realms used in the early stages of the *Lingbao* tradition.

In short, the system of Celestial Realms in Kim-Mun Yao's esoteric manuals shows signs of significant Daoist influence. These Celestial Realms are not only the residences of deities but also correspond to degrees of priestly ordination and to inner spiritual states. However, the names of the Three Realms and Nine Heavens are replaced by the Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace and Golden Star, and

<sup>65</sup> Nine Heavens were mentioned in some ancient books before the Han dynasty such as *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lü) and *Chuci* 楚辭 (Verses of Chu). However, people at that time tended to understand the Nine Heavens as nine horizontal sectors of spaces. See Mugitani 1988, p. 58; Pregadio 2011, pp. 593–594.

<sup>66</sup> The text of the scripture can be found in *Dongxuan lingbao ziran jiutian shengshen zhang-jing zhu* 洞玄靈寶自然九天生神章經注 (Commentary on the Stanzas of the Life Spirits of the Nine Heavens) in *Daozang* (DZ 318).

<sup>67</sup> Pregadio 2011, pp. 593–594.

<sup>68</sup> The full names of the four heavens and the mountain are Heaven of Nine Pneumas of Green Buds in the East (*Dongfang qingya juqi tian* 東方青牙九氣天), Heaven of Three Pneumas of Cinnabar in the South (*Nanfang zhudan sanqi tian* 南方朱丹三氣天), Mountain of the Great Emperor of Prime Cavern in the Center (*Zhongyang yuandong dadi zhi shan* 中央元洞大帝之山), Heaven of Seven Pneumas of Bright White Stone in the West (*Xifang mingshi qiqi tian* 西方明石七氣天), and Heaven of Five Pneumas of Mysterious Liquid in the North (*Beifang xuanzi wuqi zhi tian* 北方玄滋五氣之天). See *Taishang dongxuan lingbao wufu xu* 太上洞玄靈寶五符序 (DZ 388), 11b–14b.

<sup>69</sup> Mugitani 1988, pp. 58–59.

<sup>70</sup> Liu Li 2016, pp. 21–26.

these three key terms also form part of the Five Directions. This indicates that the three terms are indispensable elements in Kim-Mun Yao's esoteric manuals, and they might be viewed as a key element in the construction of Kim-Mun Yao's cosmology.

### LUNAR MANSION, SOLAR PALACE, AND GOLDEN STAR AS A CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Besides contributing to the structure of the Three Realms, the Lunar Mansion, the Solar Palace, and the Golden Star are also used as a classification system to sort out deities, scriptures, and other related matters in Kim-Mun Yao's religion. To be more precise, the Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star form the central part of classification; the Early Star and the Late Star – the two celestial objects of the Five Directions – are used as supplements. Other celestial objects, such as the Star with Fixed Light (*dingguang xing* 定光星), and the Southern and Northern Dipper, are seldom mentioned. The text “Youlun shi suoshu ye” 又論師所屬也 (Groups to Which the Master Belong), recorded in the manuscript *Shou liuxiong fanxiu zhuban miyu*, exhibits this classification system (see Figs. 6.1 and 6.2).

As we can see, the text lists the titles of deities, the celestial objects to which they belong, and their names. It is noteworthy that a deity might have multiple names and belong to more than one group due to the duty or role they fulfil,<sup>71</sup> which complicates the classification. Currently, the rules or laws for classification are unclear. However, if we look into the ranks of deities and the paired celestial objects, we note an identical hierarchy as in the system of Celestial Realms mentioned above. That is, the highest rank is given to the Golden Star, the second to the Solar Palace, and the lowest to the Lunar Mansion. Take the example of the “Three Pure Ones” (*Sanqing* 三清): According to *Zhenling weiye tu* 真靈位業圖 (Table of the Ranks and Functions in the Pantheon), the highest deity of the Three Pure Ones is “Heavenly Worthy of the Primordial Beginning” (*Yuanshi tianzun* 元始天尊) who lives in Realm of Jade Purity (*Yuqing jing* 玉清境), the second deity is “Heavenly Worthy of the Numinous Treasure” (*Lingbao tianzun* 靈寶天尊), who dwells in the “Realm of High Purity” (*Shangqing jing* 上清境), and the last is the “Heavenly Worthy of the Way and Its Virtue” (*Daode tianzun* 道德天尊), also called the “Supreme Venerable Sovereign” (*Taishang Laojun* 太上老君), who lives in the “Realm of Great Purity” (*Taiqing jing* 太清境).<sup>72</sup> In the text of Kim-Mun Yao's esoteric manuals, Jade Purity belongs to Golden Star, while High Purity and Great Purity belong to Solar Palace and Lunar Mansion respectively. In a similar vein, the pairings of the Three Generals and the three celestial objects also exhibit this hierarchy.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Cawthorne 2020, p. 156.

<sup>72</sup> Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536) inserted the deity “Lord of the Taiji Golden Gate” (*Taiji jinque dijun* 太極金闕帝君) in the third place, so Heavenly Worthy of the Way and its Virtue is ranked in the fourth place in the Pantheon. But this does not influence the ranks of the Three Pure Ones. See *Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu* 洞玄靈寶真靈位業圖 (DZ 167), 1A–11B.

<sup>73</sup> The Three Generals have two sets of names because one is for the ritual of Purification, the other is for the ritual of Offerings. But this does not influence the pairings. According to the



FIGURE 6.1 AND 6.2. Two pages of the text “Youlun shi suoshu ye” (Photo: BSB, Cod. Sin. 1059, folios 41-42)

In addition to classifying deities, the structure of Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star is also applied to ritual objects, among them horns, rice bowls, bells, and swords. This classification usually connects with visualization and consecration. The two following texts in the manuscripts of esoteric manuals prove my argument. The text “Cun huawan fa” 存花碗法 (Rite to Visualize the Flower Bowl) is used to ask deities to grant a child to a couple:

[The ritual specialist] visualizes the rice bowl as the Lunar Mansion, the bamboo tube as the Solar Palace, and the egg as the Golden Star; these are the Three Heavens. [The ritual specialist] then sets Huang Yaoba in the Lunar Mansion, Huang Yaoqi in the Solar Palace, and Huang Wanqi in the Golden Star. [The ritual specialist] sets Li Jinzhen and Huang Zongtai to the left and right in charge of two shining flowers of golden money situated in the main box.<sup>74</sup>

accounts, the General of the Upper Origin (*Shangyuan* 上元) belongs to the Golden Star; the General of the Middle Origin (*Zhongyuan* 中元) belongs to the Palace of the Sun; the General of the Lower Origin (*Xiayuan* 下元) belongs to the Mansion of the Moon.

<sup>74</sup> The text is cited from the manuscript Cod. Sin. 1119 in BSB: 想存米碗是月府，竹筒是日宮，个蛋是金星，為三天。安月府黃妖八、日宮黃妖七、金星黃萬炁，左右安李金真、黃宗臺，管兩枝金錢花，光朗番々，至主匣住也。A flower is a metaphor for the fetus; the term “golden money” is a name for the fetus, highlighting its preciousness.

The Kim-Mun Yao ritual specialist consecrates the bowl, the bamboo tube, and the egg and visualizes the three objects as the Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star.

The other text, “Youlun kaijing fa” 又論開經法 (Rite to Open the Scriptures), explains how to start a ritual. There is a paragraph regarding visualizing and classifying the scriptures used in the ritual. Here is the relevant passage:

[The ritual specialist] first recites the three volumes of the *Scripture of the Jade Emperor* with the surname Bao. The first volume belonging to the Golden Star is the Celestial Book, whose scripts are stars. By chanting the texts, [the scripts] are turned into gold and silver treasure [...], and then [the ritual specialist] recites the second volume belonging to Solar Palace, which is Book of Earth. By chanting the texts, [the scripts] are turned into gold and silver treasure [...]. [the ritual specialist] recites the third volume belonging to Lunar Mansion, which is the [Book] of Water. By chanting the texts, [the scripts] are turned into gold and silver treasure [...]. Since the three volumes are all turned into gold and silver treasure, [the ritual specialist] pays tribute to the Celestial Gate of a Buddha, the thirty-six joints, the twelve-storied tower, and then the warehouse is filled up.<sup>75</sup>

The above-cited text presented in a parallel grammatical form states that the three volumes of *Yuhuang jing* 玉皇經 (Scripture of the Jade Emperor) are classified as Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star respectively. It is worth mentioning that they are also connected with the three spheres (i.e., Heaven, Earth, and Water) and form pairing as follows: The first volume, Golden Star – Heaven; the second, Solar Palace – Earth; the third, Lunar Mansion – Water. In addition to the three volumes of *Yuhuang jing*, other scriptures like *Jiuku jing* 救苦經 (Scripture of Saving from Suffering), and *Xiehu jing* 血湖經 (Scripture of Blood Lake) are also cataloged into the three groups.<sup>76</sup>

These well-known widespread Daoist scriptures classified in different groups are used to create specific ritual payments of “gold, silver, and copper” for the ancestors and the deities of the Upper, Middle, and Lower Realms.<sup>77</sup> This verifies that the structure provided by the Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star for classifying religious material is a crucial element that cannot be ignored in the Kim-Mun Yao religion.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSIONS

This article shows that almost all of the texts in Kim-Mun Yao's esoteric manuals, whether they are relevant to the inner visions or the charts of Celestial Realms, are connected to the three terms Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star. This indicates that the three terms are firmly entrenched in Kim-Mun Yao's esoteric

<sup>75</sup> The text is cited from the manuscript Cod. Sin. 1075 in BSB: 先誦玉皇三卷大部經姓寶，上卷金是（星）為天書，字為是（星）斗，誦了成金銀寶貝... 又誦中卷即日宮為地書，字誦了成金銀... 下卷月府為水，誦了成金銀寶貝... 誦了三卷成金銀寶貝，進納么伏天門，三十六骨節，十二重樓，庫官飽滿了也。The character 星 is miswritten as 是。

<sup>76</sup> *Jiuku jing* is classified as Solar Palace and Golden Star, while *Xiehu jing* belongs to Lunar Mansion.

<sup>77</sup> Estévez 2022, p. 70.

manuals and are even used to classify various religious objects. More precisely, the Kim-Mun people took the three terms to construct a framework and combine the texts and visual representations in religious texts, and eventually they formed a “mental picture” for ritual specialists to visualize while performing rituals. In other words, the creation of a “mental picture” forms an integral part of Kim-Mun Yao’s religion.

It should be noted that there might be different cosmologies in the texts of esoteric manuals and other types of texts such as canonical texts and liturgical texts. For example, the Kim-Mun ritual specialists, especially the Daoist priests will chant *Duren jing* 度人經 in some rituals. But the system of Celestial Realms in *Duren jing* consists of thirty-two heavens. This contradiction does not seem to bother the Kim-Mun ritual specialists; since the texts of esoteric manuals usually contain detailed instructions to direct all efficacious and functional activity for the ritual performances,<sup>78</sup> the texts of esoteric manuals shall prevail in cases of contradiction. Jacob Cawthorne proposes that the esoteric manuals reflect Kim-Mun Yao’s self-identification since the texts are chanted in the Kim-Mun vernacular instead of the southern Chinese dialect. Joseba Estévez also states that the Kim-Mun ritual specialists have never read the canonical texts; they employ a ritual pointer to simulate a quick page-by-page reading. Thus, the contents are actually irrelevant to the logic of the Kim-Mun rituals.<sup>79</sup> Following this idea, I argue that the Kim-Mun people use the manuscripts of esoteric manuals, representing indigenous Kim-Mun culture, as the core of Kim-Mun Yao’s religion, with which they can integrate external religious elements so that the overall Kim-Mun religion presents the feature of “trans-hybridity.”<sup>80</sup>

However, some questions remain unanswered. The most important one is: why do the three terms, Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star, discussed in this article play such a crucial role in Kim-Mun Yao’s vernacular religious texts? And it can breed another question: why these three terms but not others? Readers might have noticed that the Lunar Mansion, Solar Palace, and Golden Star can be generalized as the “Three Radiances” (*sanguang* 三光, i.e., Sun, Moon, and Stars) which are mentioned frequently in Chinese Classics and Daoist scriptures. In the Northern and Southern Dynasties (Nanbeichao 南北朝, 420–589), *Taishang daoyin sanguang baozhen miaojing* 太上導引三光寶真妙經 (Marvelous Scripture of Daoyin Exercises Using the Three Radiances and Precious Zhen), one of the ancient *Lingbao* scriptures, mentions the Three Radiances and points out that “there are separate palaces on the Sun, Moon, and Stars.”<sup>81</sup> Later in the Song dynasty, the Three Radiances were highly relevant and taken as the origin of magic power by Daoists of the *Tianxin zhengfa* tradition.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Cawthorne 2020, pp. 139–140.

<sup>79</sup> Estévez 2022, p. 70.

<sup>80</sup> The term “trans-hybridity,” proposed by Paul Katz, aims to give equal prominence to the external and internal forces and agents at play in the process of transcultural communication. “Trans-hybridity” is shorthand for “translation” and “hybridity,” the former features mechanisms generally used by the state or local elites to introduce external cultural traditions and gradually be accepted by indigenous communities; while the latter accounts for unintentional forms of cultural assimilation. For a detailed definition and discussion, see Katz 2013.

<sup>81</sup> *Taishang daoyin sanguang baozhen miaojing* (DZ 40), 3a: 日月星中，各有宮闕。

<sup>82</sup> Li Zhihong 2006, pp. 28–31, 60.

Nonetheless, neither the *Lingbao* scriptures nor the *Tianxin zhengfa* tradition took the Golden Star / Venus (*jinxing*) as the Star of the Three Radiances. The Star of the Three Radiances in *Taishang daoyin sanguang baozhen miaojing* refers to multiple stars such as Five Planets and Five Dippers;<sup>83</sup> whereas in the *Tianxin zhengfa* tradition it means the Dipper (*Tiangang* 天罡).<sup>84</sup> As described earlier, the Golden Star represents the highest rank among the three terms; it might be the distinguishing feature in Kim-Mun Yao's religion from Daoism and traditional Chinese concepts. There is still not enough evidence to prove that the "Golden Star" in the esoteric manuals is Venus. However, as we know, Venus has been the brightest object in the sky except for the Sun and Moon. People in China have called it the "Bright Star" (*mingxing* 明星) since the Eastern Zhou dynasty.<sup>85</sup> If we agree that the term "Golden Star" really means Venus in Kim-Mun Yao's religion, this might be the reason that the Kim-Mun people selected the three celestial objects to construct the structure of their religion.

Interestingly, Venus is often seen within a few hours after sunset or before sunrise as the brightest star in the sky, so it was also named "morning star" (*chenxing* 晨星) at dawn or "evening star" (*hunxing* 昏星) at dusk. Since the pairings of the Five Directions and celestial objects in Kim-Mun Yao's cosmology mentioned East-Early Star and West-Late Star, there seems to be a connection between the two. But this hypothesis requires more evidence to support it.

In short, the three terms "Lunar Mansion," "Solar Palace," and "Golden Star" contain special meanings and multiple functions in Kim-Mun Yao's religion. In Kim-Mun Yao's manuscripts of esoteric manuals, the combination of the three terms functions as the framework of rituals. It constructs a "mental picture" in the ritual specialist's mind which plays an essential role in Kim-Mun Yao's ritual performances.

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<sup>83</sup> The text reads as follows: "The essence of sun and moon were separated into stars in the sky, and rivers and mountains on the Earth. Five Planets and Five Dippers are interlaced in the sky [...] there are palaces on the Sun, Moon, and Stars separately." 日月分精，散為星辰，止為川嶽，五星五斗，交絡於天... 日月星中，各有宮闕。See *Taishang daoyin sanguang baozhen miaojing* (DZ 40), 2b–3a.

<sup>84</sup> Li Zhihong 2006, pp. 28–31, 60; Liu Li 2016, pp. 135–138.

<sup>85</sup> *Maoshi zhushu* 毛詩注疏 (The Mao Commentary of Poetry) mentions that "at sunrise, the Bright Star is called *Qiming* 啟明; at sunset, the Bright Star is called *Changgen* 長庚。日旦出，謂明星為啟明；日既入，謂明星為長庚。See *Chongkan Songben Shisanjing zhushu fu jiaokan ji*, p. 440.



- DZ 1138 *Wushang biyao* 無上秘要  
 DZ 1185 *Baopu zi neipian* 抱朴子內篇  
 DZ 1221 Wang Qizhen 王契真, *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法  
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## CHINESE ABSTRACT

### 月府、日宮、金星——解讀荊門瑤族秘語的樞紐

荊門瑤族（又稱藍靛瑤）是瑤族的一個分支，其宗教大量借鑒了道教儀式與經典，且擁有卷帙浩繁的宗教手稿。秘語（*miyu*; [Mun] *pei-jui*）是其中最深奧的一種，同時也是荊門瑤族宗教中最具代表性的宗教文書。本文認為，「月府」、「日宮」和「金星」這三個術語是解讀秘語內容的關鍵。荊門瑤的祭儀專家利用這三個術語建構出一個框架，以之結合宗教文本中的文字和視覺敘述，協助祭儀專家形成一幅「心像」，應用於儀式過程中的存想。本研究發現幾乎所有的秘語文本內容都被囊括於此一框架之中，反映出「月府」、「日宮」和「金星」乃是荊門瑤族宗教儀式的基礎。

關鍵詞：瑤族荊門支系、藍靛瑤、秘語、存想、天界觀

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