Chapter 37. A Hermit

Sima Chengzhen gave full transmission to only two of his students. One, Li Hanguang, succeeded him as Patriarch of Highest Clarity Daoism. The other is Madame Jiao, recipient of this poem.

Offered to Madame Jiao, Daoist Master of Mount Song, with a preface

There’s a sublime being on Mount Song, the Daoist master Madame Jiao. No one knows where she’s from. Some say she was born two centuries ago, though from her appearance you’d guess she’s in her fifties or sixties. She practices fetal breathing and abjuring grains, living in a hut on the Lesser Chambers of Mount Song. She moves as if she’s flying, ten thousand miles in a flash. People claim she journeys to the Eastern Sea and climbs its Magic Mountains, but actually no one can fathom her travels. Inspired by her, I went seeking Dao in the Lesser Chambers, and climbed all thirty-six peaks. Now I spatter about some ink to make this distant offering.

The Twin Chambers are neighbor to the sky, their thrice-blooming trees hold purple smoke. Here you dwell, traveler from the Eastern Seas, perhaps the immortal Hemp Maiden herself. Dao abides here, unstained by clamor, your activity dissolves all thoughts. Sometimes you feast on the heart of osmanthus or recite scriptures written in moss. You roam the world’s eight corners at your whim and circuit beyond the sky’s nine limits. Dipping your gourd in the waters of Ying, you come to Yi River on your dancing crane.
Returning alone to the empty mountain,  
you fall asleep caressed by autumn clouds.  
The moon dangles dawn's mirror through the vines,  
a pine breeze still strums the night's lute.  
Your light is concealed within Song Mountain,  
your transfigured form resting in a tent of clouds.  
As phoenix calls fade into the distance,  
your rainbow skirt wafts in the wind,  
Just as the Queen Mother of the West  
spied Dongfang Shuo in the Emperor's court,  
please look after me, banished to this world below.  
If only I can receive your sacred scripts,  
I vow to carve your teachings in my bones.\textsuperscript{309}

贈嵩山焦煉師 井序

嵩丘有神人焦煉師者。不知何許婦人也。又云生于齊梁時。其年貌可稱五六十。常胎息絕谷。居少室廬。遊行若飛。倏忽萬里。世或傳其入東海。登蓬萊。竟莫能測其往也。余訪道少室。登三十六峰。聞風有寄。酒翰遙贈。

二室凌青天。三花含紫煙。  
中有蓬海客。宛疑麻姑仙。  
道在喧莫染。跡高想已綿。  
時餐金鵝蕊。屢讀青苔篇。  
八極恣游憩。九垓長周旋。  
下瓢酌潁水。舞鶴來伊川。  
還歸空山上。獨拂秋霞眠。  
蘿月掛朝鏡。松風鳴夜弦。  
潛光隱嵩岳。煉魄棲雲幄。  
霓裳何飄搖。鳳吹轉綿邈。  
愿同西王母。下顧東方朔。  
紫書儻可傳。銘骨誓相學。