

Chapter 1 : Eight Immortals - Wikipedia

The Eight Immortals of Taoism can be interpreted in a psychological, archetypal manner, much the way the characters of other ancient mythologies have come to symbolize human needs and wishes at a collective, universal level.

Self Help Articles April 8, The Eight Immortals Ba xian are eight saints of the Taoist pantheon of Gods, who are painted in many temples, public places, and restaurants. They are typically depicted crossing the sea on a boat. Listed below are the 8 Immortals. A famous Taoist patriarch, a legendary historical figure, and the patron of literature and hairdressers. He is depicted with a magical sword that disperses evil. Lu Dongbin is often considered the chief of the immortals while the true chief is Zhongli Quan. A doctor and scientist, defender of the sickly, and the patron of magicians and astrologers. He is depicted with a magic calabash with medicine, and an iron stick. He looks like a one-legged beggar with a dirty face, unkempt beard, and a gold hoop on his head. The Jade Emperor gave him immortality for his many noble deeds. The patron of soldiers. He is depicted with a magical fan that can raise the dead and the elixir of immortality. He looks like a tall man with curly hair, whose entire body is tattooed. He is one of the oldest of the Eight Immortals, who is considered their chief. He was a general during the Han Dynasty. He was taught Taoist alchemy, martial arts, and healing. He is a philosopher. He is portrayed as a handsome and cheerful young man who plays the magic flute, which makes everything bloom. He was given feminine traits for his beauty. He is considered the patron of musicians. He left his job as an official in the government, and went to seek the truth in Tao. Once he demonstrated the power of Tao by drinking a lot of wine and not getting drunk. He knew magic - he could make wine from water and grow flowers in the winter. Known as a representative of the ruling Song Dynasty. He is depicted in a red uniform, with a hat of a high-ranking official, and with a jade tablet that purifies all around and gives the right to enter the palace. Sometimes he is painted with rattles in his hands. He is the patron of actors and mimes. He is painted sitting backwards on a magic mule, with bamboo rattles in his hands. He has a long white beard. According to legend, he is an incarnation of a white bat. Zhang Guo Lao is associated with a real person who lived during the Tang Dynasty. A woman or man sometimes considered a hermaphrodite with a bamboo basket of flowers that express immortality chrysanthemum. Lan Caihe is the most extravagant character of the Eight Immortals , a kind of holy fool. A woman with a lotus flower or a basket of flowers, and a flute. She is the patroness of hearth. At fifteen, He Xiangmu met Lu Dongbin, who started to court her, actually wanting to bring her into the Tao. Having received teachings from him, she became able to fly through the mountains and gather wild fruit, earning a living for her and her mother. Lu Dongbin gave her a magic peach from the island of the Immortals , and taught her how to control the energies using the feminine Yin. Free Articles from ArticlesFactory. Please visit his website to learn more about the eight immortals.

Chapter 2 : Immortals - ReligionFacts

[citation needed] While cults dedicated to various Taoist immortals date back to the Han dynasty, the popular and well-known Eight Immortals first appeared in the Jin dynasty. The art of the Jin tombs of the 12th and 13th centuries depicts a group of eight Taoist immortals in wall murals and sculptures.

Two linguistic hypotheses for the etymology of xian involve Arabic and Sino-Tibetan languages. Wu and Davis For a character analysis, Schipper James Legge [1] Needham and Wang Since, "to live for a long time" has no etymological relation to xian, it may be a later accretion. Textual references[edit] This section chronologically reviews how Chinese texts describe xian "immortals; transcendents". While the early Zhuangzi, Chuci, and Liezi texts allegorically used xian immortals and magic islands to describe spiritual immortality, later ones like the Shenxian zhuan and Baopuzi took immortality literally and described esoteric Chinese alchemical techniques for physical longevity. In Chinese art , xian are often pictured with symbols of immortality including the dragon, crane, fox, white deer, pine tree, peach, and mushroom. Besides the following major Chinese texts, many others use both graphic variants of xian. Big Concealment said, "If you confuse the constant strands of Heaven and violate the true form of things, then Dark Heaven will reach no fulfillment. Instead, the beasts will scatter from their herds, the birds will cry all night, disaster will come to the grass and trees, misfortune will reach even to the insects. Smash your form and body, spit out hearing and eyesight, forget you are a thing among other things, and you may join in great unity with the deep and boundless. Undo the mind, slough off spirit, be blank and soulless, and the ten thousand things one by one will return to the rootâ€™return to the root and not know why. Dark and undifferentiated chaosâ€™to the end of life none will depart from it. But if you try to know it, you have already departed from it. Do not ask what its name is, do not try to observe its form. Things will live naturally end of themselves. All my life I have been looking for it, and now at last I have it! The true sage is a quail at rest, a little fledgling at its meal, a bird in flight who leaves no trail behind. When the world has the Way, he joins in the chorus with all other things. When the world is without the Way, he nurses his Virtue and retires in leisure. First is this description of Liezi below. Lieh Tzu could ride the wind and go soaring around with cool and breezy skill, but after fifteen days he came back to earth. He escaped the trouble of walking, but he still had to depend on something to get around. If he had only mounted on the truth of Heaven and Earth, ridden the changes of the six breaths, and thus wandered through the boundless, then what would he have had to depend on? By concentrating his spirit, he can protect creatures from sickness and plague and make the harvest plentiful. Consider this famous passage about accepting death. When Hui Tzu went to convey his condolences, he found Chuang Tzu sitting with his legs sprawled out, pounding on a tub and singing. But I looked back to her beginning and the time before she was born. Not only the time before she was born, but the time before she had a body. Not only the time before she had a body, but the time before she had a spirit. In the midst of the jumble of wonder and mystery a change took place and she had a spirit. Another change and she had a body. Another change and she was born. Many conclusions can be reached on the basis of this story, but it seems that death is regarded as a natural part of the ebb and flow of transformations which constitute the movement of Dao. Of course, this reading is somewhat ironic given the fact that much of the subsequent Daoist tradition comes to seek longevity and immortality, and bases some of their basic models on the Zhuangzi. My spirit darted forth and did not return to me, And my body, left tenantless, grew withered and lifeless. Then I looked into myself to strengthen my resolution, And sought to learn from where the primal spirit issues. In emptiness and silence I found serenity; In tranquil inaction I gained true satisfaction. I would model myself on the pattern he had left me. In this way we came at last to the moor of Shao-yuan: There, with the other blessed ones, were Red Pine and Wang Qiao. The two Masters held zithers tuned in perfect concord: I sang the Qing Shang air to their playing. In tranquil calm and quiet enjoyment, Gently I floated, inhaling all the essences. Far and forlorn, with no hope of return: Sadly I gaze in the distance, over the empty plain. Floating on the cloud and mist, we enter the dim height of heaven; Riding on the white deer we sport and take our pleasure. The above three poems are variations describing Daoist xian. Some other Chuci poems refer to immortals with synonyms of xian. The Ku-ye mountains stand

on a chain of islands where the Yellow River enters the sea. Upon the mountains there lives a Divine Man, who inhales the wind and drinks the dew, and does not eat the five grains. He inspires no awe, he is never angry, yet the eager and diligent act as his messengers. He is without kindness and bounty, but others have enough by themselves; he does not store and save, but he himself never lacks. The Yin and Yang are always in tune, the sun and moon always shine, the four seasons are always regular, wind and rain are always temperate, breeding is always timely, the harvest is always rich, and there are no plagues to ravage the land, no early deaths to afflict men, animals have no diseases, and ghosts have no uncanny echoes. The waters of the eight corners and the nine regions, the stream of the Milky Way, all pour into it, but it neither shrinks nor grows. These mountains are thirty thousand miles high, and as many miles round; the tablelands on their summits extend for nine thousand miles. It is seventy thousand miles from one mountain to the next, but they are considered close neighbours. The towers and terraces upon them are all gold and jade, the beasts and birds are all unsullied white; trees of pearl and garnet always grow densely, flowering and bearing fruit which is always luscious, and those who eat of it never grow old and die. Yet the bases of the five mountains used to rest on nothing; they were always rising and falling, going and returning, with the ebb and flow of the tide, and never for a moment stood firm. God was afraid that they would drift to the far West and he would lose the home of his sages. In one throw he hooked six of the turtles in a bunch, hurried back to his country carrying them together on his back, and scorched their bones to tell fortunes by the cracks. At the time of Fu-hsi and Shen-nung, the people of this country were still several hundred feet high. The first emperor Qin Shi Huang sent his court alchemist Xu Fu on expeditions to find these plants of immortality, but he never returned although by some accounts, he discovered Japan. This is what he concludes about xian. It is my own opinion, therefore, that though the word hsien, or Immortal, is used by Chuang Tzu and Lieh Tzu, and though they attributed to their idealized individual the magic powers that were attributed to the hsien in later times, nonetheless the hsien ideal was something they did not believe in—either that it was possible or that it was good. The magic powers are allegories and hyperboles for the natural powers that come from identification with Tao. Then and later, the philosophical Taoists were distinguished from all other schools of Taoism by their rejection of the pursuit of immortality. As we shall see, their books came to be adopted as scriptural authority by those who did practice magic and seek to become immortal. But it was their misunderstanding of philosophical Taoism that was the reason they adopted it. Breath control and meditation. Those who belong to this school can " If someone is wounded by a weapon, blow on the wound, and the bleeding will stop. If you hear of someone who has suffered a poisonous insect bite, even if you are not in his presence, you can, from a distance, blow and say in incantation over your own hand males on the left hand, females on the right , and the person will at once be healed even if more than a hundred li away. And if you yourself are struck by a sudden illness, you have merely to swallow pneumas in three series of nine, and you will immediately recover. But the most essential thing [among such arts] is fetal breathing. Those who obtain [the technique of] fetal breathing become able to breathe without using their nose or mouth, as if in the womb, and this is the culmination of the way [of pneumatic cultivation]. The Shenxian zhuan uses this story to illustrate the importance of bigu "grain avoidance": Upon seeing this person, the hunters wanted to pursue and capture him, but the person leapt over gullies and valleys as if in flight, and so could not be overtaken. They offered her grain to eat. When she first smelled the stink of grain, she vomited, and only after several days could she tolerate it. After little more than two years of this [diet], her body hair fell out; she turned old and died. Had she not been caught by men, she would have become a transcendent. Like Heaven and Earth, the male and female share a parallel relationship in attaining an immortal existence. They both must learn how to engage and develop their natural sexual instincts and behaviors; otherwise the only result is decay and traumatic discord of their physical lives. However, if they engage in the utmost joys of sensuality and apply the principles of yin and yang to their sexual activity, their health, vigor, and joy of love will bear them the fruits of longevity and immortality. However, if she can acquire the sexual essence of a thousand males through absorption, she will acquire the great benefits of youthfulness and immortality. The text lists three classes of immortals: Hagiographies and folktales abound of people who seemingly die in one province, but are seen alive in another. However, this is not a true form of immortality. For each misdeed a person commits, the

Director of allotted life spans subtracts days and sometimes years from their allotted life span. This method allows a person to live out the entirety of their allotted lifespan whether it be 30, 80, , etc. Therefore, they have no need for hiding from retribution since they are empowered by heaven to perform their duties. Are in charge of keeping the peace within the Chinese underworld. They are eligible for promotion to earthbound immortality after years of faithful service. Are given magic talismans which prolong their lives but not indefinitely and allow them to heal the sick and exorcize demons and evil spirits from the earth. This level was not eligible for promotion to earthbound immortality. A heavenly decree ordered them to "disperse all subordinate junior demons, whether high or low [in rank], that have cause afflictions and injury owing to blows or offenses against the Motion of the Year, the Original Destiny, Great Year, the Kings of the Soil or the establishing or breaking influences of the chronograms of the tome. These titles were usually given to humans who had either not proven themselves worthy of or were not fated to become immortals.

Chapter 3 : Eight Immortals - Chinese Customs

The Eight Immortals are a group of legendary xian, also known as immortals, transcendents or fairies, from Chinese Tradition. Each of the individual immortal's power can be transferred to a tool of power that can give life or destroy evil.

In art[edit] The tradition of depicting humans who have become immortals is an ancient practice in Chinese art, and when religious Taoism gained popularity, it quickly picked up this tradition with its own immortals. The art of the Jin tombs of the 12th and 13th centuries depicts a group of eight Taoist immortals in wall murals and sculptures. They officially became known as the Eight Immortals in the writings and works of art of the Taoist group known as the Complete Realization Quanshen. The 8 Immortals are considered to be signs of prosperity and longevity, so they are popular themes in ancient and medieval art. They were frequent adornments on celadon vases. They were also common in sculptures owned by the nobility. Their most common appearance, however, was in paintings. They were often depicted either together in one group, or alone to give more homage to that specific immortal. An interesting feature of early Eight Immortal artwork is that they are often accompanied by jade hand maidens, commonly depicted servants of the higher ranked deities, or other images showing great spiritual power. This shows that early on, the Eight Immortals quickly became eminent figures of the Taoist religion and had great importance[citation needed]. We can see this importance is only heightened in the Ming and Qing dynasties. During these dynasties, the Eight Immortals were very frequently associated with other prominent spiritual deities in artwork. There are numerous paintings with them and the Three Stars the gods of longevity, prosperity, and good fortune together. Also, other deities of importance, such as the Queen Mother of the West, are commonly seen in the company of the Eight Immortals. The artwork of the Eight Immortals is not limited to paintings or other visual arts. They are quite prominent in written works too. Authors and playwrights wrote numerous stories and plays on the Eight Immortals. The Immortals are the subject of many artistic creations, such as paintings and sculptures. Examples of writings about them include: There is another work, also made during the Ming c. In qigong and martial art[edit] Furthermore, they have been linked to the initial development of qigong exercises such as the Eight Piece Brocade. There are many other shrines dedicated to them throughout China and Taiwan. In modern China, the Eight Immortals are still a popular theme in artwork. Paintings, pottery, and statues are still common in households across China and are even gaining some popularity worldwide. Several movies about the Eight Immortals have been produced in China in recent years[citation needed]. At first, the protagonist did not want to learn the Immortal Woman He form because he saw it as a feminine form, but he eventually created his own version of that form. The Eight Immortals play an important part in the plot of the video game Fear Effect 2. In the Andy Seto graphic novel series Saint Legend, the Eight Immortals reappear to protect the Buddhist faith from evil spirits set on destroying it. In the X-Men comic book, the Eight Immortals appear to protect China along with the Collective Man when the mutant Xorn caused a massacre in one small village. In the Immortal Iron Fist comic book, there are seven supreme kung fu practitioners, called the Seven Immortal Weapons. In the show, the Immortals were said to be the ones who defeated the Eight Demon Sorcerers and sealed them away in the netherworld using items that symbolized their powers. Qigong Teachings of a Taoist Immortal:

Chapter 4 : The Eight Immortals of Taoism: Legends and Fables of Popular Taoism by Man-Ho Kwok

The eight immortals are of special appeal to modern audiences as they embody diverse aspects of society, then and now. There is a warrior immortal, a student immortal, a crippled immortal and an androgynous immortal ("sometimes male, sometimes female)who seems to me to be a little gay!

These beings are regarded as super-humans who control all aspects of life. Together, these eight tools are called "Covert Eight Immortals". These legendary beings have been part of Chinese oral history long before they were recorded in the works of writers of various dynasties such as Tang, Song, Yuan and Ming. Stories about the Eight Immortals and their achievements can be found in various literature and folk tales of China. The Xian are also pictured in art and depicted on a wide variety of porcelain, bronze, ivory, and embroidered objects. The Eight Immortals are considered to be signs of prosperity and longevity, so they are popular themes in ancient and medieval art. In Taoist legends they are called the "Roaming Immortals". Two of the Eight Immortals are women. Each and one of these enlightened individuals possess a tool with special powers. It is difficult to determine the true identity of Chung-Li Chuan because various sources contradict each other. Some ancient texts state his family name was Chung-li, and that he lived in the Han dynasty. He was defeated in battle, and escaped to Chung-nan Shan, where he met the Five Heroes, the Flowers of the East, who instructed him in the doctrine of immortality. It is said Chung-Li Chuan discovered the Elixir of Life during a great famine when he transmuted copper and pewter into silver by amalgamating them with some mysterious drug. He later distributed the elixir among the poor, and thousands of lives were thus saved. The Elixir of life and possessed the power to cure the sick and revive the dead. In more modern pictures we recognize her as a young boy wearing blue robe and carrying a basket of flowers. He is an old man usually seen mounted on his white mule, sometimes facing its head, sometimes its tail. He carries a phoenix-feather or a peach of immortality. His attribute is a drum made of a bamboo tube with two rods with which to strike it. The drum can cure life. Occasionally she is attributed with a peach, the divine fruit of Gods, associated with immortality or a music instrument or a ladle to dispense wisdom, meditation and purity. When he was 20 years, he made a journey to Lu Shan in Kiangsi, where he met the Fire-dragon, who presented him with a magic sword, which enabled him at will to hide himself in the heavens. He was very skilful in fencing, and is always represented with his magic Excalibur named Chan-yao Kuai, that he uses to slay demons and evil spirits. This immortal symbolizes scholastic luck and protection. He is also the patron deity of barbers. Walters Art Museum 6. Among his special skills was the ability to make flowers bloom instantaneously and smooth wild animals. His attribute is the flute, which can cause growth and he is the patron deity of musicians. It is said he is connected with the Sung Imperial family and he signifies fame and recognition. Pa Hsien Kuo Hai: He was a handsome man who used his magical skill frequently. Once, while his spirit was gone from his body, a disciple decided that Li Tie Guai was dead and burned his body as tradition required. He is represented as a lame beggar carrying a double gourd. The gourd, symbolizing longevity and the ability to ward off evil, has a cloud emanating from it. The gourd is also symbol of helping those in need and relieve the distressed. Sometimes Li Tie Guai is pictured riding the qilin, mystical hooved Chinese chimerical creature, with a physical appearance of various animals like deer, horse, ox, dragon Li Tie Guai is the emblem of the sick. In modern China, the Eight Immortals are still a popular theme in artwork. Paintings, pottery, and statues are still common in households across China and are even gaining some popularity worldwide.

Chapter 5 : Eight Immortals - Infogalactic: the planetary knowledge core

The Eight were called the "Roaming Immortals" in Taoist legends. Not only are they revered by Taoists, but by all Chinese society. They are the base for various literature, folk tales and are pictured in art.

Quiz 1 , Quiz 2 , Quiz 3 , Quiz 4 , Quiz 5 , Quiz 6 , Quiz 7 , Quiz 8 At the successful completion of each quiz, a secret word will appear in the box at the bottom of the page. Together the eight words make a sentence. According to folklorist E. It is not widely read today, but stories derived from it and inspired by it are told and retold. Both the full Chinese text [link] and an extensive Chinese summary [link] are available on the Internet. Art Most often the Immortals are represented together in art, and they are understood to be mildly amusing and relatively harmless beings, who spend their time entertaining themselves in various ways. As immortals they collectively represent long life, and pictures of them are particularly associated with birthday celebrations. At the same time, they are not divorced from religion. The bas-relief at the bottom of the page and with each story is from a Daoist temple courtyard in New Territories. Daoist though they may be, they occur as a cheerful decorative motif in the widest variety of contexts. The woodcuts found within the individual stories here are widely reprinted late dynastic productions from an unknown source, possibly a folklore manual. In fact, it would have have been equally possible to illustrate these pages entirely with pictures of the Immortals from josses, brocaded quilts, parade floats, festival lanterns, printed tracts, ceramic teapots, temple murals, theatrical costumes, school books, works of prominent painters, or even molded dough. This diversity illustrates the continued widespread popularity of these figures within the Chinese world. Each of the Immortals has specific iconographic markers, and a subset of them are sometimes used alone to suggest the Immortals without actually showing them. Nearly all artistic representations including those on this page use such conventional symbols to identify each immortal. When you finish the stories, there are quizzes in which you will be able to recognize these figures in a diversity of popular art works. Stories Two stories about their adventures together are told with wide variations, and sometimes combined. Today the expression "Eight Immortals cross the sea" can refer to each member of a group making a distinctive contribution to their collective success, but it can also refer to each of them being left to his own devices, or to each one working to outshine the others. Werner summarizes this cycle of tales as follows p. The popular pictures often represent most of these objects as articles changed into various kinds of sea-monsters. The musical instrument was noticed by the son of the Dragon-king of the Eastern Sea. The avaricious prince conceived the idea of stealing the instrument and imprisoning the owner. The Immortals thereupon declared war, the details of which are described at length by the Chinese writers, the outcome being that the Dragon-king was utterly defeated. After this the Eight Immortals continued their submarine exploits for an indefinite time, encountering numberless adventures. Religion For present purposes, I have concentrated on stories about the individual immortals and their efforts as Daoists to learn "the Way. Some of them have been used by religious sects throughout the ages to name stages of initiation. To beg the way, i. To practice the Way, i. To attain the Way, i. In these stories the last term rarely occurs, but the middle two are very common and virtually interchangeable. The people in these stories are considered by some analysts to represent the whole of humanity, all potentially suitable for Daoist pursuits: Some are rich and some poor, some old and some young, some in official positions, some simple peasants. Only one is female "possibly two" but even mere tokenism at least suggests that Daoism does not entirely exclude women as practitioners, it is argued. Thus, despite their folkloric quality, they are potentially models for imitation, and it seems probable that people interested in a religious life, or perhaps simply people who felt alienated, may have seen them as role models when secular life seemed overwhelming. That they are rarely if ever shown engaged in farming or crafts or other workaday activities might perhaps make them even more attractive as role models for a life disengaged from the humdrum and the frustrations of normal daily life. Stories of few additional immortals can be found on the page of Chinese Tales.

Chapter 6 : Myths and Legends of China: Chapter XI. The Eight Immortals

Taoism gave them an official recognition as Eight Immortals when they first appeared in the writings and art works of the Taoist sect known as Quanshen. The pictures of Eight Immortals are considered to be the signs of prosperity and longevity.

Myths and Legends of China, by Edward T. Werner, [], at sacred-texts. Images of them are made in porcelain, earthenware, roots, wood, metals. The number eight has become lucky in association with this tradition, and persons or things eight in number are graced accordingly. They are favourite subjects of romance, and special objects of adoration. They represent all kinds of people—old, young, male, female, civil, military, rich, poor, afflicted, cultured, noble. They are also representative of early, middle, and later historical periods. The legend of the Eight Immortals is certainly not older than the time of the Sung dynasty A. But some, if not all, of the group seem to p. Their biographies are usually arranged in the order of their official eminence or seniority in age. Hsi Wang Mu cured him of an ulcer on the leg and taught him the art of becoming immortal. He was canonized as Rector of the East. He is said to have been of commanding stature and dignified mien, devoting himself solely to the study of Taoist lore. Hsi Wang Mu made him a present of an iron crutch, and sent him to the capital to teach the doctrine of immortality to Han Chung-li. Soon after he had completed his course of instruction his soul left his body to go on a visit to Hua Shan. He left his disciple Lang Ling in charge of his body, saying that if he did not return within seven days he was to have the body cremated. Unfortunately, when only six days had elapsed the disciple was called away to the death-bed of his mother. In order to be able to leave at once he cremated the body forthwith, and when the soul returned it found only a heap of ashes. The object of the setting of the watch was not only to prevent injury to or theft of the body, but also to prevent any other soul from taking up its abode in it. In a forest near by a beggar had just died of hunger. Finding this corpse untenanted, the wandering spirit entered it through the temples, and made off. On lifting his hand to his eyes, he found they were as large as buckles. Another account says that he was changed into a dragon, and in that form ascended to Heaven. The contents of the gourd, poured into the mouth, revived the dead woman. He then made himself known, and, giving Yang another pill, vanished in a gust of wind. Two hundred years later he effected the immortalization of his disciple. He frequently returned to earth, and at times tried to bring about the transmigration of others. The latter, being afraid of imitating an act evidently associated with the supernatural world of evil spirits, refused to do so. One states that his family name was Chung-li, and that he lived in the Han dynasty, being therefore called Han Chung-li. He was born in the district of Hsien-yang Hsien a sub-prefecture of the ancient capital Hsi-an Fu in Shensi. He became Marshal of the Empire in the cyclic year He is referred to by the title of King-emperor of the True Active Principle. He was defeated in battle, and escaped to Chung-nan Shan, where he met the Five Heroes, the Flowers of the East, who instructed him in the doctrine of immortality. No sooner had the latter swallowed it than he went mad, left his wife, and ascended to Heaven. During a great famine he transmuted copper and pewter into silver by amalgamating them with some mysterious drug. This treasure he distributed among the poor, and thousands of lives were thus saved. One day, while he was meditating, the stone wall of his dwelling in the mountains was rent asunder, and a jade casket exposed to view. This was found to contain secret information as to how to become an Immortal. When he had followed these instructions for some time, his room was filled with many-coloured clouds, music was heard, and a celestial stork came and bore him away on its back to the regions of immortality. Since his admission to the ranks of the gods, he has appeared on earth at various times as the messenger of Heaven. She is the strolling singer or mountebank of the Immortals. Usually she plays a flute or a pair of cymbals. She wandered abroad clad in a tattered blue gown held by a black wooden belt three inches wide, with one foot shoeless and the other shod, wearing in summer an undergarment of wadded material, and in winter sleeping on the snow, her breath rising in a brilliant cloud like the steam from a boiling cauldron. In this guise she earned her livelihood by singing in the streets, keeping time with a wand three feet long. Though taken for a lunatic, the doggerel verse she sang disproved the popular slanders. It denounced this fleeting life and its delusive pleasures. When given money, she either strung it on a cord and waved it to the time of her song or

scattered it on the ground for the poor to pick up. Though he was a man, adds the writer, he could not understand how to be a man which is perhaps the reason why he has been supposed to be a woman. At last, pressed once more by the Empress Wu A. His body began to decay and to be eaten by worms, when lo! He rode on a white mule, which carried him thousands of miles in a day, and which, when the journey was finished, he folded up like a sheet of paper and put away in his wallet. When he again required its services, he had only to spurt water upon the packet from his mouth and the animal at once assumed its proper shape. At all times he performed wonderful feats of necromancy, and declared that he had been Grand Minister to the Emperor Yao " B. In the twenty-third year A. It was just at this time that the famous Taoist Yeh Fa-shan, thanks to his skill in necromancy, was in great favour at Court. When his disciples opened his tomb, they found it empty. He is usually seen mounted on his white mule, sometimes facing its head, sometimes its tail. At his interviews with the Emperor Ming Huang in A. He refused the hand of an imperial princess, and also declined to have his portrait placed in the Hall of Worthies. It seems somewhat incongruous that an old ascetic should be associated with matrimonial happiness and the granting of offspring, but the explanation may possibly be connected with his performance of wonderful feats of necromancy, though he is said not to have given encouragement to others in these things during his lifetime. Others say her father was a shopkeeper at Ling-ling in Hunan. She lived in the time of the usurping empress Wu A. At her birth six hairs were found growing on the crown of her head, and the account says she never had any more, though the pictures represent her with a full head of hair. She complied with this injunction, and also vowed herself to a life of virginity. Her days were thenceforth passed in floating from one peak to another, bringing home at night to her mother the fruits she collected on the mountain. She gradually found that she had no need to eat in order to live. Her fame having reached the ears of the Empress, she was invited to Court, but while journeying thither suddenly disappeared from mortal view and became an Immortal. She is said to have been seen again in A. She is represented as an extremely beautiful maiden, p. He was born in A. He came of an official family, his grandfather having been President of the Ministry of Ceremonies, and his father Prefect of Hai Chou. He was 5 feet 2 inches in height, and at twenty was still unmarried. At this time he made a journey to Lu Shan in Kiangsi, where he met the Fire-dragon, who presented him with a magic sword, which enabled him at will to hide himself in the heavens. These being successfully overcome, he was invested with supernatural power and magic weapons, with which he traversed the Empire, slaying dragons and ridding the earth of divers kinds of evils, during a period of upward of four hundred years. Another version says that Han Chung-li was in an inn, heating a jug of rice-wine. This had gone on for p. Alone in the world, he was sighing bitterly, when he awoke with a start. During a whole year he met only selfish and extortionate customers, with the exception of one old lady who alone did not ask for more than was her due. So he went to her house, and seeing a well in the courtyard threw a few grains of rice into it. The water miraculously turned into wine, from the sale of which the dame amassed great wealth. Consequently he is one of the spiritual beings honoured by the literati. The child was entrusted to his uncle to be educated and prepared for the public examinations. He excelled his teacher in intelligence and the performance of wonderful feats, such as the production from a little earth in a flower-pot of some marvellous flowering plants, on the leaves of which were written in letters of gold some verses to this effect: Where is your abode? The snow is deep on Lan Kuan; Your horse refuses to advance. When he reached the foot of Lan Kuan the snow was so deep that he could not go on. Many indeed are the eminent men who have served their country, but which of them surpasses you in his knowledge of literature? When you have reached a high position, you will be buried in a damp and foggy land. How many here below allow themselves to be inebriated by the love of honours and pelf! Alone and watchful you persevere in the right path. But a time will come when, taking your flight to the sky, you will open in the ethereal blue a luminous roadway. He became one of the p. The elder of the two, Ching-hsiu, did not concern himself with the affairs of State; the younger, Ching-chih, was notorious for his misbehaviour. In spite of all warnings he refused to reform, and being at last guilty of homicide was condemned to death. His brother, ashamed at what had occurred, went and hid in the mountains, where he clothed his head and body with wild plants, resolved to lead the life of a hermit. He pointed to the sky. He pointed to his heart. The two visitors smiled and said: In a few days only he had reached this much-sought-after condition.

Chapter 7 : Chinese Mythology: The Eight Immortals “ Under the influence!

Heh Xian-gu is the only female celestial of the Eight Immortals. There are many legends about her. According to the records, she was born on the seventh of March in one of the years during the Tang Dynasty.

While cults dedicated to various Taoist immortals date back to the Han dynasty, the popular and well-known Eight Immortals first appeared in the Jin dynasty. The art of the Jin tombs of the 12th and 13th centuries depicts a group of eight Taoist immortals in wall murals and sculptures. They officially became known as the Eight Immortals in the writings and works of art of the Taoist group known as the Complete Realization Quanshen. The Eight Immortals are considered to be signs of prosperity and longevity, so they are popular themes in ancient and medieval art. They were frequent adornments on celadon vases. They were also common in sculptures owned by the nobility. Their most common appearance, however, was in paintings [citation needed]. Many silk paintings, wall murals, and wood block prints remain of the Eight Immortals. They were often depicted either together in one group, or alone to give more homage to that specific immortal. An interesting feature of early Eight Immortal artwork is that they are often accompanied by jade hand maidens, commonly depicted servants of the higher ranked deities, or other images showing great spiritual power. This shows that early on, the Eight Immortals quickly became eminent figures of the Taoist religion and had great importance [citation needed]. We can see this importance is only heightened in the Ming and Qing dynasties. During these dynasties, the Eight Immortals were very frequently associated with other prominent spiritual deities in artwork. There are numerous paintings with them and the Three Stars the gods of longevity, prosperity, and good fortune together. Also, other deities of importance, such as the Queen Mother of the West, are commonly seen in the company of the Eight Immortals. The artwork of the Eight Immortals is not limited to paintings or other visual arts. They are quite prominent in written works too. Authors and playwrights wrote numerous stories and plays on the Eight Immortals. The Immortals are the subject of many artistic creations, such as paintings and sculptures. Examples of writings about them include: There is another work, also made during the Ming c. In qigong and martial art Furthermore, they have been linked to the initial development of qigong exercises such as the Eight Piece Brocade. There are many other shrines dedicated to them throughout China and Taiwan. In modern China, the Eight Immortals are still a popular theme in artwork. Paintings, pottery, and statues are still common in households across China and are even gaining some popularity worldwide. Several movies about the Eight Immortals have been produced in China in recent years [citation needed]. At first, the protagonist did not want to learn the Immortal Woman He form because he saw it as a feminine form, but he eventually created his own version of that form. The Eight Immortals play an important part in the plot of the video game Fear Effect 2. In the Andy Seto graphic novel series Saint Legend, the Eight Immortals reappear to protect the Buddhist faith from evil spirits set on destroying it. In the X-Men comic book, the Eight Immortals appear to protect China along with the Collective Man when the mutant Xorn caused a massacre in one small village. In the Immortal Iron Fist comic book, there are seven supreme kung fu practitioners, called the Seven Immortal Weapons. In the show, the Immortals were said to be the ones who defeated the Eight Demon Sorcerers and sealed them away in the netherworld using items that symbolized their powers. Qigong Teachings of a Taoist Immortal:

Chapter 8 : Legend Of The Eight Immortals Who Know The Secrets Of Nature | Ancient Pages

The spiritual beings of primary importance in religious Taoism are the Immortals (Xian in Chinese). First introduced in the Chuang-Tzu and perhaps intended by the author to be allegorical, these super-humans or "perfected persons" (chen jen) came to be worshipped and emulated by Taoists.

The Eight Immortals is a group of legendary, semi-historical beings in both religious Daoism and popular religion, said to have obtained immortality through the elixir of life produced by alchemy or by the eating of magic fruits and according to other sources; through studying the secrets of nature which to some extent could be the same thing. The Immortals, seven male and one female, might have originated already in the Han dynasty, though they were not represented in art until the Yuan dynasty when they seem to first have been depicted on Longquan Celadon ware. The figures are usually recognizable by their attributes. They are from left to right: A pure maiden who floats on clouds and eats only mother-of-pearl and moonbeams. Carrying the lotus, a symbol of compassion and longevity, she travels with the feng huang the phoenix which originates from the sun and is an omen of prosperity. A strolling singer and flutist, patron of the indigent. All the money Lan Caihe receives while performing on the earth are given to the poor. Lu Dongbin, patron of barbers is also worshipped by the sick. His attribute is a sword and a fly-whisk. The sword is known as Chan yao kuai, the Devil-slaying sabre, and was presented to him by the Fire Dragon. The fly-brush is called yun chou, the cloud sweeper. It empowers him to fly at will and to walk on the clouds as he traverses the earth, slaying dragons and ridding the world of evil. He is also worshipped by scholars who credit him with writing the Kong kuo ge, a table or code of merits and demerits, which serve as a guide for morality. For this, he is known as the god of the Inkmakers, Lu zu. He was a vital and handsome man when his soul once left his body to seek wisdom with the gods. In the meantime his caretaker mistakenly cremated his body. Having no body to return to, his soul thus entered the lame, crippled body of a beggar who had just died. It is in this form that he performs his good deeds. A dispenser of medicine and assistance, Li Tieguai wears a gourd across his shoulder in which he stores his cures. A bat often flutters nearby. The word for bat in Chinese is fu, which also means happiness and explains the benevolent symbolism of the bat. His attribute is an iron staff or crutch. He is characterized by his bearded face and his attribute is a fan. He makes his appearance whenever there is a message from the heavens to be conveyed to the mortal world. He is sometimes portrayed beside a tiger, a force of good and the defender against terrestrial chaos. Tigers represent strength, military prowess and is one of the four animals symbolizing Power and Energy. Tigers also represent wealth and power; in addition, legends tell of tigers carrying heroes to the heavens. Nephew of the great scholar and statesman Han Yu. Often seen carrying a basket of peaches to promote longevity. His attribute is a flute. Zhang Guo or Zhang Guolao, an elderly magician famous for his mule, which can travel great distances without rest. After a journey, this immortal simply folds up the mule and places it in his pocket. He is the patron of happy marriages and numerous offspring, two goals which need the help of magic. His attribute is a fish-shaped musical instrument. Patron of the theatrical profession. Brother of the Empress Cao always depicted wearing an imperial court dress. His attribute is a pair of tablets resembling castanets. Stories of the Eight Immortals were popularized in folklore, drama, novels, and wood block prints besides occurring on all kinds of ceramic and decorative objects. The eight figures represent the spectrum of Chinese society: In order to demonstrate the range of their powers, they floated down to the surface of the sea on lotus leaves for their journeys. They are identified with the onset of the Yuan Dynasty and it is a possibility that the sea wave borders of early Chinese porcelain is to some extent referring to this fundamental story.

Chapter 9 : Chinese Porcelain Glossary: Eight Daoist Immortals

The Eight Immortals are actual figures from Chinese legend (Taoism, specifically), being eight individuals who attained immortality and various other magical powers by various means, usually as rewards after being tested by a Taoist sage Lao Tzu or another immortal.

He told her that he would be born into her family. Then a sudden shining aura appeared like fire spreading in the room, and a large baby boy was born who was the size of a three-year-old. His extraordinary looks showed his unusual background: His facial and lip color was rosy; his nipples were far apart and his arms were long. He never cried nor wanted to nurse for seven days. He was defeated, then disappeared in Mount Zhong Nan. In the mountains he met several celestials and learned from them. He practiced and eventually became an Immortal. He learned martial arts and the secrets of cultivating into a celestial being, becoming various deities such as Dong Hua and later Hua Yang. He also helped Lu Dong-bin become a celestial. Zhong is considered one of the Five Northerner Taoist Ancestors. In most paintings he looks free and relaxed and carries himself like an ordinary man. Zhang Guo lao Zhang Guo lao was a real person whose life was recorded in historical records. A Taoist during the Tang Dynasty, he had developed super powers and people believed he had lived several hundred years. It is said that he often sat backward on a white donkey that was transformed from his "paper cut" an art form and traveled between Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces to teach people how to be kind. At night he changed the donkey back into paper again. The Tang emperors sent invitations to him but he refused to go. Later when the female emperor Wu Ze Tian persisted in inviting him, he had to go but "died" halfway there, then secretly returned to the mountains. The emperor wanted him to marry Princess Yu Zhen. Zhang Guo lao refused. He sang a poem, "To marry a princess will be like reaching the sky, which a man would love but which only can give me trouble. His disciples said he had become a celestial and went to heaven. The Emperor ordered a temple to be built in Pu Wu County in his memory. Tsao Guo jiu "Guo jiu" means the brother-in-law of an emperor. So the statue of him is different from the rest of the celestials; he wears an official robe. In his hands he carries two jade yin- yang planks. He had a very kind and merciful heart and liked a simple life. He was so deeply ashamed by the things his brother was doing, such as stealing from the people and killing them, that he left his family and went into the mountains to study Taoism and cultivate himself. One day Immortal Zhong and Lu went to test him. They asked, "What are you studying and cultivating? The two Immortals asked again, "Where is heaven? The two Immortals smiled and knew that he had learned the truth of life, so they gave him directions and Tsao became a celestial too. There are many stories about him. Originally he was a handsome, strong, tall man. One day he told his disciple that he was going to meet Lao zi and would be gone for seven days. If his shen spirit did not return to his body form on the seventh day, his disciple should burn the body. So he sat in deep meditation and his soul went to the meeting. In the forest he found a man who had just died of hunger, so he went inside. He discovered the body had only one leg. Just when he was going to get out of that body he heard someone laughing and clapping hands. It was Lao zi, who stopped him from jumping out of the body. Li Tie guai often carries a bottle gourd on his back when he comes to visit our world. The bottle gourd contains herbal remedies that have magic powers and he uses them to cure people and save their lives. Han Xiang zi Han Xiang zi often appears as a nice-looking young scholar. He carries a long bamboo flute in his hand. He was the nephew of the famous literary giant and senior official Han Yu. It is said in his previous life he was the daughter of the Primary Minister An Fu, and was a beautiful and very intelligent girl during the Han Dynasty named Ling Ling. So the emperor sent him far away to do hard labor. Ling Ling was angry and sad; she died and her soul went into a white crane. The boy was named Xiang zi. He was raised by Han Yu since both his parents died when he was young. When he grew up he wanted to be a Taoist but was rejected by his uncle. Nevertheless he still went to Mount Zhong Nan and practiced Taoism. He was guided by Immortal Zhong and Lu again and succeeded in cultivating himself into a celestial. Han Xinagzi tried several times to help his uncle understand Tao but Han Yu refused. Later Han Yu was demoted by the emperor because he disagreed with him. On his way to his new lower post, a sudden heavy snow buried Han Yu. Han Xiang zi saved his life and finally Han Yu began to

realize that the real world was only a place to learn about Tao. He became immortalized too. Lan Tsai-heh Lan Tsai-heh is often portrayed carrying a flower basket. It was said that he was the Big Feet Deity who was born on earth, but in plays about him he was often dressed up like a girl. According to legend he was a traveling Taoist who liked to wear shabby clothes and a wide wooden belt around his waist; on one foot he wore a shoe and the other foot was bare. In summer he wore a heavy coat, but in winter he bared his upper body and often slept in the snow, where his body heat melted the snow and transformed it into steam. He often looked drunk, singing about being kindhearted while clapping two bronze music planks. He acted as if he was crazy but in fact he was not. Often followed by a crowd, he was given coins which he strung together and pulled across the ground, often losing some. He either gave the money to the poor or used it to buy wine. Some people saw him when they were children and again when they were old, and they said he never changed his appearance. One day when he was drunk and singing in a restaurant, sudden music came from the sky and cranes began soaring through the air. This is one of his popular songs: Dancing Lan Tsai-heh, how long can this world last? Riding on my phoenix in the morning I watch the green tides ebbing, In dusk I watch white waves covering the green trees and fields. Long lasting lives and scenes are only up in the above. Where the majestic palaces are built of splendid gold and silver! There are many legends about her. According to the records, she was born on the seventh of March in one of the years during the Tang Dynasty. It is said when she was born, purple clouds rose in the room and six bunches of auras appeared above her head. She was an extraordinarily bright child. When she was fifteen she dreamed a celestial taught her how to take mica powder a mineral. She did and she began to run as if she were flying. In the morning she went to the faraway mountains and came back at dusk, bringing fruit for her mother. As time went on she no longer ate food but ate qi-on pigu. It is said that Immortal Heh predicted a highly accurate future. When the female Emperor Wu Ze Tain invited her to the Forbidden City, she set out on the journey but disappeared halfway there. Another saying was that Immortal Lu guided her to become a celestial. The poem on the columns outside the temple reads. In the universe, the purple qi shows the magic power of Tao; Deep in the white clouds is where the celestials live. Immortal Lu is the most influential Immortal of the eight and is known by young and old alike. But after the female Emperor Wu Zetian seized power, he had to hide like his other family members to avoid being jailed or killed. So he went to the mountains and changed his last name to Lu. It is also said that he was the grandson of Lu Wei, a Tang Dynasty high official. One day before he attained Tao he met Zhong Li-quan, who loaned him a pillow. Lu fell asleep on the pillow quickly. He dreamed that he came in first in the highest imperial examination and became a high official, married a beautiful wife and had a nice family for ten years. Then he offended the emperor, who punished him by sending him far away from his family. He felt broken up when he awoke, but noticed the rice soup that Zhong had been cooking before he fell asleep was not yet done. He wanted to get beyond that and begged Zhong to teach him. So Zhong taught him and Lu became an immortal and gained phenomenal power. One day, however, the Fire Dragon Deity taught Lu that the crucial practice, which was also what he had been practicing for cultivating the highest level of Tao, was to put an end to feelings of greediness, anxiety, longing and disturbed emotion.