

## CHAPTER 13

# FINAL THOUGHTS

**AFTER READING THROUGH** this book, reflect on what resonates with you and what does not, how the practices taught herein can be integrated into your own craft, and then proceed to make your first Fu sigils. In the end, no amount of reading can teach you craft. You must practice it, and that is why we call ourselves practitioners.<sup>1</sup> But you cannot practice before you know the principles. That is what I hope you get out of this book: the principles.

In high school, my father would tutor me for my science classes. My novice approach to passing these classes was memorization. I would make flash cards, copying physics formulas from a textbook onto these cards, and try to memorize them. I believed memorization was the way to getting such knowledge into my head. I would also memorize the solution to one problem and then attempt to apply that same solution to the new problem. “This is how I solved question 1, so I’m going to do the same exact thing for question 2.”

One time I was struggling with my physics homework because question 2 was completely different from question 1, and I was at a loss. I asked my father for help. Although he isn’t a physicist (but he is a scientist) and hadn’t worked with high school physics equations for decades, he didn’t need to consult my textbook for the formula as he tried to work through the problem himself. He deconstructed it to figure out the guiding principles behind it, and by doing so, created (or recreated) the formula to use. Basically, he reinvented the wheel—in that moment, he reinvented the physics formula needed for solving the problem. Therefore, no memorization of any formula was needed. My father scrawled out the formula he devised in his head and proceeded to solve

the problem. Meanwhile I looked to my reference notes and stared at him in awe, as what he had scrawled out was exactly what was written in the textbook.

“Dad, you’re able to recall that formula after all these years? You have a really good memory.”

“No,” he said. “I figured it out just now.”

“How?” I asked.

“If you understand the basic principles of physics, you can use that understanding of the basics to solve any problem. Every formula you’ve been trying to memorize is based on those basic principles. It’s very simple. Understand the principles, and you’ll never have to memorize anything, because you’ll understand.”

While it might not be that simple for me when it comes to physics, I find it uncanny how applicable my father’s approach is to craft. There is no need to memorize where “this” has to go, or where to put “that,” what invocation to use, what to summon, or the exact order of steps to follow for a ritual.

Does “this” *have* to go “there” and is there requisite content that needs to go into an invocation, and precise orders of steps to a ritual? In one sense, yes, just as a set formula exists for solving that physics problem. But memorization isn’t necessary if you understand the basic principles. That is why the bulk of this book has been devoted to imparting those basic principles.

Through understanding, and not memorization, you can work through the process needed to arrive at your objective, and just as it is in math and science, there are multiple approaches for arriving at the same objective. So when I said “this” *has* to go “there,” I’m talking about metaphysical principles, not material logistics. That is why understanding theory is imperative for the practitioner of craft. Theory helps the practitioner advance farther in craft, whereas learning very specific methodologies limits the practitioner’s craft. To find your own spiritual path, you need to know theory, not specific methodologies.

Be mindful that the approach to sigil crafting I have set out in this book is only one of many, and there is no need to try to embed it into your practice. Instead, try to understand the “why” behind my approach, apply that “why,” and devise your own formula for reaching your objectives.

## YIN AND YANG IS NOT BLACK AND WHITE

I want to address the notion of white magic and black magic, from my perspective. Taoist magic is not identified by the dichotomy of white versus black,<sup>2</sup>

or good versus evil,<sup>3</sup> or at least I do not identify energy in that way.<sup>4</sup> Rather, metaphysical energy (harnessed in a way that has been called “magic”) is either creative or it is destructive.<sup>5</sup>

Energy is characterized as yin-dominant or yang-dominant. We work through the binary of yin and yang, and within the yin, there is yang, which can expand until yin dominance becomes yang dominance. Likewise, within yang there is yin, which can expand until yang dominance becomes yin. In other words, an intent to create through light and work within the subjective framework of “white magic” can quickly slip into destructive work that might otherwise be characterized as malevolent. Also, any time I have spoken of benevolent or malevolent energy in this book, I am addressing the intentions driving the force behind the energy, not the energy itself.

A Fu sigil harnesses energy to create—or more accurately, add to or amplify a life force—or it is used to destroy, to take away from or weaken a life force. An example of creative work might be enhancing a person with greater financial wealth prospects so that person may use that wealth to achieve his goals. But another example of creative work is triggering physical pain in a person’s body or creating a torrent of misfortune and directing it toward someone, which few would call acts of “good” or “white magic.”

Destructive work might be taking away from what a person has built, which is often the function of curses. Destructive work can also be the banishing of existing pain in an individual’s life or removal of karmic merits that would otherwise lead to misfortune, which that person would hardly consider “evil.” Destructive work can involve dismantling malignant and malicious forces that have been harming someone.

Note further that in Taoist cosmology (and in the law of conservation of energy), energy is in fact neither created nor destroyed; it is transferred. A practitioner summons energy from a particular source and transfers it to the beneficiary in question to manifest an intention, or the practitioner pulls energy away from the beneficiary and redirects it elsewhere, to another source. Thus, the practitioner must be aware at all times that energy does not appear from nowhere and does not simply vanish at your command. It comes from a source and was taken from that source and transferred to you by your summoning or invocation. When it seems to disappear, it has only disappeared

momentarily from your line of sight; the energy has been redirected elsewhere and is having an impact elsewhere.

There are consequences to this. The impact elsewhere could very well be detrimental to your personal karma. Most consequences are tolerable, but others are not worth the gain that the energetic working has yielded. That is why the beneficiary's vow, which this book explains, is a recommended safeguard. It extends the manifestation after the effect of the sigil to include how energy will be redirected after the event.

Make no mistake: there are certainly such things as good and evil. Good and evil describe the practitioner's actions or the beneficiary's intent. These are not words to describe the actual energetic working itself. There is no good or evil gravity, black or white laws of physics. If someone uses gravity to push another over a ledge and harms that person, that is not the practice of black gravity, but I would contend that it is an example of someone acting evilly.

A practitioner can use either creative or destructive metaphysical energy to craft Fu sigils for evil intentions, and the more he or she does so, the more impact it will have on his or her karmic account. What that means, however, is not for me to say. Good deeds, on the other hand, as discussed briefly in chapter 6, are the means through which a practitioner transcends, and accrues, the Vital Force needed for powerful craft.

The irony is that once a practitioner transcends through the accumulation of good deeds, he or she finds the application of craft to be rather useless, much like the Venerable Sheng-Yen said.<sup>6</sup> Yet again, I must stress: my code of ethics and what I am for or against bears no relevance in your life. You must live by your own code and decide for yourself what you are for or against. After learning Fu sigil crafting, what you choose to do with your learned knowledge is on you.

## QUANTUM MECHANICS AND CRAFT

In the realm of quantum physics, Albert Einstein proved that energy and matter are interchangeable. In other words,  $E = mc^2$ .<sup>7</sup> Einstein asserted that all matter has within it untapped energy that by and large went unnoticed.<sup>8</sup> Thus, as Banesh Hoffman, a British mathematician and physicist and a former student of Einstein, noted, "Every clod of earth, every feather, every speck of dust [becomes] a prodigious reservoir of untapped energy."<sup>9</sup> Man, then, can take

from Heaven and Earth “for personal enrichment and for exercising triggering mechanisms,”<sup>10</sup> if the practitioner can access that prodigious reservoir of untapped energy, a concept from Taoist texts that predate Einstein by well over a thousand years.

For Man’s spirit to be awake, to be spiritual,<sup>11</sup> is to realize a conscious, intelligent matrix behind all that is in the universe, and how all that is, all matter, is connected and related to energy, as Einstein propounded. The practitioner can tap into that conscious, intelligent matrix—cosmic Qi—and thus tap into any matter through its energy by understanding vibrations.

All that goes into craft and ritual is about understanding vibrations. Theoretical physicist Max Planck asserted that all physical matter consists of vibrations, and all matter subsists by a force that triggers a vibration. Thus, Planck deduced that a conscious, intelligent matrix is the force behind the vibrations,<sup>12</sup> and through craft, that is what the practitioner can come to appreciate.

Crafting Fu sigils is an experience that teaches the practitioner about how the universe works and how that which we perceive as not connected is, in cosmic truth, connected. Craft teaches you how to see those connections. Craft is about understanding the mechanics of the binary code that instructs all life, all energy and matter, the yin and the yang. A Fu sigil, in its essence, is a bit-string that represents an instruction for how energy and matter is to be manifested.

An intelligent design is what causes the vibrations in matter, and those vibrations result in energy, much of it unseen, undetected, and untapped. It is that energy that a practitioner has access to by way of craft, and to do so, the practitioner’s approach is through matter and attaining dominion over that matter.

Whether it is by Eastern or Western traditions in craft, or by a union of both, the practitioner attains dominion over matter by understanding nature—the changing seasons and the four directions.<sup>13</sup> Eastern tradition understands the changing seasons and four directions through the trinitarian principle of Heaven, Earth, and Man, the Wu Xing five phases, and the Ba Gua, or eight trigrams. Western traditions have their own expressions, but both are unified in agreement as true expressions of nature—of the changing seasons and the four directions. Craft, therefore, is untouched by what any one lineage or school of esoteric thought has to say about it.

Taoism as a concept shirks from definition. Definitions are limitations, and the Tao is unlimited, an expression of that which is beyond the limited capability of humankind to grasp. Likewise, what is authentic Taoist craft is hard to say. Is Taoist craft that has been blended with Buddhism or Confucianism less pure, less Tao? Is a Western practitioner's interpretation of Taoist craft no longer authentic? To answer "yes" to any of these questions would be an attempt to define the Tao. To answer "yes" is an attempt at limiting the unlimited.

This book may be about Taoism after all. The Tao—or The Way, the practitioner's Path—cannot be spoken. It cannot be taught. It must be found. No lineage and no school of thought can articulate Tao, or articulate what craft is or is not. That which tries to articulate it is not the true Tao.<sup>14</sup> The Tao of craft is not about teaching a spiritual path; it is about finding your own, and a practitioner's spiritual path is the one that leads to concord of the trinity that is Heaven, Earth, and Man. Fu talisman crafting happens to be one well-established tried-and-true way to achieve that trinitarian concord.

Ultimately, exoteric Taoist philosophy is the highest aspiration of the esoteric Taoist practitioner. Fu sigils are not to be crafted for achievement. Achievement begets conflict. Nor should Fu sigils be crafted for prosperity and riches. Wealth begets greed and thievery. Desire confuses the heart. These are the teachings of the Tao.<sup>15</sup> The Tao of craft is to gain insight into the many theories of craft and then work with those theories to forge your own spiritual path.

True magic is cultivated for the pursuit of transcendence. The cultivation toward immortality that is the great work and pursuit of Taoist practitioners is transcendence, for Man to become like Heaven and Earth, which are everlasting because they do not exist for themselves.<sup>16</sup> To transcend, a practitioner learns, through craft, how not to exist for him- or herself.

The highest good, and the highest form of magic, is to be like water, and to be like water is the way of the Tao. Water nourishes and benefits without contention, and does not avoid what it dislikes.<sup>17</sup> Thus, do not use craft to avoid what you dislike. True mastery of craft is *wu wei*, or nonuse of craft.<sup>18</sup>

To develop proficiency in many areas of skill and knowledge enriches life. The more you can, the more you are; but just because you can, it does not mean you do. Spell-working for romance, career advancement, or wealth can

be shortsighted, and a squander of a practitioner's gifts. The gift of craft is better exercised toward the highest form of magic, the way of the Tao. And yet craft is ironic in that way. To achieve that highest form, a practitioner must first bumble and stumble through the mechanics and the shortsightedness of craft. And, I contend, if there is one most fascinating way to bumble and stumble on the magical path, it is by way of the Fu sigil.

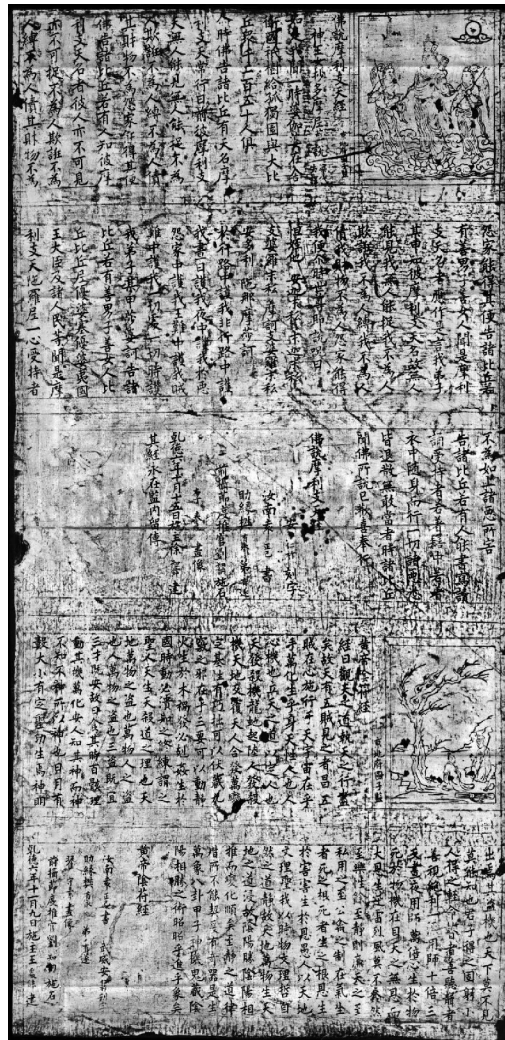


Figure 13.1. Circa AD 960–1127 stele carvings of the Buddhist/Taoist Canons of Marici [Marishiten] (courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University)