

# The Secret of the Golden Flower and the Establishment of the Longmen Tradition at Mt. Jin'gai during the Qing Dynasty

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The *Secret of the Golden Flower* (*Jinhua zongzhi* 金華宗旨) is a famous alchemical text which the Western world came to know through Richard Wilhelm's 1929 translation. It was published, together with Carl Jung's commentary, under the title *Das Geheimnis der Goldenen Blüte: ein chinesisches Lebensbuch*. The Chinese text used by Wilhelm is Zhanran Huizhenzi's 湛然慧真子 edition, published between 1921 and 1927 and found, as its preface explains, in Beijing's Liuli chang 琉璃廠, the old street of books and antiques dealers. In reality, many other versions of the *Golden Flower* text exist, all traditionally attributed to the immortal Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓. They date back to the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and belong to various Daoist lineages and traditions.

So far I discovered at least seven editions of this text, among them a rare one at the Otani University Library in Kyoto. The text is a product of spirit-writing seances. Each Daoist lineage and tradition which engaged in its compilation left its marks. Through comparison of prefaces, notes, and the thirteen chapters of the *Golden Flower* in its different editions, relevant variants as well as omissions become apparent. The Longmen 龍門, an important Daoist tradition which during the Qing dynasty was charged with transmitting public ordinations, used this text not only as basis for its alchemical doctrine but also for establishing its spiritual power of transmitting ordinations among its followers. In order to assert themselves as the holders of the original version and by virtue of being the unique recipients of the true transmission, the Longmen masters from Mount Jin'gai 金蓋 (Zhejiang) modified and edited the *Golden Flower* according to their own criteria.

Through analysis of its various versions and study of the textual inconsistencies in the Longmen's claim to legitimacy, we can shed light on Qing Daoism and on the struggles among the Daoist traditions which claimed to have the orthodox transmission of such text.