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Artist: Anonymous  
 Title: *The Celestial Worthy Taiyi, Who Delivers from Suffering*  
 《太乙救苦天尊像》  
*Taiyi Jiuku Tianzun xiang*  
 Dynasty/Date: Southern Song-Yuan, 13th–14th century  
 Format: Hanging scroll mounted on panel  
 Medium: Ink and color on silk  
 Dimensions: 94.5 x 45.8 cm (37-3/16 x 18-1/16 in)  
 Credit line: Gift of Charles Lang Freer  
 Accession no.: F1904.341  
 Provenance: Yamanaka and Company, New York

**Painting subject:** While the painting bears no label or text, the bearded figure can be identified through its iconography as the Celestial Worthy Taiyi (Grand Unity), Who Delivers from Suffering (*Taiyi Jiuku Tianzun* 太乙救苦天尊).<sup>1</sup>

**Object description:** Painting much darkened. No artist signature. No seals. Two (2) boxes.

**Outside box:** Japanese. Plain wood. Three (3) inscriptions: one (1) end label and two (2) labels on lid.

End label: Anonymous.

Ink on paper. Glued to end of box.

Six characters, standard script.

西金居士《文珠》



*Manjusri*, by Xijin jushi (Jin Dashou)<sup>2</sup>

Lid: Anonymous. One text written directly on wood; one on small slip of paper.

1. Ink on wood. Nine characters, standard script.

《文珠菩薩》。西金居士筆。

*The Bodhisattva Manjusri*. Painted by Xijin jushi (Jin Dashou).

2. Ink on paper. Four characters, standard script. Glued on lid, upper right.

二十五番。

No. 25.

**Inside box:** Japanese. Black lacquer. Anonymous.

Gold ink on lacquer. Eight characters, standard script.

《文珠尊》。西金居士筆。

*The Venerable Manjusri*. Painted by Xijin jushi (Jin Dashou).

Artist Inscription: None

Artist seals: None

Other inscriptions: None

Colophons: None

Collector seals: None

**Traditional Chinese catalogues:** None

### **Selected Bibliography**



Toda Teisuke 戸田禎佑 and Ogawa Hiromitsu 小川裕充, eds. *Chūgoku kaiga sōgō zuroku: zokuhen* 中國繪畫總合圖錄：續編 (Comprehensive Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Paintings: Second Series). 4 vols. Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1998–2001. Vol. 1, 118 (A21–310).

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> A compassionate and powerful Daoist divinity, the Celestial Worthy Taiyi (Grand Unity), Who Delivers from Suffering (*Taiyi Jiuku Tianzun* 太乙救苦天尊), responds to all who call on him regardless of station or realm of existence. He dwells in the eastern palace in the Realm of Eternal Bliss and is one of two companion-attendants of the Jade Emperor, the supreme deity in the Daoist pantheon. His birthday is celebrated on the eleventh day of the eleventh lunar month and he is also invoked on each of the three annual “primes” (see F1917.185, elsewhere on the website), as well as during ceremonies for the salvation of deceased souls, his primary association in everyday religious practice. Seated on a white lotus, Taiyi is depicted with his left hand holding a bowl before the middle of his chest, while his right hand is lifted in a Daoist hand sign or sacred gesture (*shoujue* 手訣). The deity wears a low dark cap with a single button-like jewel on the forehead and a second jewel crowns the top his head, behind which is a circular darkened nimbus. The lotus bearing Taiyi Jiuku balances on the back of his customary mount, a blue nine-headed lion adorned with an elaborately jeweled and tasseled caparison. The entirety of the figural grouping is surrounded with scrolling clouds done in outline against an otherwise undifferentiated background. For discussions of the deity and his history, see: Yūsa Noboru 遊佐昇, “Tōdai ni mirareru Kyūku tenson shinkō ni tsuite” 唐代に見られる救苦天尊信仰について, in *Tōhō shūkyō* 東方宗教 73 (1989): 19–40; and Xiao Dengfu 蕭登福, *Daojiao diyu jiuzhu: Taiyi jiuku tianzun* 道教地獄救主：太乙救苦天尊 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 2006). For brief discussions in English, see: Franciscus Verellen, “Evidential Miracles in Support of Taoism: The Inversion of a Buddhist Apologetic Tradition in Late T'ang China,” in *T'oung Pao*



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78 (1992): 217–63, esp. 234–43; and Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), vol. 2, 637.

<sup>2</sup> The subject of this painting is misidentified in the Japanese box labels as the Buddhist bodhisattva Manjusri (Chinese: Wenshu 文殊 — note the second character of the deity’s name is usually written 殊, rather than 珠, as in the Japanese labels), probably owing to the fact that he too customarily rides on a blue lion. The name Xijin jushi 西金居士 is a Japanese misnomer for the painter Jin Dashou 金大受 (active late 12th–early 13th century) based on a misreading of his usual signature. From the town of Ningbo 寧波, Jin Dashou was a Southern Song dynasty painter of Buddhist subjects and worked in a style similar to that of Lin Tinggui and Zhou Jichang; see F1904.224 and F1907.139, elsewhere on this website. The current painting bears no particular stylistic affinity with Jin Dashou’s known works.