

THE *HUIMING JING*: A TRANSLATION AND DISCUSSION

by

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Abstract

This thesis consists primarily of a translation of the *Huiming Jing* 慧命經, a text written by Liu Huayang 柳華陽 in 1794 that incorporates Taoist inner alchemical training with Buddhist language and concepts. In addition to the translation, the thesis discusses Liu's claim that in the text that he reveals the secrets that allowed the Buddhas and patriarchs to achieve enlightenment. For him, to reveal the secrets seems to mean primarily to explain Buddhist and Taoist terminology and concepts in terms of the circulation and interaction of energies within the body. He also emphasizes that this work of energies has clear stages that must be followed in sequence. However, while it is possible to discern broad stages in the work that Liu describes, on close examination, the obscurity and contradictions in the language seriously hinder attempts to decode, translate or render them fully coherent or intelligible. In the end, it is an ever-shifting play between order and disorder that characterizes our text, and can itself ultimately be understood as a tool intended to allow the adept to move beyond the world of words that can never fully reflect reality into a state of enlightenment.

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Dedication

In memory of Master Moy Lin-shin, teacher of the Tao.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The *Huiming Jing* 慧命經 by Liu Huayang 柳華陽 (1736–?) is a text that can ultimately be considered part of the Taoist tradition of inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) that originated in the Tang and became widespread during the Song dynasties. Broadly speaking, inner alchemy represents a development of earlier Taoist systems of training intended to help practitioners return to a state of harmony with the Tao by gathering, purifying, storing, manipulating and transforming alchemical ingredients which are believed to exist not outside the practitioner, but instead inside his or her own body. Although the ideal of harmony with the Tao has often been understood as the attainment of physical immortality, particularly in earlier Taoism, in inner alchemy the final attainment of the practitioner is generally defined much less clearly. However, it normally includes notions of both physical health and inner clarity and wisdom. As it developed, this tradition incorporated features from many streams of Taoism, including the philosophy of the *Daodejing* 道德經 and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, physical practices that have been present since at least the time of Zhuangzi including gymnastics and breathing exercises, the ecstatic visions of the *Shangqing* 上清 school and the symbolism of the schools of Yin-Yang and the Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行), in particular that of the *Yijing* 易經. It can also integrate both thought and practices from Buddhism, especially *Chan* 禪 Buddhism, as well as Neo-

Confucianism. Finally, a noteworthy feature of inner alchemy that is certainly present in the *Huiming Jing* is its unique use of language and symbolism that is particularly complex and does not lend itself to easy interpretation or understanding.

This last characteristic makes texts such as ours worthy of study. Although their potential seems virtually limitless, the study of inner alchemy as a whole, while improving very quickly, is still in its infancy. In Western languages, only a small number of the texts of this tradition have been translated or examined closely, and most of those that have date from its earlier periods. Consequently, there is a need for more translation and discussion of inner alchemical texts in general, particularly those of the Qing 清 dynasty and later. As a text that was and is still relatively well-known, the *Huiming Jing* represents its era and is therefore a good candidate for translation and examination.

The Text

The date on the author's introduction to the *Huiming Jing* at the beginning of the text states that it was written down in the summer of 1794. Presumably, the text itself was completed shortly before, as there is nothing to suggest that the author's introduction is a later addition. The edition from which this translation was made was originally produced at the Immortal Temple of Nourishing Cloud (*yangyun xian guan* 養雲仙館) in Sichuan and was published in 1897, according to the colophon, by Deng Huiji 鄧徽績. According to Judith Boltz,¹ it was this date when Deng first collected the *Huiming Jing* together with another text by Liu Huayang entitled *The Discourse on the Testimony of the Golden Immortals* (*Jinxian zheng lun* 金仙証論), as well as the *Authentic Principles of the*

¹ Judith Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature: Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries*, China Research Monograph 32 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 325.

Heavenly Immortals (Tianxian zhengli 天仙正理) and the *Compatible Heritages of Buddhahood and [Taoist] Immortality* (Xian fo hezhong 仙佛合宗), both by Wu Shouyang 伍守陽 (Wu Chongxu 伍冲虛). The title of the resulting collection is *The Immortal Heritage of Wu and Liu* (Wu-Liu xianzhong 伍柳仙宗).² According to the *Daojiao da cidian* 道教大辭典,³ at least one other edition of our text exists, from the Hall of Realizing Goodness (*Shan cheng tang* 善成堂) in Beijing. Although I have been unable to locate such an edition, I have seen one from the Temple of Heavenly Flowers (*Tian hua guan* 天華館) in Beijing, which contains no important differences from the Sichuan edition I have used here.

The text itself contains a number of different sections. It begins with a series of charts, accompanied by poems and some discussion, that broadly introduce the process of cultivation for those who wish to learn Liu's teachings. The body of the text then elaborates on what the charts introduce. Significantly, the body is accompanied by extensive commentary, which was also written by Liu. Finally, the text finishes with a record of various questions that students put to Liu, along with his responses. Although it seems possible that this last section could have been recorded by students rather than being written by Liu, it should be noted that the preface written in 1794 by Sun Tingbi 孫廷璧 does mention it as an integral part of the original text. Consequently, it is most likely that Liu at had a direct hand in selecting what dialogue would be included in this final section, and that it was produced at the same time as the rest of the text.

Other additions, however, seem likely to have been made at a later date, perhaps by Deng Huiji. The first of these is a text entitled "Zhang Ziyang's Scripture of the Eight Meridians" (*Zhang Ziyang bamai jing* 張紫陽八脈經), which does not appear in any of

² These texts can all be found in *Wu-Liu xianzhong* 伍柳仙宗 (Henan: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1987).

³ Min Zhiting 閔智亭 and Li Yangzheng 李養正, eds., *Daojiao da cidian* 道教大辭典 (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 1994), 465.

the standard catalogues of Taoist texts and is not among the texts normally attributed to Zhang, a Song dynasty inner alchemical master. Nonetheless, the style of language is different to that of the rest of the text, and does in fact seem older. Two other texts which are also added, entitled “Nine Levels of Refining the Heart-and-Mind” (*Jiu ceng lian xin* 九層煉心) and “Perfected One Li Hanxu’s Sequential Account of the Latter Realm” (*Li Hanxu zhenren houtian chuan shu* 李涵虛真人後天串述) are both by Li Hanxu.

Unfortunately, I have been unable to find any reliable information on this personage, although its content and style of the text suggest that he lived later than Zhang.

Nevertheless, the themes contained in the added texts are quite compatible with the approach taken by Liu throughout the *Huiming Jing*: a focus on the Latter Realm, as opposed to the Prior Realm (*xiantian* 先天), a focus on stages of progress, and a focus on detailed explanations in terms of the internal energies of the body or *qi* 氣.

Liu Huayang 柳華陽

The author and compiler of our text, a *Chan* 禪 monk by the name of Liu Huayang, was born about 1736. Very little information seems to be available about him beyond what appears in the *Huiming Jing* itself, including the date of his death. According to the text, Liu was a villager from Hongdu 洪都, which is present-day Nanchang city 南昌市 in Jiangxi. Although Liu describes his experiences pursuing an interest in Buddhism as a youth, he does not give any indication of his age at the time he actually became a monk, or how old he was when he finally claims to have met Master Wu Chongxu (who was in fact born in 1552 and died in 1641) and Teacher Huyun 壺雲 (whose dates are not known), receiving the true transmission from them. Later, Liu continued his training with a few companions, and eventually compiled the *Huiming Jing* in order to maintain the

teachings “for those who have the karmic affinity.”⁴ According to the very brief description of his life in the *Zhonghua dao jiao da cidian* 中華道教大辭典, Liu was originally a successful, ranking Confucian scholar who left his position to study Buddhism, eventually abandoning Buddhism to study the Tao.⁵ This, and the fact that his text was published in 1794 when he would have been older than sixty, suggests that he may have devoted himself to Buddhist and Taoist cultivation later in his life. In any case, by that time he was clearly already a respected teacher whose advice was sought by many practitioners.

The Wu-Liu School (*Wu-Liu pai* 伍柳派)

As we have seen, Liu Huayang claims to have met Wu Shouyang and received the transmission of his teachings. Wu was a Ming dynasty holder of the eighth-generation transmission of the *Longmen* 龍門 branch of Complete Reality (*Quanzhen* 全真) Taoism, which is traditionally thought to have been founded by Qiu Chuji 邱處機 during the rule of the Jurchens and Mongols. According to some, Wu, like Liu, was a Confucian scholar who came to the cultivation of the Tao as he grew older, although there are a number of different versions of the details of his past.⁶ Wu in fact also had the same hometown as Liu: modern-day Nanchang city in Jiangxi. He wrote a number of texts, many of which

⁴ See page 3b of the “Author’s Introduction to the *Huiming Jing*.”

⁵ Hu Fuchen 胡孚琛, ed., *Zhonghua dao jiao da cidian* 中華道教大辭典 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1995), 51.

⁶ See Ren Jiyu 任繼愈, ed., *Zhongguo dao jiao shi* 中國道教史 (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1990), 650, and Boltz, 199–200.

still survive in the *Daozang jiyao* 道藏輯要 and the *Daozang jinghua lu* 道藏精華錄. Broadly speaking, his work focuses on the cultivation of *shen* 神 and *qi* 氣 through inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹), and also associates Buddhahood with Taoist notions of immortality (*xian* 仙), which brings it very close to the ideas expressed by Liu in the *Huiming Jing*. His most well-known texts are those we have mentioned appear in *The Immortal Heritage of Wu and Liu: The Authentic Principles of the Heavenly Immortals* and *The Compatible Heritages of Buddhahood and [Taoist] Immortality*.

Wu Shouyang passed his legacy on to a number of students directly, including Xie Ningsu 謝凝素, whose dates are unclear. Although Wu ultimately became particularly associated with Liu Huayang, Ren Jiyu 任繼愈 reveals that there was a claim that Xie had originally written the *Huiming Jing* and *Discourse on the Testimony of the Golden Immortals*, and that Liu had simply plagiarized them.⁷ Whether or not these accusations were true, Liu ended up with credit for the texts and thereby became closely associated with Wu. This transmission was also maintained through students that came after Liu. One particularly notable claim of lineage is that of Zhao Bichen 趙避塵 in his well-known early twentieth-century work entitled *Xianzong xingming fa jue* 仙宗性命法訣.⁸ Zhao traces his lineage to Liu and Wu through Liaoran 了然, a student of Liu's who is one of Liu's questioners in the section entitled "Resolving Doubts" (*Jueyi* 決疑).⁹ This connection between Wu and Liu was solidified with the publication in 1897 of Deng Huiji's compilation, *The Immortal Heritage of Wu and Liu*. It is not clear whether the term "Wu-Liu school" arose as a result of the publication or existed prior to it. However,

⁷ Ren, 655.

⁸ Zhao Bichen 趙避塵, *Xianzong xingming fa jue* 仙宗性命法訣 (Taipei: Woolin Publishing Co., 1988). For an example, among many others, see pages 76–77.

⁹ See page 53a of the section entitled "Resolving Doubts."

in either case, by the turn of the twentieth century the two had become inextricably linked to each other.

Study of the *Huiming Jing*

There have been a few attempts made at translating and examining the *Huiming Jing* over the years. In general, this work seems to be divided into two categories: work which focuses fully on the text but fails to live up to scholarly standards, and scholarly work that is reasonably well done but very brief. Any discussion of the studies to date on the *Huiming Jing* should start with its partial translation by Richard Wilhelm, retranslated into English from German by Cary F. Baynes.¹⁰ Here, Wilhelm translates the verse and prose that accompanies the introductory charts at the beginning of the text. Because he does not include any of the text after the introductory sections and also does not display all of the charts themselves, his text can in no way be termed complete. Of the portions of the text that are represented, the translation is smooth and readable (perhaps a tribute as much to Baynes as to Wilhelm), but unfortunately does not provide an accurate representation of what is communicated in the original Chinese. This is primarily due to the fact that Wilhelm presents the teachings in a way that makes them appear to be a form of proto-Jungian psychology, which ignores the basic conceptions found not only in inner alchemy, but in the Taoist and Chinese traditions in general regarding the make up of human beings. Such conceptions include a picture of the body that developed out of an understanding that energy or *qi* 氣 underlies all phenomena, including the physical,

¹⁰ Richard Wilhelm, trans., "The Hui Ming Ching," *The Secret of the Golden Flower: A Chinese Book of Life*, 1931, translated into English by Cary F. Barnes (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1962) 67–78.

mental and spiritual. Because he does not adequately consider this picture, Wilhelm tends to make translations that fit his own inclinations rather than the tradition he is dealing with. For example, Wilhelm translates *huiming* 慧命 as “consciousness and life,” which tends to strip it entirely of the sense that it should be understood as something not only mental but physical, that has a real presence in the body. Because Wilhelm tends to underplay the tradition of which the *Huiming Jing* constitutes a part, his translation is ultimately most useful as an artifact from a previous age than as a work that can provide guidance in our attempt to understand inner alchemical training.

The most complete attempt in English to deal with the *Huiming Jing* appears in a translation by Eva Wong entitled *Cultivating the Energy of Life*.¹¹ As is clear from the title, Wong’s focus in translation is less scholarly accuracy, and more, as she says, to “free the text from its historical and philosophical context and listen to it as if it were a trusted teacher.... the text can take us beyond our personal experiences and become a guide to the frontiers of spiritual consciousness.”¹² Although very different from the aims of scholarly enquiry, this is certainly not an illegitimate goal. Wong’s text is readable and provides a reasonable introduction to the world of inner alchemical training that is more accurate than that provided by Wilhelm. However, her focus on readability, at times, leads her to take some liberties with the original wording. As well, although she commendably has chosen to translate the commentary, by placing it all together at the end of each chapter, she loses the connection of each comment to its original. Both of these decisions, while academically questionable, are legitimate considering the aims of her translation. However, other problems also appear that cannot be justified in the same way. While she claims that her translation is complete,¹³ it is in reality far from it. She leaves out whole

¹¹ Eva Wong, trans., *Cultivating the Energy of Life*, by Liu Huayang (Boston: Shambhala, 1998).

¹² Wong, 6–7.

¹³ Wong, 5.

sections of the text, including the largest one entitled “Collected Explanations of the *Huiming Jing*” (*Jishuo huiming jing* 集說慧命經), which, while the most difficult part of the text, contains the most complete discussion of the training. She also strangely omits the section entitled “Resolving Doubts” (*Jueyi* 決疑), which contains dialogue between Liu and his students and would likely be interesting for Wong’s readers since it is less technical and more personal. In addition to these omissions, she includes the text entitled “Nine Levels of Refining the Heart-and-Mind” (*Jiuceng lian xin* 九層煉心) and claims that it was written by Liu Huayang, when it was in fact written by Li Hanxu.¹⁴ As a result of all these problems, Wong’s translation cannot be considered adequate treatment of the *Huiming Jing*, especially for those with an academic interest in precision.

Aside from these two attempts by Wilhelm and Wong, there is very little else on our text in any Western language. In *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 5, Part 5,¹⁵ Joseph Needham does briefly discuss the *Huiming Jing*. The main intent of his discussion is to provide an introduction to some of the contents of the text, particularly as they relate to his own ideas concerning the physiological nature of inner alchemical training. As well, he aims to illustrate the problems with Wilhelm’s approach, which, he believes, stem from his failure to recognize that inner alchemy is in fact “real and experimental proto-science.”¹⁶ However, the space of a few pages does allow him to provide much detail as it relates to any of these questions. Needham does cite a presentation by Miyuki Mokusen to the 1968 Bellagio conference on Taoist studies entitled “Taoist Zen Presented in the *Hui Ming Ching*.” Unfortunately, Miyuki’s paper was not included in any of the books or

¹⁴ Wong, 10. See *Daojiao da cidian*, 465, where the text is attributed to Li Hanxu.

¹⁵ Joseph Needham and Lu Gwei-Djen, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 5, part 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁶ Needham, 257.

journals that published papers submitted at this conference, including *Facets of Taoism*,¹⁷ *Dōkyō no sōgō teki kenkyū* 道教の総合的研究,¹⁸ or the August 1969 edition of *History of Religions*,¹⁹ although there is a brief description of the paper in Holmes Welch's report on the conference.²⁰ According to Welch, Miyuki felt that the *Huiming Jing* was understandable in terms of Jungian psychology, to which Joseph Needham, Kristopher Schipper and others objected, presenting a more physiological alternative. However, the description of both Miyuki's presentation and the subsequent debate is not very detailed, so it is difficult to get a clear sense of exactly how the presentation proceeded. Both here and in Needham's book, while the discussion is interesting in general terms, space prevents much detail from being discussed, making its usefulness limited for those who wish to explore the *Huiming Jing* in depth.

In Chinese and Japanese, there is also relatively little discussion of the *Huiming Jing*, although I should admit that my enquiries in these two languages were less complete than those in Western languages. Two encyclopedic dictionaries, the *Daojiao da cidian* and the *Zhonghua daojiao da cidian*, contain articles on Liu Huayang, Wu Shouyang or the Wu-Liu School. For the most part, their discussions restrict themselves to brief introductions of both figures and their lineages, and short descriptions of the contents of their texts. Ren Jiyu also briefly discusses lineage and text contents in his history of Taoism,²¹ but does not have the space to provide much more detail than the dictionary entries. Judith Boltz

¹⁷ Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel, eds., *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion* (Hew Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

¹⁸ Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, ed., *Dōkyō no sōgō teki kenkyū* 道教の総合的研究 (Tokyo, 1977).

¹⁹ *History of Religions* (Chicago), 9.2-3 (1969/70): 107-279.

²⁰ Holmes Welch, "The Bellagio Conference on Taoist Studies," *History of Religions* (Chicago), 9.2-3 (1969/70): 107-137.

²¹ See Ren 650, 655, 662, 669-671.

mentions a 1971 printing of *The Immortal Heritage of Wu and Liu* that contains a preface by Chen Zhibin 陳志濱. However, I was unfortunately not able to obtain a copy of that edition, so the extent of his discussion will remain unclear to us.

In any case, the relatively limited amount of useful scholarly attention that has been devoted to the *Huiming Jing* shows the need for more scholarly translation and discussion of this important representative of Qing dynasty inner alchemy. I hope that the translation and discussion that follow will provide a starting point for this work to occur.

Chapter 2: A Translation of the *Huiming Jing*

Preface

1a Should [the cultivation of] life be considered essential? Since ancient times there have been no sages or worthies who have not died.

Should [the cultivation of] life not be considered essential? How then does the World-Honoured One speak of *arhats* who are able to not die?

The *Book of Changes* says, “Heaven and Earth interact and the myriad things form and are pristine. Male and female mingle their *jing* 精 and the myriad beings form and come alive.” It also says, “After there is male and female, there is husband and wife. After there is husband and wife, there is father and son, lord and subject, higher and lower. Then, propriety and righteousness have that which to manage.”¹ Therefore, the ancient sages were at the junction of male and female.

¹ Here I read *cuo* 錯 as *cuo* 措.

Husbands and wives diligently focus their attention on it with triple intensity: what they exalt is life.² How much the more for the teachers of Buddhism! Having made purity and compassion pre-eminent they further seek the Tao of not dying, in the manner of the *arhats*.

1b But how could this Tao be attained without instruction? Up to now, from the monk Huayang there has been the book *Discourse on the Testimony of the Golden Immortals*.³ Lord Wu of the Salt Monopoly Office,⁴ having delighted in its words, wrote an introduction for it. When I arrived in Wancheng⁵ to pay my respects by affixing my seal to it, I also asked to write a preface to the *Huiming Jing*.

In reviewing its table of contents, [you will see that] from “The Chart of the End of Leakage” to “Resolving Doubts,” there are in all fourteen sections. Its words say that if you do not understand *xing* 性 and *ming* 命, then the Great Tao will not be achieved. Since the ancient Buddhas and patriarchs, there have been none who did not arise from the cultivating and refining of *xing* and *ming*. “Cultivating” is mending and making whole what is broken. “Refining” is using fire to transform the Substance.⁶ If there is fire but no wind, it will not burn. If the Substance does not have a place, it loses its abode. For this reason, does not the Realized One participate in the Great Tao? Does he not cultivate *xing*

² That is, in their desire to produce children they exalt life.

³ This text can be found in Liu Huayang 柳華陽, *Jinxian zheng lun* 金仙証論, *Wu-Liu xianzong* 伍柳仙宗 (Henan: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1987) 542–723.

⁴ Whenever possible, translations of official titles have been taken from Charles Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1985).

⁵ 皖城. Present-day Qianshan county 潛山縣 in Anqing city 安慶市, Anhui 安徽.

⁶ *Wu* 物. This term is of central importance to this text, referring to the object of cultivation. It is associated with *huiming* 慧命, *ming* 命, *qi* of the Prior Realm (*xiantian zhi qi* 先天之炁) and Primordial *Qi* (*yuanqi* 元炁) throughout the text. In other inner alchemical (*neidan* 內丹) texts, it may be referred to as the Medicine (*yaowu* 藥物).

and *ming*? Wind and fire are used together equally on the Substance. When the heart⁷ and kidneys unite, this is none other than *xing* and *ming* uniting into one. *Ming* is rooted in the kidneys, and when the kidneys move there is water. *Xing* is rooted in the heart, and when the heart moves there is fire. Entering fire into water, *huiming* 慧命 is then not
 2a squandered outside. Blowing fire with wind changes it into the True Seed.⁸ Cultivating the True Seed, one then achieves *Śarīra*.⁹ This is the general meaning.

The real stages of work include the time of starting work, the time of transitional work, the time of completing work and the time of letting go of work. It adheres to the End of Leakage¹⁰ of *Śūraṅgama*,¹¹ expresses the mysterious intent of *Avatamsaka*,¹² and unites the scattered words of the various sutras. If you understand these heavenly Inner Workings¹³ of dual cultivation,¹⁴ do not indulge in deviant teachings, and with a dedicated heart¹⁵ fully abide in this book only, from now on you will realize the Tao and your longevity will be everlasting.

⁷ In this text (and others), translation of the word *xin* 心 can be challenging, as the Chinese presents a range of meaning that includes both the English words “heart” and “mind.” To adequately reflect the physical component of the system of training described in this text, I have used “heart” or “heart-and-mind” rather than “mind” wherever possible.

⁸ *Zhenzhong* 真種.

⁹ *Sheli* 舍利. In Buddhism, this term normally refers to relics of the Buddha, but in this text and many Taoist *neidan* 內丹 texts, it refers to an inner substance and level of attainment in the training process.

¹⁰ *Loujin* 漏盡.

¹¹ *Lengyan* 楞嚴. That is, the *Śūraṅgama-sūtra*.

¹² *Huayan* 華嚴. That is, the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*.

¹³ *Ji* 機.

¹⁴ *Shuangxiu* 雙修. This is a common phrase which normally refers to the dual cultivation of *xing* 性 and *ming* 命.

¹⁵ *Poxin* 婆心. This is a *Chan* 禪 term referring to measureless dedication in teaching the *dharma*.

How could one think that Huayang is inferior to the disciple of the Buddha, Kāśyapa,¹⁶ who lived in the world seven hundred years before he met the World-Honoured One, or to the Monk Baozhang,¹⁷ who lived in the world one thousand seven hundred and twelve years before he met Bodhidharma? Since *Chan* 禪 Master Jiwu¹⁸ there has been no one with the ability of Huayang to use simplicity to explain the utmost of the Tao and to disclose its secret principles, thereby transmitting the limitless to later generations.

Consequently, I was glad to receive and write a preface for [this text], and moreover donate all its printing blocks.

2b

Preface written the day of gengshen in the beginning of winter in the year jiyin of in the reign of the emperor Qianlong,¹⁹ by Sun Tingbi, Principal Graduate of the Metropolitan Examination granted by the Emperor title of Third Graduate of the Palace Examination, consequently given the rank of Palace Guardsman, bestowed with the title of Grand Master for Thorough Counsel, formerly holding the post of Regional Commander of the Garrison of Huangyan²⁰ in the province of Zhejiang, also bestowed with the title of General of Military Brilliance, and acting as Assistant Vice General of Anqing.²¹

¹⁶ Jiashe 迦葉. This seems to refer to Mahākāśyapa, one of the ten great disciples of Śākyamuni.

¹⁷ Baozhang Heshang 寶掌和尚. An Indian monk said to arrive in China between the Wei 魏 (220–265 CE) and Jin 晉 (265–420 CE) dynasties, who is then said to have died in 657 CE.

¹⁸ 寂無. I have been unable to locate any information concerning this figure beyond what appears in the text.

¹⁹ The 18th of November, 1794.

²⁰ Present-day Huangyan county 黃巖縣 in Taizhou prefecture 台州地區, Zhejiang 浙江.

²¹ Present-day Anqing city 安慶市, Anhui 安徽.

Author's Introduction to the *Huiming Jing*

3a I, Huayang, was a villager from Hongdu.²² As a youth I delighted in Buddhism, so I entered a temple and had an awakening. My thoughts were constantly beyond the mundane world, and whenever I saw the monks I was happy.

One day, I heard the temple master say, "Before, at the third watch,²³ the Fifth Patriarch used to privately teach the Tao to the Sixth Patriarch, who would blissfully listen with his ear cocked."²⁴ I awoke as if from a dream, and only then did I realize that those who cultivate themselves must rely on a teacher. Consequently, I searched without stopping, my feet leaving tracks throughout Chu,²⁵ but through that time I did not meet anyone. After that I joined the Double Lotus Temple [on the River] Wanshui²⁶ where I shaved my head [to become a monk]. There, I enquired further, and of all the teachers from the three religions there were none I did not investigate. In the end, however, none understood the principles of *huiming*.

As a result I sighed to myself, "Human form is difficult to obtain. Am I to pass my life in vain?" Abruptly, I took a vow to prostrate myself every evening at the drum of the

²² Present-day Nanchang city 南昌市, Jiangxi 江西.

²³ Midnight.

²⁴ This is a reference to the Fifth Patriarch, Hong Ren 弘忍 (601–674 CE), secretly teaching the Sixth Patriarch, Hui Neng 慧能 (638–713 CE).

²⁵ Present-day Hunan 湖南 and Hubei 湖北.

²⁶ A tributary of the Yangtze River, in Anhui 安徽. This could refer to the name of a town, however I have located no reference to the existence of a town by this name.

3b second watch,²⁷ swear devotion and kow-tow to heaven. I would then surely receive what I sought.

Half a year later, luckily I met Master Wu Chongxu,²⁸ who transmitted the secret meaning to me. With a shock, I completely awoke and understood the Tao of *huiming*, and that it is none other than my original numinous Substance. I continued on until I reached Kuanglu,²⁹ and then met Teacher Huyun.³⁰ I secretly listened to his introductory discourse, and knew this was an extraordinary man. Diligently and earnestly I listened and learned.

Because of my continual mournful pleading, the Teacher finally displayed his broad compassion, and opened my understanding of the subtle and obscure and the mysterious centres therein. There was nothing I did not penetrate completely. When I was on the point of leaving, my Teacher instructed me, "Buddhist dual cultivation now has already disappeared. You must maintain its lifeline in order to save those who have the karmic affinity."

I secretly journeyed to Jiangzuo.³¹ Together with two or three Taoist companions we burned incense and cultivated ourselves, studying in detail, and as a result Bichan, Liaoran, Qiongyu and Zhenyuan³² attained *Śarīra*.

²⁷ 10 p.m.

²⁸ Wu Chongxu 伍冲虚 was born in 1574 and died in 1644, so it appears that Liu is claiming to have met him after his death.

²⁹ This is an alternate name for Mount Lu 廬, which is located in the north of Jiangxi 江西, near its border with Anhui 安徽.

³⁰ I have been unable to locate any other information on this person.

³¹ The area corresponding roughly to today's Jiangsu 江蘇.

³² Liaoran, Qiongyu and Zhenyuan are referred to as questioners of Liu at the end of the text.

Because I had a wordless understanding with my Teacher, I compiled this book, whose title³³ is the *Huiming Jing*. The charts and illustrations establish signs that open up the secrets of the ancient Buddhas, revealing the Primordial Inner Workings³⁴ of the
 4a teacher-patriarchs—they are a raft that will truly guide later generations of students.

I observe among the seekers of the Tao of the world there are the discourse-records of many schools. In these records there is truthful language and there is delusive language. Beginning students do not know the Tao of *huiming* of the Tathāgata, so they mistakenly become ensnared in slogans and superficial oral *Chan*, and end up as base fools, repeatedly reaping harm from these records.

I have thoroughly examined the various scriptures, and verified this with my Teacher: there are the *Śūraṅgama-sūtra*, the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* and the *Platform Sutra*, which are truthful language. The discourses of *Chan* masters and of monks are false language. If the Tao of cultivation and practice is not in truthful language, it is not able to verify the real truth and is not enough to get rid of empty delusion. If empty delusion is victorious, then evil hindrances arise. Even if you have intelligence, there is nothing to follow or enter into.

The Tao of *huiming*, which comes down from one hundred thousand years, profoundly secret and transmitted exclusively, is ultimately difficult to peer into and realize. Now, by means of simple, straightforward language, I will pass on the Treasure of the Buddha,³⁵ offering it as if on a tray to enable followers in the world [to practise its
 4b teachings]. As you examine the *Huiming Jing* it is indeed the same as if I were telling it to you with my own mouth. It is only necessary to rouse your will and dedicate all your

³³ Here I read *ming* 命 as *ming* 名.

³⁴ *Yuanji* 元機.

³⁵ *Fobao* 佛寶. This normally refers to one of the Three Treasures of Buddhism, which are the Treasures of the Buddha, *Dharma* (*fabao* 法寶) and *Saṅgha* (*sengbao* 僧寶).

energy—you need not go to some other mountain to seek further help—and you will be able to establish and manifest the Buddha Fruit.³⁶ This was my original intent in toiling bitterly to find a teacher and awaken to the Tao.

Introduction transmitted in the summer of the year jiyin of in the reign of the emperor Qianlong,³⁷ at Hukou,³⁸ by Liu Huayang of Mount Lu, [written down] at the Temple of Dedication and Purity in Wancheng.

³⁶ *Foguo* 佛果. The state of Buddhahood.

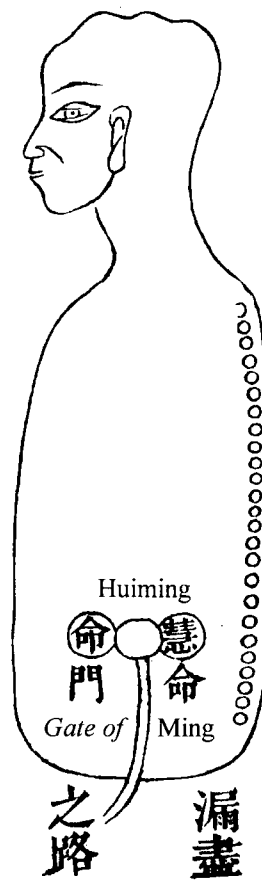
³⁷ 1794.

³⁸ A district in Jiujiang city 九江市, Jiangxi 江西.

The *Huiming Jing* of the Uppermost Singular Vehicle

Chart of the End of Leakage

Figure 1:
Chart of the
End of
Leakage



Path of the End of Leakage

7a *If you wish to complete the diamond body of the End of Leakage,
Diligently decoct the roots of huiming.
In samādhi,³⁹ illuminate and never leave the joyful terrain,
And in time the perfect self will secretly reside.⁴⁰*

7b Now, of the subtleties of the Tao, none can compare to *xing* and *ming*. And in the cultivation of *xing* and *ming*, nothing can compare to returning them to one. The ancient sages and high worthies took the objectives of returning *xing* and *ming* to one and cleverly illustrated them using external phenomena, but were unwilling express themselves clearly and speak directly. Because of this, there is no one in the world who practises such dual cultivation.

The charts I have linked here are not reckless divulgence. They adhere to the End of Leakage of *Śūraṅgama*, express the mysterious intent of *Avataṃsaka*, and unite the scattered words of the various sutras, thereby yielding an accurate illustration so that one may then know that *huiming* is nothing beyond the Opening.⁴¹ In fact, I have set forth this chart because I want fellow-practitioners to understand these heavenly Inner Workings of dual cultivation and not descend into deviant teachings. They will then know that proceeding from this the True Seed is kept, that proceeding from this the End of Leakage is realized, that proceeding from this *Śarīra* is cultivated, and that proceeding from this the Great Tao is attained.

³⁹ *Ding* 定.

⁴⁰ The physical arrangement of the poetry in the original text makes it difficult to immediately discern the correct order of the lines. Fortunately, it becomes clear when we examine the tonal patterns of each verse. For a more thorough explanation, please see Appendix A on page 94.

The charts that appear here and below are copied from the original text, with my own translations added.

⁴¹ *Qiao* 竅.

Indeed, this Opening is in fact the cavern of emptiness and non-being.⁴² It has no shape and no image. When the *qi* 炁⁴³ is expressed the Opening is complete. When its Inner Workings rest, it is far and indistinct. It is in fact the storehouse of perfection and the altar of cultivating *huiming*. We call it the “Palace of the Dragon-King at the Bottom of the Sea,” the “Realm of the Himalayas,” the “Western Lands,” the “Primordial Pass,” the “Kingdom of Ultimate Bliss,” and the “Village of the Limitless.” Although its names are many, it is nothing but this very Opening.⁴⁴ If those who practise do not understand this Opening, in one thousand lifetimes or ten thousand ages they will not find *huiming*.

This Opening is great indeed! Before a father and mother have yet given birth to a person, at the time of becoming pregnant, they first give birth to this Opening, and *xing* and *ming* become real and reside within it. These two things are fused together into one. Bright and flourishing, they are like a spark inside a stove, a mass of the Heavenly Principle of Great Harmony.⁴⁵ Therefore we say the Prior Realm⁴⁶ has limitless cycles of breath. Therefore we say before father and mother have yet given birth, the *qi* 炁 is full and the embryo is complete. When its body moves and the womb splits open, it is like

⁴² *Wu* 無.

⁴³ Because this text uses both the characters *qi* 氣 and *qi* 炁, in my translation I have indicated which of the two characters is used in each instance. In general, when there is a distinction, *qi* 氣 refers to the Latter Realm (*houtian* 後天) form, while *qi* 炁 refers to the Prior Realm (*xiantian* 先天) form. However, the reader will notice that the distinction in this text is often not quite so clear.

⁴⁴ See note 91. It would seem to indicate that all these terms refer to the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

⁴⁵ *Taihe tianli* 太和天理. This is a standard term referring to the *qi* 氣 of the union of Yin and Yang.

⁴⁶ *Xiantian* 先天. The Prior Realm refers to a state of primordial perfection and harmony in the person and in the universe. The Latter Realm (*houtian* 後天) refers to a state of decay—the state of the mundane world and the people in it. Inner alchemical (*neidan* 內丹) training is often described in terms of cultivating a return from the Latter Realm to the Prior Realm.

losing your footing on a high mountain and crying out,⁴⁷ and *xing* and *ming* at this point then divide into two. From now on they leave each other. *Xing* cannot see *ming*, and *ming* cannot see *xing*. After becoming a youth you become adult; after becoming adult you become old; after becoming old you die.⁴⁸

8b

For this reason the Tathāgata showed his great compassion and revealed the method of cultivation and refinement. He taught people to again enter the womb, restore their own *xing* and *ming*, and make their *shen* 神 and *qi* 炁 enter the Opening and unite into one in order to complete the True Seed. This is the same principle by which the *jing* and *qi* 炁 of a father and mother enter into this Opening and unite into one in order to become a pregnancy.

Inside the Opening is the Fire of the Ruler, at its entrance is the Fire of the Ministers, and the whole body forms the Fire of the Subjects. The Fire of the Ruler initiates and the Fire of the Ministers takes it up. The Fire of the Ministers moves and the Fire of the Subjects follows it. When the three fires go accordingly, they then complete a person. When the three fires reverse [direction] and come, they then complete the Tao.

Therefore, sage-hood always proceeds from the Opening of the End of Leakage. If you do not practise this Tao and instead practise some other activity, it will bring no gain.

As a result, all the various schools do not understand that the ruler of *huiming* is within this Opening. By seeking on the outside they exhaust their energies and achieve nothing.

9a

⁴⁷ *He di yisheng* 因地一聲 is a *Chan* 禪 expression that normally refers to an involuntary cry of sudden awakening, of finding that which had been lost. In this case, however, it seems to refer simply to crying out.

⁴⁸ One literary meaning of the term *wuhu* 嗚呼 (“alas”) is “to die.”

A segment of time becomes six phases,⁴⁹

In one period⁵⁰ join the beginning and the end.

The Great Tao emerges from the centre.

Do not seek the Primordial Inner Workings outside.

10b Now, in the marvellous functioning of the Tao, nothing compares to the *dharma*-wheel. Rotating without forming a path, nothing compares to the Road of the Tao. Not waiting for slow or fast, nothing compares to the rules and regulations. Limits and numbers being without error, nothing compares to the method of the phases.

This chart greatly sets out the entirety of the *dharma*, and the true face⁵¹ that comes from the West. There is nothing that is not here. Furthermore, to hold and practise the primordial marvels within it, nothing is better than exhalation and inhalation. For breathing to go and come, nothing compares to closing and opening. To not be outside the path of the Tao, nothing is better than True Intention.⁵² For [proper timing of] starting and stopping, nothing is better than demarcating the territory.

Giving up self to accord with others, I prepared and set forth this chart. It completely reveals the Inner Workings of heaven. If ordinary people receive it, surely there is nothing they will not achieve.

⁴⁹ *Liu hou* 六候. This describes six important locations in the operation of the fire phases (*houhou* 火候), which describe cycles of circulation and refinement of Yin and Yang *qi* 氣. Generally, in inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) these six are divided into three pairs. The first is gathering the outer medicine (*cai wai yao* 採外藥) and gathering the inner medicine (*cai nei yao* 採內藥). The second is advancing the fire of Yang (*jin yang huo* 進陽火) and withdrawing the talisman of Yin (*tui yin fu* 退陰符). The third is soaking at the *mao* 卯 position (*maowei mu* 卯位沐) and bathing at the *you* 酉 position (*youwei yu* 卯位浴).

⁵⁰ One *ke* 刻 often corresponds to fifteen minutes, although in inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) it can simply mean "moment." In the practice of the fire phases (*houhou* 火候), it is said that in this space of time the Inner Workings (*ji* 機) complete one cycle.

⁵¹ A *Chan* 禪 term for the Buddha-nature within.

⁵² *Zhenyi* 真意. See notes 168, 189 and 191.

If you do not have virtuous power,⁵³ even if you encounter the Tao, heaven will certainly not grant it to you. Why is this? Virtuous power and the Tao are like a bird's wings. If one is missing [the other is] useless. You must have dedication, filial piety, humanity and rectitude,⁵⁴ and the Five Precepts⁵⁵ must all be pristine. Only then do you have something to hope for.

11a The pure and subtle marvels in all this are all to be found in the *Huiming Jing*. Those who can practise and observe both [virtuous power and the Tao] will without exception reach perfection.

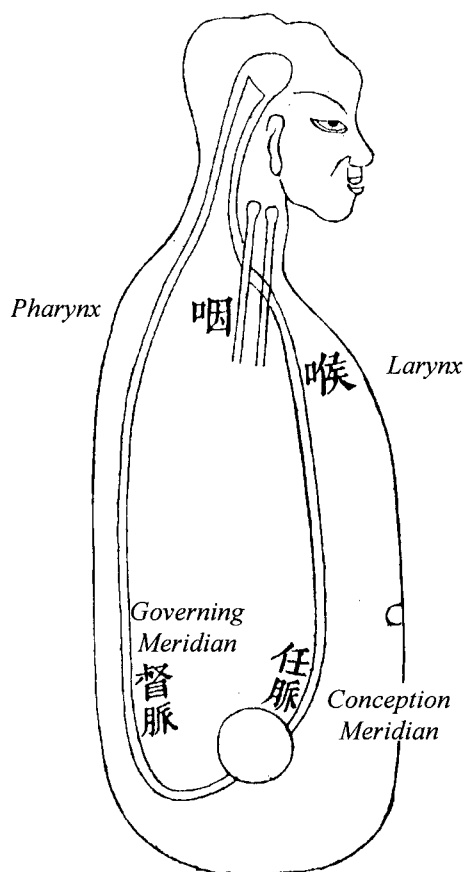
⁵³ *De* 德.

⁵⁴ *Zhong xiao ren yi* 忠孝仁義. These are Confucian virtues.

⁵⁵ *Wujie* 五戒. Buddhist precepts against killing, stealing, adultery, lying and intoxicating liquors.

Chart of the Two Meridians: Conception and Governing

Figure 3:
Chart of the
Two Meridians:
Conception
and Governing



- 12a *Make the path of the breathing of the Primordial Pass appear,
Do not forget the circulation of the dharma-wheel along the hundred
meridians.
Steadfastly direct the fire to nourish the Cavern of Long Life
And inspect and set in order the Pass of Not Dying of the brilliant pearl.*

- 12b Now this chart was initially the same as the two previous charts. Why does it reappear?
Because I am afraid that people who cultivate the Tao do not understand that their own

body possesses the road of the *dharma*-wheel. Accordingly, I prepared this chart simply in order to enlighten fellow-practitioners.

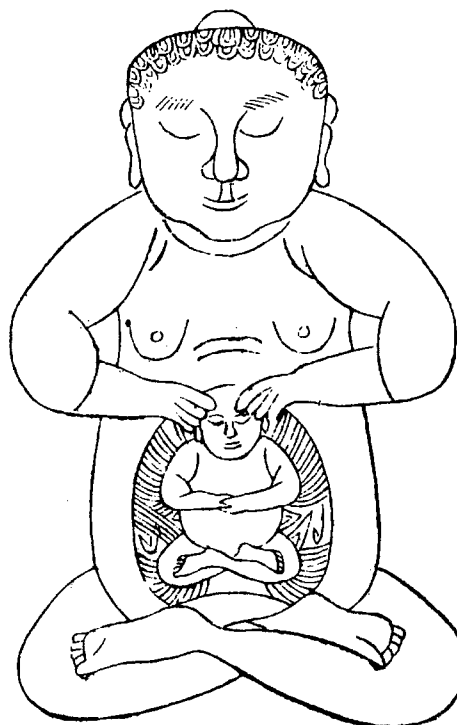
When a person can connect these two meridians, the hundred meridians will all connect. So, when the deer sleeps, its nose enters its anus, connecting its governing meridian.⁵⁶ The crane and the tortoise connect their conception meridians.⁵⁷ These three animals all live one thousand years. How much the more [should this be true of humans]! Why should those who cultivate the Tao, having turned the *dharma*-wheel and thereby set *huiming* moving, worry about not lengthening their life spans and attaining the Tao?

⁵⁶ *Dumai* 督脈.

⁵⁷ *Renmai* 任脈.

Chart of the Embryo of the Tao

Figure 4:
Chart of the
Embryo of the
Tao



13a *With the dharma and without effort, diligently illuminate and penetrate;
Forgetting your body, gaze inward and assist the true numinous power.
For ten months, the Embryo of the Tao is in fire
After one year it soaks and bathes in warmth.*

13b This chart [consists of] the marvellous instructions originally contained in the
Śūraṅgama-sūtra. Common monks do not know the Embryo of the Tao, so for this reason,
from the beginning they have made the error of not continuing [to show] the chart.
Because I am now expounding and holding it up, those who practise may now realize that
the Tathāgata has the Embryo of the Tao and that its true work exists.

Now, the embryo is not something with form or appearance, something that may be completed by means of other objects. In reality, it is none other than our own *shen* and *qi* 炁. First, take the *shen* and enter the *qi* 炁; after that, the *qi* 炁 comes to envelop the *shen*. The *shen* and *qi* 炁 uniting and the intention⁵⁸ then calm and not moving are what is called the embryo. Moreover, only after the *qi* 炁 congeals⁵⁹ does the *shen* become numinous.⁶⁰ Therefore, the sutra⁶¹ says, “Personally uphold enlightened response.” The two *qi* 炁⁶² are nourished, so it says “Daily they accumulate and grow.” When the *qi* 炁 is sufficient and the embryo is complete, it exits from the crown of the head. This is what is called, “The form being complete, sending forth the embryo and personally becoming the Buddha-child.”

⁵⁸ *Yi* 意.

⁵⁹ *Ning* 凝.

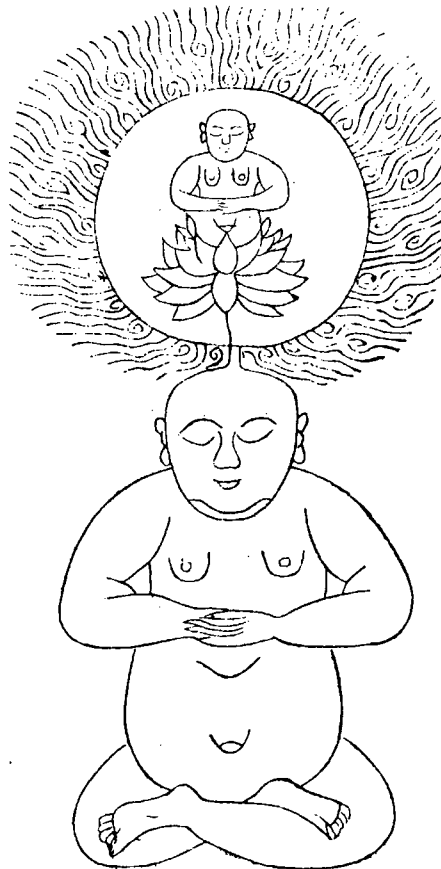
⁶⁰ *Ling* 靈.

⁶¹ That is, the *Śūraṅgama-sūtra*.

⁶² *Erqi* 二炁. This term refers to *shen* 神 and *qi* 炁, to Yin and Yang, to the dragon and the tiger, to the *Yijing* 易經 trigrams of *kan* 坎 and *li* 離 and many other correspondences.

Chart of Sending Forth the Embryo

Figure 5:
Chart of
Sending Forth
the Embryo



14a

Outside the body there is a body called the mark of Buddha;⁶³

*The numinous power of consciousness is non-consciousness; this is in fact
Bodhi.⁶⁴*

⁶³ *Foxiang* 佛相, Sanskrit *lakṣaṇa*. Normally, this refers to marks and features on the Buddha's body that allow him to be recognized. The Buddha is often said to have thirty-two characteristic physiological marks.

⁶⁴ *Puti* 菩提. That is, perfect wisdom.

The lotus of one thousand petals⁶⁵ is transformed from qi 炁,

The dazzle of the hundred lights owes itself to of the congealing of shen.

14b The *Śūraṅgama-mantra* says:

At that time, the World-Honoured One emitted from his curl of flesh one hundred beams of precious light. From within the light sprang out a precious lotus of one thousand petals. The Tathāgata of Transformations was seated inside the precious flower. From the crown of his head radiated ten beams of hundred-jewelled light which shone everywhere. The great crowd looked up at the light-emitting Tathāgata, who was pronouncing sacred mantras.

This was in fact the appearance of the Yang spirit,⁶⁶ and so it was named the Buddha-child.

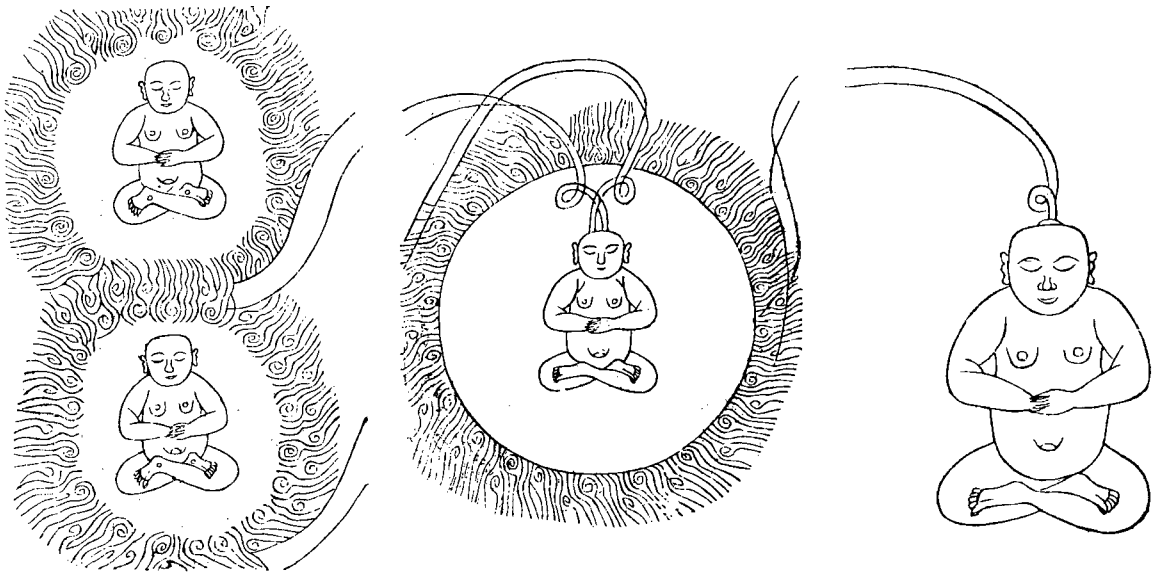
If you do not obtain the Tao of *huiming*, in stale solitude and superficial oral *Chan*, how will you have [this] in your own body? How could you come to say that the Tao of the World-honoured one is a lesser way [Tao]? This, then, reveals the secrets of *Śūraṅgama* and explains them for later generations of followers. Those who attain this Tao will immediately pass into the sacred realm and will not tumble into the dust of the mundane.

⁶⁵ Normally, this term refers to the Buddha's throne.

⁶⁶ *Yangshen* 陽神.

Chart of the Transformation Body

Figure 6: Chart of the Transformation Body



15a When the separated consciousness⁶⁷ takes form, you can discern its form and marks;⁶⁸

The shared numinous power manifests its signs and transforms into emptiness and non-being.

16a Depart from being⁶⁹ and enter non-being so to uphold the marvellous Tao.

The separate forms, exposed, share in the True Source.

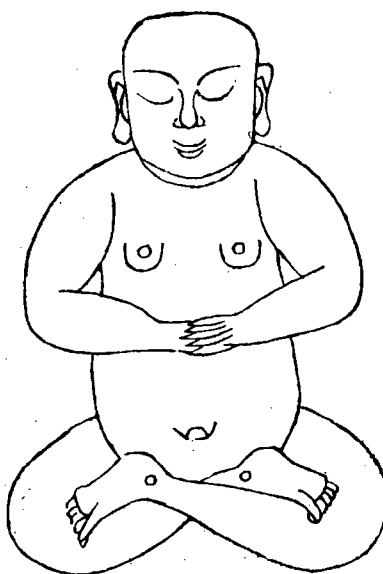
⁶⁷ Nian 念.

⁶⁸ Sexiang 色相 normally refers to the form and marks manifested by the Buddha.

⁶⁹ You 有.

Chart of Facing the Wall⁷⁰

Figure 7:
Chart of
Facing the
Wall



16b

*The fire of shen transforms the body into vacant form and marks;
The light of xing shines back inward, restoring primordial perfection.
The mind seal⁷¹ hangs in the void and the image of the moon is clear;
The raft reaches the [opposite] shore⁷² and the light of the sun is bright.*

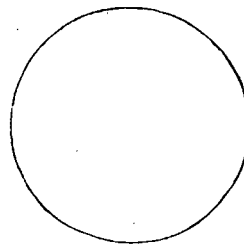
⁷⁰ *Mianbi* 面壁. This means to sit in meditation with the face to the wall, as Bodhidharma did for nine years without uttering a word. These nine years are also sometimes understood as the work of reverting the alchemical elixir (*dan* 丹) nine times.

⁷¹ *Xinyin* 心印. Wordless, enlightened understanding passed from master to disciple.

⁷² *Fazhou dao an* 筏舟到岸. This refers to attaining enlightenment.

Chart of Dissolution into Empty Void

*Figure 8:
Chart of
Dissolution
into Empty
Void*



17a

Not arising, not perishing,

Without past, without future;

A single beam of brilliant light penetrates the dharma-realm,

Forgetting both calm and clarity is the most numinous emptiness.

The empty void illuminates and penetrates, the heavenly heart gleams,

The water of the sea is still and pure, in its depths the moon dissolves,

The clouds disperse in the azure sky, the colour of the mountains is clear,

Wisdom returns to Chan and samādhi, the moon's disc is alone.

The *Huiming Jing*

Collected Explanations of the *Huiming Jing*

1a Huayang said:

To attain Buddhahood and become a patriarch is your original nature⁷³ and numinous light. [But] if you do not manage to End the Leakage of *huiming*, you will not realize the

2a Tao and directly enter the Great Void of the Tathāgata.⁷⁴ ♦ And if you End the Leakage of *huiming* but do not receive the method of refining with wind and fire, you cannot unite and congeal⁷⁵ and attain the Great Tao. ♦

2b Accordingly, is this not evidence of the true transmission of the work in stages⁷⁶ of the Buddhist method? ♦ [But some] foolishly take a single saying or half a sentence to be the Tao! ♦ And from eons ago until now, they have all been the blind leading the blind,

⁷³ *Benxing* 本性.

⁷⁴ I have used the “♦” symbol to denote the locations of commentaries in the original text.

⁷⁵ *Hehe ningji* 和合凝集.

⁷⁶ The commentary to this section describes the stages of training as follows: “At the time of beginning is the work of uniting the True Seed. At the time of transition is the work of cultivating *Śarīra*. At the time of completion is the work of warming and nourishing the Embryo of the Tao. At the time of letting go is the work of releasing the embryo and facing the wall.”

ensnaring immeasurable numbers of believers deep into the Nine Springs of Hell, where in the end they cannot lift their heads to see the Buddha's radiance. ♦

- 3b Now, the teachings of the Great Canon were originally complete and perfect. However, because there are novices with shallowness and depth, with [karmic] roots that are keen and dull, when you encounter them they are of mixed character from beginning to end and are certainly not willing to complete the successive stages [of the work]. ♦ Also, all the later patriarchs were unwilling to fully reveal and discuss what they received and used
- 4a to achieve success. ♦ Some manifested themselves in non-interference⁷⁷ and concealed themselves in activity.⁷⁸ ♦ Some manifested themselves in non-substance⁷⁹ and
- 5a concealed themselves in Substance.⁸⁰ ♦ Some manifested themselves in inactivity⁸¹ and concealed themselves in activity.⁸² ♦ Some manifested themselves in the Lesser Vehicle

⁷⁷ *Wuwei* 無爲.

⁷⁸ *Youwei* 有爲. According to the commentary to this section, non-interference (*wuwei* 無爲) is part of the later stages of training and involves nourishing the Embryo of the Tao and facing the wall (see charts). Activism (*youwei* 有爲) is part of the earlier stages of training, involves the congealing and uniting of *huiming*, and is the “marvellous functioning of the intention (*yi* 意) and *qi* 炁 of the Prior Realm.” Although activism is illusory, if it is abandoned the student will not succeed, and although non-interference is real, if it is hastened the fruits of sage-hood will be difficult to produce. Activism prepares the student to grasp the product of non-interference. As an example of the relationship between the two, heaven and earth are said to be non-interference, while that by which heaven and earth produce the myriad things is said to be activism.

⁷⁹ *Wuwu* 無物.

⁸⁰ *Youwu* 有物. The commentary here associates non-substance (*wuwu* 無物) with work of *xing* in the later stages of training, and substance (*youwu* 有物) with work of *ming* in the earlier stages of training. The Substance (*wu* 物) is mentioned throughout the text and is described here as the “root of the Tao” (*dao zhi genben* 道之根本), the “bridge of the *dharma*” (*fa zhi jinliang* 法之津梁), the “pure Yang perfectly hard *qi* 炁 of the Prior Realm” (*xiantian chunyang zhigang zhi qi* 先天純陽至剛之炁) and the *bodhi*-seed (*puti zhongzi* 菩提種子).

⁸¹ *Wushi* 無事.

⁸² *Youshi* 有事. According to the commentary here, inactivity (*wushi* 無事) is a method for subduing the multitudes and is the method of the Lesser Vehicle (*xiaosheng* 小乘, Sanskrit *hīnayāna*). Activity (*youshi* 有事) is a secret, hidden teaching and is the method of the Greater Vehicle (*dasheng* 大乘, Sanskrit *mahāyāna*). It is the activity of the Inner Workings and the production of substance. It is in fact the

5b and concealed themselves in the Greater Vehicle.⁸³ ♦ Some have ease of speech and simplicity of explanation. You should learn well each successive stage—they should not be regarded presumptuously. You should enquire after enlightenment without doubts and repeatedly seek for evidence. As for those who compel their followers to hold skewed views, who seek doctrine from the mouths of fools, how could they be criticized unjustly? ♦

I therefore say, “Cast off the ordinary and leave its dust, and seek surpassing
6a knowledge.”⁸⁴ ♦ Cut off lust, awaken to the Tao, and treasure true teachers. ♦ If we rely on others to point out and explain a myriad of methods, it is difficult to peer into our own bodies and hearts-and-minds. ♦ To reach outside and use high-sounding talk is not to
6b attain the Tao. ♦ Brief words and obscure instruction—this is good medicine. ♦ When you receive it, temporarily examine it, looking at it from its beginning. After only a small effort, you laugh to yourself.⁸⁵ ♦

The famed *Heart Sutra* says, “The bodhisattva Guanyin.”⁸⁶ ♦ The *Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra* says, “If you unite and congeal, you will certainly succeed.”⁸⁷ ♦ The *Platform Sutra*

application of intention and breathing on *huiming* 慧命 or Primordial *Qi* (*yuanqi* 元炁) so when it arises it does not disperse.

⁸³ In the commentary here, as above, the Lesser Vehicle is associated with expedient methods, while the Greater Vehicle is associated with the cultivation of *huiming* 慧命.

⁸⁴ In the commentary, “surpassing knowledge” (*guozhi* 過知) describes those who have received secret instruction.

⁸⁵ According to the commentary, concentrating the heart-and-mind (*xin* 心) and using the breath will cut the roots of excess. The practitioner smiles because the intention (*yi* 意) and *qi* 炁 unite, the heart-and-mind stills and the body freshens.

⁸⁶ According to the commentary, this sentence refers to the cultivation of the two Substances (*er wu* 二物) into one Substance. “To observe” (*guan* 觀) is identified with *xing* 性 or original nature (*benxing* 本性), and “the bodhisattva” (*pusa* 菩薩) is identified with *ming* 命 or *huiming* 慧命. The two become one through the process of uniting and congealing (*hehe ningji* 和合凝集). After they fuse and flourish, thought (*nian* 念) or “intelligent nature” (*shixing* 識性), which is called “intelligent spirit” (*shishen* 識神) elsewhere in the text, dies. In its place, Buddha-nature (*foxing* 佛性), which is called Primordial *Shen* (*yuanshen* 元神) in the rest of the text, arises.

- 8b of the Sixth Patriarch says, “The emotion comes and plants the seed.”⁸⁸ ♦ As well, the
 9b *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-hridaya-sūtra*⁸⁹ says, “Time.”⁹⁰ ♦ The World-Honoured One said,
 10a “Preach the *dharma* in the Palace of the Dragon-King of *Jietuo* 竭陀.”⁹¹ ♦ The *Chan*
 10b Master Yuantong⁹² said, “Hide the body in the Northern Dipper.”⁹³ ♦ The *Chan* Master
 Jiwu said, “If you congeal and gather the *shen* into the Opening, the *qi* 炁 will follow the
 11a going of the *shen* and spontaneously return to this place.”⁹⁴ ♦ He also said, “Do not
 interrupt the work and let each breath return there. In about one or two months you will
 11b then be able to feel glowing, warm *qi* 炁 revolving inside the Opening.”⁹⁵ ♦ The
 Tathāgata of Clear Light said, “Once the Golden Child awakens and abandons the royal
 palace,⁹⁶ imperceptibly the rhinoceros is in the *dharma*-sea. If you want to find it, return it

⁸⁷ According to the commentary, in “uniting” (*hehe* 和合), *he* 和 is when the Yin *qi* 炁 in the heart goes and unites with the Yang *qi* 炁 in the kidneys, and *he* 合 is when the Yang *qi* 炁 in the kidneys receives the Yin *qi* 炁 from the heart. In “congealing” (*ningji* 凝集), *ning* 凝 is congealing the *shen* (*ning shen* 凝神), and *ji* 集 is assembling *ming* (*ji ming* 集命).

⁸⁸ According to the commentary, the emotion (*qing* 情) is the beginning move of the Heavenly Inner Workings (*tianji* 天機) of cultivating *huiming* 慧命.

⁸⁹ That is, the *Heart Sutra*.

⁹⁰ According to the commentary here, “time” (*shi* 時) refers to the beginning of movement in meditative stillness. It is in fact when *huiming* 慧命 moves by itself in the body.

⁹¹ The commentary after this section says that the Palace of the Dragon-King (*longgong* 龍宮) is Sanskrit for what the Chinese call the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田). I have been unable to determine the significance of the term *Jietuo* 竭陀, although it appears to be a Sanskrit proper name.

⁹² *Chan* Master Yuantong (Yuantong Chanshi 圓通禪師) appears to refer to Yuantong Mingguang Chanshi 明廣圓通禪師, a Qing dynasty *Chan* Master figure from Hebei 河北 whose exact dates are unknown.

⁹³ According to the commentary here, the Northern Dipper (*beidou* 北斗) is the same as the Palace of the Dragon-King (*longgong* 龍宮), and “hiding the body” (*cangshen* 藏身) is the same as “congealing” (*ningji* 凝集).

⁹⁴ According to the commentary here, the Opening (*qiao* 竅) is the same as the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田), and is also called the Furnace (*lu* 爐). It also explains that this is when the *qi* 炁 begins to express and move, and that it can become attached to external forms and leave. By gathering the *shen* 神 into the Cinnabar Field, the *qi* 炁 then follows it there instead.

- 12a to the ancient village.⁹⁷ At the bottom of the *stūpa* at Spirit Vulture Peak you will begin to understand the traces.”⁹⁸ ♦ The *Chan* Master Yuantong said, “The multitude of Yin is fully stripped away and One Yang returns to life. If you wish to see the Heart-and-Mind of Heaven and Earth, you must know the method of availing yourself of Yin.”⁹⁹ ♦
- 12b The *Śūraṅgama-sūtra* says, “If you wish to establish a ritual arena, first find the White Ox of Great Strength of the Himalayas. You can take its dung and spread it on the
- 13b earth.”¹⁰⁰ ♦ The *Śūraṅgama-sūtra* also says, “You must cut off both inner springs of lust and the sensual heart-and-mind. Cut off sexuality¹⁰¹ and it will disappear. In Buddhist
- 14a *bodhi* this can be hoped for.” ♦ The *Chan* Master Jiwu said, “Once the Inner Workings

⁹⁵ The commentary here says that the breath is the *qi* 氣 of respiration, and is what the Buddha explained as “wind.” It is also called the “pillar” (*zhu zhang* 柱杖). The *qi* 氣 of respiration originates in the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田), but most people can only make it leave, not make it enter. When you obtain the true transmission, the *shen* 神 of the Cinnabar Field can meet the breath. They mingle and the *dharma*-wheel (*falun* 法輪) then turns. The number of months required depends on whether you are young or old.

⁹⁶ According to the commentary, this is a reference to Prince Śākyamuni leaving his palace, and is the beginning of the cultivation of *huiming* 慧命.

⁹⁷ According to the commentary here, the rhinoceros is the *qi* 炁, the *dharma*-sea (*fahai* 法海) is the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田), and the ancient village (*guli* 故里) is the Field of the Heart (*xintian* 心田), which seems to be another name for the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮). Returning the rhinoceros to the ancient village is the transformation of intelligent nature (*shixing* 識性) into Buddha nature (*foxing* 佛性). Normally, in Buddhism the rhinoceros refers to *khadga-viṣāṇa*, the rhinoceros-horn, which symbolizes single awakening to sage-hood.

⁹⁸ According to the commentary, *Lingshan* 靈山 is the heart, and the bottom of the *stūpa* (*taxia* 塔下) is the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田). To understand the traces is when, unexpectedly, in the midst of non-being (*wu* 無), being (*you* 有) is born. Normally, Spirit Vulture Peak refers to the mountain where Buddha is said to have given the *Lotus Sutra*.

⁹⁹ According to the commentary, the multitude of Yin (*qunyin* 羣陰) in the body is the Northern Sea (*beihai* 北海) and in the year is the eleventh month. One Yang (*yiyang* 一陽) in the body is the birth of Yang and in the year is winter. The Heart-and-Mind of Heaven (*tianxin* 天心) is the place where Yang is born.

¹⁰⁰ According to the commentary, spreading the dung of the White Ox of Great Strength of the Himalayas (*xueshan dali bainiu* 雪山大力白牛) refers to cultivating the roots of *huiming* 慧命.

¹⁰¹ *Xing* 性. The meaning of this term here is clearly different from the rest of the text.

- 14b have started, congeal the *shen* and enter it into the Cinnabar Field.¹⁰² You should use the Martial Fire¹⁰³ to gather and subdue it, making it return. Fumigate and refine it. When the Inner Workings have not yet started, use the *shen* to illuminate the Cinnabar Field. You should use the Civil Fire¹⁰⁴ to not depart from it but protect it. Use decoction and evaporation [on it]. Only when you awaken and enter like this will you obtain the
- 15a emergence of the True Seed.” ♦ The World-Honoured One of the Śākya House said,
- 15b “Facing the bright stars of the Dipper,¹⁰⁵ awaken to the Tao.” ♦ The *Chan* Master Yuantong said, “Though the hidden body in the Northern Dipper may awaken, few people know the form of breathing to leave the dusty world.”¹⁰⁶ ♦

In these few [phrases] above, the marvellous teaching of the *Huiming Jing* and the heavenly Inner Workings of uniting the True Seed are all present. The work of wind and fire is also not outside this. ♦ I therefore say, “Once you start to congeal *shen*, return to illuminate the Palace of the Dragon-King and completely settle yourself in stillness. Use

16a dual forgetting¹⁰⁷ to wait for movement. Use intention and *qi* 炁 together. Use *shen*-fire to transform. Use the wind of the breath to blow. Use the martial to refine. Use the civil to protect. For a long time, fumigate and evaporate. If for an instant intention and *qi* 炁 do not separate from each other, you have attained the method of uniting and congealing. ♦

¹⁰² *Dantian* 丹田. This refers to an area slightly below the navel.

¹⁰³ *Wuhuo* 武火.

¹⁰⁴ *Wenhua* 文火.

¹⁰⁵ According to the commentary here, the bright stars of the Dipper are the brightness of the *qi* 炁 emitted in the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田), the brightness of the True Seed being produced.

¹⁰⁶ According to the commentary here, the hidden body (*cangshen* 藏身) awakening is the hidden *shen* 神 starting to move. The breathing here is the breathing of turning the *dharma*-wheel, which is the method of uniting the True Seed (*hehe zhenzhong* 和合真種).

¹⁰⁷ According to the commentary, this is forgetting form (*xing* 形) and forgetting intention (*yi* 意).

16b Have you not heard the words of the ancient Confucian scholar¹⁰⁸ who obtained the
 Tao? “Unconsciously Yin and Yang begin to transform. In harmony heaven and earth
 begin to revolve.” ♦ The *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* says, “On the causal
 17a ground,¹⁰⁹ the fruit¹¹⁰ again grows.” ♦ The Tathāgata of Immeasurable Light said,
 “Clearly distinguish movement and stillness and respond to the formless.”¹¹¹ Imperceptibly,
 in the Palace of the Dragon-King is the sound of a howl.”¹¹² ♦ The Tathāgata of Pure
 17b Golden Light¹¹³ said, “At the sea-bottom the form of the mud-ox is half-exposed.”¹¹⁴ ♦
 The *Chan* Master Yuantong said, “If the plum blossoms have not yet bloomed, it is too
 early for it to arise. If the plum blossoms have already bloomed, it is too late for it to
 arise.”¹¹⁵ ♦ He also said, “If it is like this, you endure all hardships. The universe is

¹⁰⁸ According to the commentary, this refers to Shao Kangjie 邵康節. This is Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011–1077 CE), the neo-Confucian philosopher.

¹⁰⁹ According to the commentary, the “ground” is also called the Pure Land (*jingtu* 淨土), the Sea of Bitterness (*kuhai* 苦海) and *udāna* (*youtuona* 優陀那), which means “navel” or “middle.” The text elsewhere confirms that the Pure Land refers to the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

¹¹⁰ According to the commentary, the “fruit again growing” refers to the *bodhi*-seed or the *Śarīra*-seed being produced based on the previous “Inner Workings of the emotion planting the seed and uniting” (*youqing lai xiazhong hehe zhi ji* 有情來下種和合之機). In addition, *yinguo* 因果 commonly refers to karmic cause and effect.

¹¹¹ According to the commentary, *wuxiang* 無相 is *wuji* 無極 (“the Limitless”). The Substance (*wu* 物) is originally formless and arises out of stillness and *samādhi*.

¹¹² According to the commentary, the Palace of the Dragon King (*longgong* 龍宮) is the same as “causal ground” (*yindi* 因地) above, and the howl (*hou* 吼) is the same as the “fruit” (*guo* 果) above.

¹¹³ *Zimojin* 紫摩金 is a Buddhist term referring to gold of highest purity.

¹¹⁴ According to the commentary here, the sea-bottom (*haidi* 海底) refers to the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田). The mud-ox (*niniu* 泥牛) refers to *huiming* 慧命, or the *shen* 神 and *qi* 炁 of the body united into the True Seed (*zhenzhong* 真種). Its form being half-exposed is when the True Seed is about to be produced. The mud-ox entering the sea (*niniu ru hai* 泥牛入海) is a *Chan* 禪 term referring to the dissolution of distinctions, the stopping of breath and the intention possessing a single direction.

¹¹⁵ According to the commentary, the blooming of the plum blossoms refers to the movement of Yang *qi* 炁, which will not ascend if it is gathered too late or too early.

- 18a entirely filled with spring.”¹¹⁶ ♦ He also said, “You certainly must grab it.” ♦ The *Chan*
 18b Master Jiwu said, “All in the Six Unities is like spring:”¹¹⁷ each Substance finds its
 place.” ♦ The Patriarch Bodhidharma said, “In the second phase collect the Muni
 jewel.”¹¹⁸ ♦ He also said, “In the second phase collect the Muni jewel. In the fourth phase
 19a there is marvellous functioning. In the sixth phase do not exert the *shen*.”¹¹⁹ ♦ The Sixth
 Patriarch said, “Go north to receive and meet deliverance.” ♦

The *Chan* Master Jiwu said, “Gather and thereby rise and descend. Follow the governing meridian to rise to the *Niwan* 泥丸.¹²⁰ Follow the conception meridian to descend to the Cinnabar Field.” ♦ The *Book of Changes* says, “Closing the door is called *kun* 坤. Opening the door is called *qian* 乾. To both close and open is called
 20b transformation. Going and coming without limit is called connecting.”¹²¹ ♦ It also says,
 21a “The *qian* lines use nine; the *kun* lines use six.”¹²² ♦ The *Avatamsaka-sūtra* says, “The various Buddhas, in *samādhi*, are able to revolve the marvellous *dharma*-wheel in

¹¹⁶ According to the commentary, this refers to the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田) being completely filled with Yang *qi* 炁. This is when the True Seed (*zhenzhong* 真種) is produced.

¹¹⁷ According to the commentary, the Six Unities (*Liu he* 六合) refers to the entire body. “Spring” refers to the warm token (*xin* 信) filling the whole body. Six Unities is a standard term with a number of interpretations, generally referring to unities within the person, or between the microcosm of the person and the macrocosm of the universe.

¹¹⁸ According to the commentary, this refers to the phase of collecting the Substance (*wu* 物) and returning it to the furnace (*lu* 爐), which is identified elsewhere as the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田). Muni (*Mouni* 牟尼) normally refers to Śākyamuni.

¹¹⁹ See the Chart of the Six Phases of the *Dharma*-Wheel on page 24.

¹²⁰ The *Niwan* 泥丸, also known as the *Niwan* Palace (*niwan gong* 泥丸宮), is the same as the Upper Cinnabar Field (*shang dantian* 上丹田) and is located in the centre of the head. It is the terminus of the governing meridian (*dumai* 督脈) and the starting point of the conception meridian (*renmai* 任脈).

¹²¹ According to the commentary, this refers to the respiration of using the two *qi* 炁 to turn the *dharma*-wheel (*falun* 法輪). Here, *qian* 乾 is associated with exhaling (*hu* 呼), and *kun* 坤 is associated with inhaling (*xi* 吸).

¹²² According to the commentary here and immediately preceding, this refers to the measures in the turning of the *dharma*-wheel (*falun* 法輪).

- 21b response to the time.”¹²³ ♦ The World-Honoured One of the Śākya House said, “Enter the ponds¹²⁴ and soak and bathe.” ♦ The *Avatamsaka-sūtra* says, “In order to walk the Tao that the Tathāgata travelled do not be late or be hasty, examine the truth and walk in accord with the constant.” ♦ The Tathāgata said, “Do not toil and do not be idle.” ♦
- 22a Dīpaṃkara Buddha said, “Constantly turn the *dharma*-wheel.” ♦ The World-Honoured One said, “You should turn the marvellous *dharma*-wheel of thusness.” ♦ The Sixth Patriarch said, “I have one Substance. [It is a pillar that] above reaches heaven and below reaches the earth.”¹²⁵ ♦ [The World-Honoured One of] the Śākya House said, “Sea water bathes the crown of the Prince’s head.”¹²⁶ ♦ The World-Honoured One said, “After the transformation by fire,¹²⁷ gather the *Śarīra*.” ♦ The *Avatamsaka-sūtra* says, “The forms of all true men attain the retractable penis of the Tathāgata.”¹²⁸ ♦ The World-Honoured
- 22b One said, “*Arhats* who are able to not die.”¹²⁹ ♦ The above all describes the work of turning of the *dharma*-wheel and achieving *Śarīra*; is not the Tao of *huiming* completely located there?” ♦
- 23a

I say, “The methods of work of the Tao of achieving *Śarīra* are very many. They are called True *Shen*, the True *Qi* 炁, True Intention, respiration, ruling, revolving. They are

¹²³ That is, in response to time and circumstances.

¹²⁴ According to the commentary here, the two ponds (*erchi* 二池) are the Eastern and Western Lands.

¹²⁵ According to the commentary here, this refers to reaching the crown of the head (*ding* 頂) above and the abdomen below.

¹²⁶ According to the commentary here, the sea is the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田) and water is the Primordial *Qi* (*yuanti* 元炁), which then rises to the crown of the head (*ding* 頂).

¹²⁷ According to the commentary, fire here refers to *shen* 神.

¹²⁸ According to the commentary, this means the *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利) is complete. The retractable penis is a characteristic of the Buddha.

¹²⁹ According to the commentary, when the external kidneys (that is, the testicles or ovaries) do not move, *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利) is attained, and there is no death.

difficult to remember completely. Whenever, according to circumstance, you rotate the *dharma*-wheel, one intention governs the two *qi* 炁.¹³⁰ The method of revolving is in the *shen* co-operating with the True *Qi* 炁, sharing the path. You cannot start with any other focus. At the twelve measures,¹³¹ you completely depend upon the respiration to hasten the revolving. By means of the amounts of the breath you establish its pattern. You gather it yourself in order to return to the root. You must not leave it for an instant. If you leave,

23b it will end and not continue and you will not achieve *Śarīra*.” ♦ Have you not heard of

24a the words the World-Honoured One said to Kāśyapa? He said, “The true *dharma* is stored in the eyes.”¹³² ♦ He also said to Ānanda, “If you do not know where the eye of the heart-and-mind is located, you will not be able to subdue worldly troubles.” ♦ The *Dharma-flower Sutra*¹³³ says, “I will now have you undertake this task. In the end it is not in vain. With diligence and dedication you should practise this *samādhi*¹³⁴ and for seven days your thought should be on this task.” ♦ The World-Honoured One said, “The six types¹³⁵ are shaking.” ♦ He also said, “The curl between the eyebrows that constantly emits a

25a bright light.” ♦ The World-Honoured One said, “The reed sprouts penetrate past the knees.”¹³⁶ ♦ The Patriarch Bodhidharma said, “Snap the reeds and cross the river.”¹³⁷ ♦

¹³⁰ See note 62.

¹³¹ The twelve measures appear on the Chart of the Six Phases of the *Dharma*-Wheel on page 24.

¹³² According to the commentary here, the eyes are where the *shen* 神 rests.

¹³³ *Fahua jing* 法華經. That is, the *Lotus Sutra*.

¹³⁴ Here, the term *sanwei* 三昧 is used for *samādhi*, and not *ding* 定 as in the rest of the text.

¹³⁵ According to the commentary, this refers to the production of *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利). The six types (*liuzhong* 六種) refer to six locations within the body: the eyes, ears, nose, brain, body and Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

¹³⁶ According to the commentary here, this refers to the *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利) traversing the Three Passes (*sanguan* 三關) in the back.

¹³⁷ According to the commentary, this also refers to traversing the passes (*guoguan* 過關).

- 25b The World-Honoured One said, “A single arrow penetrates the nine-layered iron drum.”¹³⁸ ♦ He also said, “The delight of *Chan* is eating.”¹³⁹ ♦ He also said, “Joy in the *dharma* is replete.” ♦ The *Sutra of the Deeds of the World-Honoured One* says, “If you
26a reach the south bank of the River Ganges, you will hold peaceful and steady as Mount Sumeru.”¹⁴⁰ ♦ The *Śūraṅgama-sūtra* says, “Go together with the Buddha and receive a share of the *qi* 炁 of the Buddha. If the Yin body at the centre seeks for the father and mother itself, the Yin token darkly interpenetrates. There is then a person’s seed of the Tathāgata. This is called producing the precious abode.”¹⁴¹ ♦
- 26b The World-Honoured One said, “In between the two realms of the heavens of desire and of sensuality, it transforms into the place of the Seven Treasures. If in the great chiliocosm of three billion worlds you preach the profound *dharma* of the Buddha, you will make the *dharma* abide for a long time.”¹⁴² ♦ The *Avatamsaka-sūtra* says, “By

¹³⁸ According to the commentary, the arrow is the True *Qi* (*zhenqi* 真炁) penetrating the Three Passes (*sanguan* 三關) of the spine. The nine layers refer to the passes together with the openings to the right and left of each one.

¹³⁹ According to the commentary, “eating” refers to the True *Qi* (*zhenqi* 真炁) entering the larynx (*hou* 喉) to ascend to the crown of the head (*ding* 頂), and then returning to the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮).

¹⁴⁰ *Xumi* 須彌. The commentary here explains that reaching the south bank of the River Ganges refers to the refined *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利) entering the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮). See also note 201 below.

¹⁴¹ According to the commentary, this entire passage refers to cultivating the Embryo of the Tao (*daotai* 道胎). Once the *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利) has returned to the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮), the *shen* 神 receives the *qi* 炁 of the Buddha and unites with it. This is “going together with the Buddha and receiving a share of his *qi* 炁.” In the following sentence, the Yin body is *xing* 性, the father is the *qi* 炁 of the Buddha, and the mother is the breathing. These last two helping in the development of the embryo is “seeking for the father and mother itself”. When the Yin *qi* 氣 changes into a body of pure Yang and pervades the entire body, this is the “Yin token (*yinxin* 陰信) darkly interpenetrating.” Finally, the Embryo of the Tao preserved as a Heavenly Perfect Buddha-body (*tianzhen foti* 天真佛體) is the seed of Tathāgata (*rulai zhong* 如來種).

¹⁴² According to the commentary, the heavens of desire and sensuality (*yuse tian* 欲色天) refer to the lower and middle Cinnabar Fields (*dantian* 丹田). The three billion worlds refer to the three Cinnabar Fields: lower, middle and upper. Abiding a long time refers to the work of lodging the Embryo of the Tao (*daotai* 道胎) in the middle Cinnabar Field for ten months.

- 27a means of *samādhi* subdue the heart-and-mind. Ultimately there will be no residue.” ♦
 The World-Honoured One said, “Come according to principle; go according to
 27b principle.”¹⁴³ ♦ The Tathāgata said, “*Nirvāṇa* with residue.”¹⁴⁴ ♦ The *Brahmajāla-sūtra*
 says, “The absolute is fundamental truth and moves in birthless¹⁴⁵ void. All the Buddhas,
 worthies and sages share in birthless void.”¹⁴⁶ ♦ The World-Honoured One said this: “To
 28a be vacant while not vacant is the Tathāgata-storehouse.”¹⁴⁷ ♦ Dīpaṅkara Buddha said,
 “Birth and extinction are extinguished.”¹⁴⁸ ♦ The *Diamond Sutra* says, “The only
 responses of Bodhisattvas are according to what is taught and learned.” ♦ The
 28b *Śūraṅgama-sūtra* says, “When the Embryo of the Tao has roamed, personally uphold
 awakening and response.” ♦ The *Diamond Sutra* says, “As for Bodhisattvas and the
dharma, they should have nowhere to lodge, and act according to charity.” ♦ The
Avataṃsaka-sūtra says, “Peacefully abide in calm and stillness and the knowledge of all
 29a *Chan* and *samādhi*. Enter the deathless Tao.” ♦ The World-Honoured One said, “*Nirvāṇa*
 without residue.”¹⁴⁹ ♦ The *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* says, “Constantly, with clear reflection,
 abide in the highest awakening.” ♦ Dīpaṅkara Buddha said, “Calm and extinction is
 joy.” ♦

¹⁴³ According to the commentary, this refers to cultivating the Embryo of the Tao (*daotai* 道胎) with the breathing.

¹⁴⁴ According to the commentary, here the breath is present and mutually follows the heart-and-mind (*xin* 心). In Buddhism, “residue” normally refers to previously produced karma which has not yet disappeared.

¹⁴⁵ That is, beyond birth and death, or *samsāra*.

¹⁴⁶ According to the commentary, this refers to the uniting and movement of the *qi* of the Prior Realm (*xiantian zhi qi* 先天之炁) and the *qi* of the Latter Realm (*houtian zhi qi* 后天之氣).

¹⁴⁷ According to the commentary here, to be vacant while not vacant (*kong bu kong* 空不空) is to be calm yet to illuminate (*zhao* 照) at the same time. The Tathāgata-storehouse (*rulai zang* 如來藏, Sanskrit *Tathāgatagarbha*) normally refers to the source of all things, both pure and impure, good and bad.

¹⁴⁸ According to the commentary, this refers to the end of the expansion and contraction of breathing.

¹⁴⁹ According to the commentary, this means the breath does not leave or enter.

- 29b I therefore say, “[This is] the marvellous method of *Śarīra* traversing the passes.¹⁵⁰
Use stillness to illuminate and use softness to function. The path is dangerous, so guard
against wandering above or below. Waiting to act, you pull it in. Gently protecting it, you
move. Using the Civil Fire, fumigate it. Using the two *qi* 炁,¹⁵¹ nourish it. Using both
calm and illumination, cultivate it. Using dual forgetting, establish stillness. Then, the
30a method of the Embryo of the Tao is obtained.” ♦

- Have you not heard the words of the fiftieth scroll of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*? “From
the white curl in the centre of his face, the World-Honoured One emitted a great light.
30b This was called the emergence of the Tathāgata.”¹⁵² ♦ The *Chan* Master Jiwu said, “The
Inner Workings at the utmost stage of the embryo where snow and flowers fly and the
consciousness moves and floats up to the summit of the void—do not call this the
Tathāgata’s way of stale meditation. The *dharma*-body emerges calmly and takes
31a refuge.” ♦ The *Śūraṅgama-sūtra* says, “The form being complete, send forth the embryo
and personally become a Buddha-child.”¹⁵³ ♦ The *Dharma-flower Sutra* says, “The
World-Honoured One emitted a bright light from the white curl on his face, illuminating
the eighteen thousand worlds of the East, with nothing not completely penetrated. Below,
it reached Avīci hell. Above, it reached Akaniṣṭha heaven. The South, West and North
were all illuminated and completely penetrated like this.” ♦

- 31b The Great Enlightened Golden Immortal Tathāgata said, “[The World-Honoured One]
emitted from his curl of flesh one hundred beams of precious light. From within the light
sprang out a precious lotus of one thousand petals. The Tathāgata of Transformations was

¹⁵⁰ *Guan* 關.

¹⁵¹ See note 62.

¹⁵² According to the commentary, the text from this point on discusses sending forth the embryo, whereas up to this point it discusses nourishing the embryo.

¹⁵³ This phrase also occurs at the end of the “Chart of the Embryo of the Tao” on page 30.

- seated inside the precious flower.”¹⁵⁴ ♦ The World-Honoured One said, “When you first attain correct awakening,¹⁵⁵ you then enter the Palace of the Dragon-King. Enter *samādhi* 32a for seven days and observe the King of the Bodhisattva-tree.¹⁵⁶ Entering *samādhi* for seven days extends to twice seven and three times seven. In the Forest of Milk enter 32b *samādhi* for seven times seven—forty-nine days—and do not eat.”¹⁵⁷ ♦ The World-Honoured One said, “The method of guarding your thoughts causes you to abide a long time.”¹⁵⁸ ♦ The *Avatamsaka-sūtra* says, “Though you may demonstrate calm and extinction, practise diligently. You will be able to pass beyond the unmoving earth like the sky. Buddha exhorts, from calm and extinction on, the task of broadly cultivating all types of knowledge.” ♦ The *Avatamsaka-sūtra* also says, “Constantly abide in 33a *Nirvāṇa*, which is like empty void.” ♦ It also says, “If your heart-and-mind is always in correct concentration¹⁵⁹ and you eliminate [intellectual] awareness, then with the awareness from perfect knowledge you will from that time, imperturbable,¹⁶⁰ enter formless *samādhi*.” ♦ The *Sutra of Complete Enlightenment* says, “The complete 33b enlightenment of the Tathāgata.”¹⁶¹ ♦ The *Avatamsaka-sūtra* says, “[When] *dharma-nature*¹⁶² is like the empty void, the various Buddhas abide at the centre.”¹⁶³ ♦

¹⁵⁴ This quote from the *Śūraṅgama-sūtra* also appears in the section entitled “Chart of Sending Forth the Embryo” on page 32.

¹⁵⁵ *Zhengjue* 正覺. Sanskrit *sambodhi*.

¹⁵⁶ *Pusa shu wang* 菩薩樹王. I have been unable to locate any explanation of this term. I expect that *pusa shu* refers to *puti shu* 菩提樹 or Bodhi-tree.

¹⁵⁷ According to the commentary, this all refers to the care of the child that resulted from the birth of the embryo.

¹⁵⁸ According to the commentary, this refers to returning to the *Niwan* 泥丸.

¹⁵⁹ *Zhengding* 正定, Sanskrit *samyaksamādhi*.

¹⁶⁰ *Budong* 不動, Sanskrit *acala*.

¹⁶¹ According to the commentary, complete enlightenment (*yuanjue* 圓覺) is when True Xing (*zhenxing* 眞性) returns to emptiness.

The above all discusses the marvellous method of *Śarīra* traversing the passes, nurturing the exit of the Embryo of the Tao, and in *samādhi* returning to emptiness. The

34a Tao of *huiming* is all here. I do not dare call this collection my own discussion of the marvellous Tao—this all gathers the true transmission of previous sages. It is in fact [from] those who, with determination, over myriad ages past awakened to the Tao of the Buddha and cultivated the root of *huiming*. They allowed those who see it to awaken to it themselves, accord with the True Intention of the Buddhas and patriarchs, and having succeeded, to complete their humanity. This, then, is the outcome of the Tao of the Buddha.

¹⁶² *Faxing* 法性.

¹⁶³ According to the commentary, this is the marvellous method of refining emptiness and the secret instruction of returning True *Xing* (*zhenxing* 眞性) to the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮)

10. Direct Discussion on Cultivating the Correct Tao

35a Huayang said:

“Cultivating” is mending and making whole what is broken. ♦ “Refining” is using fire to transform the Substance.¹⁶⁴ ♦ If there is fire but no wind, it will not burn. ♦ If the Substance does not have a place, then it does not have an abode.¹⁶⁵ ♦ For this reason, does not the Realized One participate in the Great Tao? Does she not cultivate *xing* and *ming*? Wind and fire are what are used together equally¹⁶⁶ on the Substance. ♦ Everywhere and forever, all who attain the Tao take this to be crucial. ♦ Why are those who know about this so rare and those who are ignorant of this so many? ♦

If you cling to *xing* but lack *ming* and do not understand movement and stillness, you will generally end up feeble and old. ♦ *Ming* moves and is squandered outside. When it is squandered completely, you die. Where can *xing* reside then? How can the Tao be preserved then? ♦ For this reason, the Realized One examines the cycles of movement and stillness and unites and practises them both. ♦ *Ming*¹⁶⁷ is rooted in the kidneys, and when the kidneys move there is water. ♦ *Xing*¹⁶⁸ is rooted in the heart, and when the heart moves there is fire. ♦ By putting fire into water, ♦ *huiming* is then not squandered outside. ♦ Blowing fire with wind changes it into the True Seed. ♦

¹⁶⁴ According to the commentary here, the Substance (*wu* 物) is Primordial *Qi* (*yuanqi* 元炁).

¹⁶⁵ According to the commentary here, the abode is the Cave of *Qi* (*qixue* 炁穴), from where the Substance (*wu* 物) originally came out when it was born.

¹⁶⁶ According to the commentary, this refers to taking intention (*yi* 意), entering it into the Cave of *Qi* (*qixue* 炁穴), and blowing back on it by exhaling and inhaling.

¹⁶⁷ According to the commentary here, *ming* 命 is Primordial *Qi* (*yuanqi* 元炁).

¹⁶⁸ According to the commentary here, *xing* 性 is True Intention (*zhenyi* 真意).

36b The method is simple. ♦ Those who are aware of it cultivate the True Seed to realize *Śarīra*. ♦ When it is still, wait. ♦ When it moves, take it. ♦ Refine them together in the
 37a furnace.¹⁶⁹ ♦ We therefore say “transformation by fire.” ♦ Go along the road of the Buddha.¹⁷⁰ ♦ Take shelter under the tree of the World-Honoured One.¹⁷¹ ♦ This is called “starting and stopping.”¹⁷² ♦ In fact, the starting and stopping of fire really follows the transformation of the Substance. ♦ When the Yin demons¹⁷³ appear, you must refine them away with the Martial Fire to avoid them hastening danger of leakage.¹⁷⁴ ♦ In clear stillness and great peace, constantly softening yourself, be warmly nurturing and thereby
 37b protect and hold the strength of the precious pearl. ♦ And if you turn the *dharma*-wheel, use the Civil and Martial together.¹⁷⁵ The subtle and fine marvel moreover being located in the Master’s teachings, you of yourself will awaken. ♦ When *Śarīra* is complete, stop the Martial and encircle with the fumigating and assembling of the Civil. ♦ This is called warmly nurturing. In reality, it is likened to protecting. ♦

¹⁶⁹ According to the commentary here, this refinement unites intention (*yi* 意) and *qi* 炁.

¹⁷⁰ According to the commentary here, this refers to the conception (*ren* 任) and governing (*dui* 督) meridians, and is also called the road of the *dharma*-wheel (*falun* 法輪).

¹⁷¹ According to the commentary, this refers to the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

¹⁷² According to the commentary, this refers to not stopping while not yet having started, and not starting while not yet having stopped.

¹⁷³ Yin demons (*vinmo* 陰魔) can be understood to symbolize the Five *Skandhas*, which are the five components of a human being: form, perception, consciousness, action and knowledge. According to the commentary, they refer to Yin *qi* 氣 in the body.

¹⁷⁴ Here I read *loujin* 漏盡 (“End of Leakage”) as *zoulou* 走漏 (“leakage”), as appears in the commentary.

¹⁷⁵ According to the commentary, in the work of turning the *dharma*-wheel (*falun* 法輪), rising and falling is the Martial (*wu* 武), while soaking and bathing (*muyu* 沐浴) is the Civil (*wen* 文).

At this time ♦ the bright pearl emerges and the hundred monsters are annihilated.¹⁷⁶ ♦ Gently transport it along the great course of the waterway.¹⁷⁷ ♦ The

38a Embryo of the Tao is established and thousand-fold wisdom arises. ♦ Warm nurturing allows the *samādhi* and wisdom of the Tathāgata to be verified. ♦ Do not employ [this] wisdom, but diligently cultivate *dhyāna*.¹⁷⁸ ♦ This increases the radiance of numinous knowledge. ♦ In calm and illumination, be constantly awake and aware. Do not follow the regretful hollowness of darkness and dispersion. ♦ Hold and protect *samādhibala*.¹⁷⁹

38b It is situated in the actuality of vacant *xing* and unified consciousness. ♦ When *dharma*-nature is in *samādhi*, snowflakes fly about chaotically. ♦ This is called “exiting *samādhi*.” ♦ In the utmost of stillness of the Great Tao, the Inner Workings of movement are born. This is called “the Northern Dipper¹⁸⁰ returning to be re-established on *zi* 子.”¹⁸¹ The True Substance again moves at the utmost of stillness. ♦ It is called “again forming in the marvellous Tao, once more being established in discipline, *samādhi* and wisdom.”¹⁸² ♦ *Samādhi* after *samādhi* without cease. Reaching the Limitless,¹⁸³ you reach the utmost.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁶ According to the commentary, the bright pearl (*mingzhu* 明珠) is the *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利) and the hundred monsters are residual illness of Yin *qi* 氣 in the body.

¹⁷⁷ According to the commentary, the waterway is the path of the spine.

¹⁷⁸ *Channa* 禪那. According to the commentary, *Chan* refers to stillness and *na* refers to *xing* 性. A standard translation for this term is “meditative absorption.”

¹⁷⁹ *Dingli* 定力. The ability of *samādhi* to overcome all mental disturbance.

¹⁸⁰ *Xuanji* 璇璣. Normally, this term refers to an ancient astronomical instrument. However, in Taoist terminology it refers to the Northern Dipper (*beidou* 北斗).

¹⁸¹ *Zi* 子 is the first of the twelve Earthly Branches (*dizhi* 地支) and corresponds to north.

¹⁸² *Jie* 戒, *ding* 定, *hui* 慧. This is a common Buddhist expression.

¹⁸³ *Wuji* 無極.

¹⁸⁴ *Ji* 極.

11. Direct Discussion on Working in the Correct Tao

39a Huayang said:

When you set to work, locate yourself in a quiet room. ♦ Your body should be like dry wood. ♦ Your heart-and-mind should resemble cold ashes. ♦ Make use of the numinous light. ♦ House *xing* and *ming* together in the same palace.¹⁸⁵ ♦ This is called the Head of the Tao.¹⁸⁶ ♦ Moreover, at the utmost of stillness is movement. ♦ It is the root and sprouts of the Great Tao. ♦ It is the mastery of the making of things.¹⁸⁷ ♦ The 39b *qi* 炁 revolves and the Opening appears.¹⁸⁸ ♦ With the emotion of *huiming*, in delight, 40a face the exterior. ♦ Subdue the interior. ♦ Concentrate on it continuously and keep it in your mind. Uniting and melting, it forms the embryo-source of the True Seed. This is indeed the true transmission of the correct Tao. ♦ [It is] what the ancients called “transformation by fire,”¹⁸⁹ ♦ what they called “uniting,” ♦ what they called “facing the 40b Dipper,”¹⁹⁰ ♦ what they called “sitting cross-legged.” ♦ This explains the functioning of this Tao. ♦

¹⁸⁵ The commentary says to enter *xing* into the Palace of *Ming* (*minggong* 命宮). This seems to refer to the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

¹⁸⁶ According to the commentary, this means to cultivate *xing* 性 with *ming* 命 at its centre.

¹⁸⁷ Here, I translate *wu* 物 as “things” rather than “Substance” as I do elsewhere in the text. This is because the commentary here explains this phrase in terms of things (and beings) in general rather than the specific object of cultivation.

¹⁸⁸ According to the commentary, the *qi* 炁 is the same as the Substance (*wu* 物), and the Opening (*qiao* 竅) is the same as the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

¹⁸⁹ According to the commentary, fire is True Intention (*zhenyi* 真意).

¹⁹⁰ According to the commentary, the Dipper (*dou* 斗) is the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

The achievement comes and the time arrives. ♦ In the centre of non-substance, the Substance is produced. ♦ At this time, not letting it follow its course, reverse it. ♦ Bodhidharma called this “gathering.” ♦ When the Substance has returned to its source, ♦ then there is the marvellous revolving of the *dharma*-wheel. ♦ Start the respiration of opening and closing. ♦ It moves to and fro, from top to bottom. ♦ Establish the Heart-and-mind of Heaven.¹⁹¹ ♦ Follow the conception and governing [meridians]. ♦ Return to the root and restore *ming*. ♦ These are therefore called the fourth phase and the sixth phase.¹⁹² ♦ When the amount is sufficient and the Substance is numinous, then the secret of gathering and traversing the passes is located there. ♦

There are some who gather it when it has not arisen. ♦ There are some who, when it arises, do not take it. ♦ This is because they have not obtained the truth of the secret. ♦ Furthermore, those who wish to receive the truth of the secret must also, with an empty heart-and-mind, seek a teacher and protect and support him for a long time. ♦ Build up virtuous power and relinquish strength.¹⁹³ ♦ Then, the Great Tao may be obtained. ♦ [Use] breathing [that] comes from the furnace.¹⁹⁴ ♦ Also, if you rely on quiet observation with the intention,¹⁹⁵ then the Substance will arise. ♦ The Tathāgata calls this “fire blazing forth in the furnace.”¹⁹⁶ ♦ At this time, Muni reveals his form. ♦ Do not be afraid;

¹⁹¹ According to the commentary, this is the True Intention (*zhenyi* 真意) in the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮).

¹⁹² See the Chart of the Six Phases of the *Dharma*-Wheel on page 24.

¹⁹³ According to the commentary, virtuous power (*de* 德) is the Body of the Tao (*daoti* 道體) and the functioning of *xing* 性. Strength (*li* 力) is wealth (*cai* 財).

¹⁹⁴ According to the commentary, this refers to the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

¹⁹⁵ According to the commentary, it is the power of the intention (*yi* 意) that determines whether or not the Substance (*wu* 物) emerges.

¹⁹⁶ According to the commentary, this is when the *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利) is produced.

do not be startled. ♦ Moving, they work in unison.¹⁹⁷ ♦ Strictly guard against suffering the dangers of treading the path. ♦ Traverse the passages of the Ganges.¹⁹⁸ ♦ Proceeding from the waterway,¹⁹⁹ rise up to the Eagle Ridge.²⁰⁰ ♦ Reaching Mount Sumeru,²⁰¹
 42b descend the layered tower.²⁰² ♦ Go to the Nan Hua flowered world.²⁰³ ♦ Sit in the Precious Hall of ascending to the Buddha-light.²⁰⁴ ♦

Suddenly, there is bathing like clouds in a valley, falling like spring rain. They revolve and gather in the Central Palace. This is called “forming the Embryo of the Tao.” ♦ Be at
 43a peace and joy in the *samādhi* of Great Peace. ♦ Neither assisting nor neglecting, nourish it. Neither calming nor illuminating, warm it. ♦ In stillness and *samādhi*, you suddenly notice a disc of the vast moon appears in this void.²⁰⁵ ♦ Keep it lingering. ♦ A disc of the red sun rises in the centre of the moon. ♦ Receive and store it. ♦ In the stillness of *samādhi*, practise calm extinction. ♦

The site of being and non-being returns to non-differentiation. ♦ It is therefore called “non-interference.” ♦ Furthermore, the Great Tao is limitless. When stillness is at its utmost, it gives birth to movement. The one Substance rises to unite with the Embryo of

¹⁹⁷ According to the commentary, this refers to *ming* 命 and *yi* 意.

¹⁹⁸ According to the commentary, the Ganges refers to the “marrow of the spine,” or spinal cord.

¹⁹⁹ According to the commentary, this also refers to the “marrow of the spine.”

²⁰⁰ According to the commentary, the Eagle Ridge is located at the back of the head.

²⁰¹ *Xumi* 須彌. The commentary says this is the crown of the head.

²⁰² *Chonglou* 重樓. According to the commentary, this refers to the trachea with its twelve segments (in reality, the trachea has between sixteen and twenty segments).

²⁰³ According to the commentary, this refers to *huiming* 慧命 entering the Opening of the Heart (*xinqiao* 心竅) and the intelligent spirit (*shishen* 識神) being refined into Primordial Shen (*yuanshen* 元神).

²⁰⁴ According to the commentary, this refers to an opening (*qiao* 竅) beneath the heart, where after a long time the Embryo of the Tao (*daotai* 道胎) completes itself.

²⁰⁵ According to the commentary, the moon rises from the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田) to in front of the eyes.

43b the Tao²⁰⁶ ♦ and the *dharma*-wheel again turns.²⁰⁷ ♦ In stillness, become further still. In extinction, become further extinguished. ♦ When the embryo is complete and the *qi* 炁 is sufficient, heavenly flowers²⁰⁸ fall in a jumble. ♦ Then, the consciousness in *samādhi* of the Buddha-child should migrate, passing out of the Three Realms.²⁰⁹ ♦ This is called the emergence of the Tathāgata. ♦

When first exiting *samādhi*,²¹⁰ guard against aggression by external demons. ♦ [There is a] single disc of golden light, which is originally the numinous Substance that we possess. Take it and make it return, making it a marvellous medicine of transforming the
 44a body. ♦ Receive and nourish it, and the child then gives birth to grandchildren. ♦ When your aspiration is fulfilled and your activity is complete, conceal yourself in a deep valley. Vanishing completely, return to emptiness and unite with the marvellous Tao. ♦ This is called “The last activity of the Tathāgata.” I wish fellow-practitioners to stop mistakenly entering the deviant ways of superficial oral *Chan* and *samādhi*.²¹¹ Though they assume this is the correct Tao, it is not the correct Tao.

²⁰⁶ According to the commentary, a point of Substance (*wu* 物) of Pure Yang rises from the Bubbling Spring (*yongquan* 湧泉) to the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮) and unites into one with the Embryo of the Tao (*daotai* 道胎).

²⁰⁷ According to the commentary, the Substance (*wu* 物) having returned to the Embryo of the Tao (*daotai* 道胎), it then rises from the coccyx (*weilü* 尾閭) to the crown of the head (*ding* 頂) and then descends to the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮).

²⁰⁸ According to the commentary, this is a sign that the embryo is complete.

²⁰⁹ According to the commentary, the Three Realms (*sanjie* 三界) are the Lower Cinnabar Field (*xia dantian* 下丹田), the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮) and the Gate of the Crown of the Head (*dingmen* 頂門).

²¹⁰ Here and below, if we read *chuding* 出定 as *chuding* 出頂, an alternate translation would read “exiting the crown [of the head].” This would accord with descriptions of the exit of the embryo elsewhere in the text.

²¹¹ *Sanmei* 三昧.

12. Discussion of Meditation and the Inner Workings

45a Huayang said:

In the Tao of the Buddha, *xing* and *ming* are explained as the Dragon and Tiger. The Dragon and Tiger are explained as movement and stillness. Movement and stillness are explained as Meditation²¹² and the Inner Workings.²¹³ Why are these explanations so varied? ♦ The Buddha of Ancient Times said, “If you do not understand *xing* and *ming*, the Tao will not be realized. ♦ Of all the Buddhas and Patriarchs, there were none who did not arise from the cultivating and refining of *xing* and *ming*. ♦

45b Having spoken of *xing* and *ming*, why is it that we also speak of Meditation and the Inner Workings?²¹⁴ ♦ From the time of endowment,²¹⁵ a person’s *xing* and *ming* are a single mass. ♦ When you are born, it divides into the two. ♦ When you reach the stage where the body is most vigorous, ♦ in the Primordial Treasure of *huiming* ♦ there is then a change into Inner Workings of opening a pass outward.²¹⁶ ♦ Do not let it take advantage of these Inner Workings to flow out. ♦ If you shine the light back inwards and congeal your intention to enter it into the Northern Sea, then the Primordial Treasure will

²¹² *Chan* 禪.

²¹³ Despite the order of words in this sentence, the content of the text suggests that Meditation is identified with stillness and the Inner Workings are identified with movement. Also, the commentary here states that “movement is the Inner Workings and stillness is *Chan*.”

²¹⁴ *Ji* 機. Here, the commentary says that when the heart is still, this is Meditation, and that when the kidneys move, this is the Inner Workings.

²¹⁵ At conception.

²¹⁶ According to the commentary here, the *qi* 炁 of the Prior Realm (*xiantian* 先天) in the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田) takes form as *jing* 精 in the Latter Realm (*houtian* 後天) and leaks out.

surely follow the return of the intention to the Northern Sea.²¹⁷ ♦ Therefore, this is called uniting and congealing. ♦

46a Because it possesses following and reversing of transformation, ♦ we therefore say “Inner Workings.” ♦ If we did not say “Inner Workings,” then people would not understand the ultimate treasure of the movement of *huiming*. ♦ Ignorantly sitting in dull vacuity, ♦ in a muddle [some people] reject the true Inner Workings of uniting *xing* and *ming*. ♦ Indeed, as they fall into stale solitude, how will they form the True Seed? ♦

When the breath of the Inner Workings silently shines without differentiation, we therefore say Meditation. ♦ When the time comes where it suddenly moves, this is also
46b called the Inner Workings.²¹⁸ ♦ You must immediately grab it.²¹⁹ ♦ Yuantong called this “stealing.” ♦ Start from the respiration of opening and closing. ♦ Rotate the Primordial Inner Workings of the *dharma*-wheel. ♦ The Numinous Treasure²²⁰ of the True Seed should be returned to the root and deeply hidden.²²¹ ♦ The ancients called this going back to the origin and restoring *ming*. ♦ To have this seed come this way ♦ is called *Śarīra*. ♦ Remove the work of activism.²²² ♦ Use the method of non-interference.²²³ ♦ In stillness

²¹⁷ According to the commentary, when the *shen* 神 is congealed (*ning* 凝) into the Opening (*qiao* 竅), the *qi* 炁 will spontaneously follow it there.

²¹⁸ According to the commentary, this is when the True Seed (*zhenzhong* 真種) is produced.

²¹⁹ That is, grab the True Seed (*zhenzhong* 真種).

²²⁰ *Lingbao* 靈寶.

²²¹ According to the commentary, it should be hidden in the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

²²² According to the commentary, this means to stop the wind blowing and the *dharma*-wheel (*falun* 法輪) turning.

²²³ According to the commentary, this means to use light to illuminate back inward.

and silence, to calm and illuminate it is also called Meditation.²²⁴ ♦ This is called “where the eye of the heart-and-mind is located.” ♦ Then, the pearl of Muni is complete. ♦ Its
 47a body is like cinnabar; its light resembles snow.²²⁵ ♦ It looks like decocted soup; its flavour is like honey. ♦ Active and lively, flowing freely it goes forth from it.²²⁶ This is also called the Inner Workings. ♦ Do not be fearful or apprehensive. ♦ Wait and move and take it. ♦ This is truly called the prescription for skilfully getting the marvellous *dharma*. ♦ Speed up these moving Inner Workings. ♦ Steadily traverse the three threes of the Iron Passes.²²⁷ ♦ This is called surpassing the profane and entering the holy. ♦

When the precious pearl of Muni has returned to the centre,²²⁸ ♦ gently guard it and, in *samādhi*, illuminate it. This is also called Meditation. ♦ In the midst of Meditation and *samādhi*, merrily glows the joy of non-interference. ♦ In the midst of non-interference,
 47b suddenly there is activity. This is also called the Inner Workings. ♦ Why is it that having said “non-interference” we again say “Inner Workings”? If we do not say “Inner Workings,” people will not know that there is a marvellous Substance being protected alone inside the womb. ♦ Following these Inner Workings, gather the marvellous Substance into the embryo. ♦ In calm and illumination, for a long time settling it in *samādhi* is also called Meditation. ♦ This is called “birth and extinction being extinguished.”²²⁹ ♦ In the midst of calm *samādhi*, the one Substance soaring out²³⁰ is also

²²⁴ According to the commentary, this means to collect the *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利) and illuminate it for seven days.

²²⁵ The commentary says that inside it is red, while the light it emits is white.

²²⁶ According to the commentary, it leaves the furnace (*lu* 爐)

²²⁷ See note 138. The commentary here provides a similar explanation.

²²⁸ According to the commentary, the heart descends and the kidneys rise.

²²⁹ See note 148.

²³⁰ According to the commentary, it soars out from the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

called the Inner Workings. ♦ Gradually waiting for it is also called Meditation. ♦
 Following it, again going out from there²³¹ is also called the Inner Workings. ♦ Gather
 and store it. ♦ In calm and illumination, gently and silently guarding it is also called
 Meditation. ♦ In calm, illumination, gentleness and silence, two Substances coming out
 48a from the Bubbling Spring²³² is also called the Inner Workings.²³³ ♦ Taking them, to be in
 still *samādhi* is also called Meditation. ♦

This is called calm and extinction. ♦ Spend a long time in the *samādhi* of calm and
 extinction, and white snow abundantly fills the void. This is also called the Inner
 Workings. As for the distinct Inner Workings of exiting *samādhi* at this time, ♦ do not
 delay. ♦ If you stagnate inside the embryo, you will lack the transformations of
 supernormal power.²³⁴ ♦ You must consequently make it exit.²³⁵ ♦ This is called “exiting
 beyond the Three Realms and waiting in peace.”²³⁶ ♦ This is also called Meditation. A
 beam of golden light shining through this void is also called the Inner Workings.
 Gathering it, make it enter. In *samādhi*, settle further into *samādhi*. This is also called
 Meditation. In *samādhi* a very long time, body and *shen* both transform.

The account of Meditation and the Inner Workings ends at this point. ♦ I hope that
 48b those who study Buddhism stop mistakenly entering into the deviant ways of wicked
 teachers and superficial oral Meditation and Inner Workings. Though they believe these
 are the true Inner Workings, they are not Meditation and the Inner Workings.

²³¹ The commentary says it leaves the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

²³² *Yongquan* 湧泉. This refers to acupuncture points on the bottoms of the feet.

²³³ According to the commentary, two beams of Pure Yang Substance (*chunyang zhi wu* 純陽之物) rise from the Bubbling Spring (*yongquan* 湧泉) to the crown of the head (*ding* 頂) and then descend to the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮). See also notes 206 and 207.

²³⁴ *Shentong* 神通.

²³⁵ The commentary says it exits the top of the head.

²³⁶ According to the commentary, it leaves the mundane body and waits one or two feet away.

13. Explanations of Various Categories

49a Huayang said:

Of those who achieved the Great Tao, none did not receive it due to previously
 49b produced karmic conditions. ♦ Some enter by watching, some by listening. In reaching
 their success, they are the same. ♦ You must also rest in the judgement of your numinous
 heart-and-mind. ♦ Do not be beguiled by deviant teachings and do not delight in
 capabilities from minor techniques. ♦ Be adept at respectfully welcoming others while
 emptying your heart-and-mind. ♦ Do not cling to particular sects.²³⁷ ♦ Seek out the
 50a legacy of instructions from the ancients. Seek a teacher and awaken to the Tao. Use this to
 verify true and false and the junction of teaching and learning. You must investigate the
 successive stages and which methods can and cannot be combined [with them]. ♦ If a
 secret instruction is true, after you practise it you can succeed. ♦ Do not be taken in by
 old practices. ♦ Do not be interfered with by evil hindrances. ♦ Immediately cast off the
 suspicious heart-and-mind and forever preserve the true heart-and-mind, ♦ so future, past
 and present become undifferentiated. ♦

When you see the Substance, your interior awakens and is not confused. ♦ When you
 50b hear its sound, your interior settles in *samādhi* and [worldly affairs] do not enter. ♦
 Tranquil and serene, the shining sun assumes its place in the sky. ♦ Calm and still, it

²³⁷ The commentary mentions that the three teachings (Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism) all have hidden teachers who should be asked the Tao.

brightly shines back inward.²³⁸ ♦ The eight winds²³⁹ do not flutter at all. ♦ Then, the Great Tao can be hoped for. ♦

Now, to attain the Tao, do not proceed alone. ♦ If your strength²⁴⁰ is slight and your *qi* 炁 is weak, you will have no success at it. ♦ You must rely on having virtuous power together with returning to awareness. ♦ When investigating the truth or falsehood of what
 51a your companions are harbouring, you must probe a long time into their motivations. ♦ For some, their lusts overcome their hearts-and-minds. Some plan with the intention of achieving fortune and benefits. ♦ Some cling to their own²⁴¹ abilities. ♦ Some call themselves Buddhas, patriarchs or born of heaven. ♦ By no means reveal the Inner Workings to them. ♦ Some esteem wealth and neglect rectitude. ♦ Some start but do not finish. ♦ Some have good words but evil hearts. ♦ Some are polite but beguile and defraud. ♦ Some have ancestors who are without virtuous power.²⁴² ♦ When you see such as this, keep the truth deeply secret. ♦

51b If you find someone of true character, she will in the end herself [realize] the source. ♦ [She] continuously searches for the secrets of the Buddhas and patriarchs. ♦ She fosters and holds on to dedication, filial piety, humanity and rectitude,²⁴³ ♦ [She] is compassionate, good and saves beings. ♦ She is completely true to the Five Precepts, respects teachers and esteems the *dharma*. To her pledges she stands firm and to her vows

²³⁸ According to the commentary, it illuminates the Northern Sea (*beihai* 北海), which is identified elsewhere with the Opening (*qiao* 竅) or Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

²³⁹ According to the commentary, this means the eyes, ears, nostrils, tongue and intention (*yi* 意) do not move.

²⁴⁰ According to the commentary, strength (*li* 力) is wealth (*cai* 財). See also note 193.

²⁴¹ Here I read *yi* 已 as *ji* 己.

²⁴² The commentary here reads, "If an ancestor is without virtuous power, when his sons or grandsons practise, heaven will certainly not grant them the Tao."

²⁴³ See note 54.

she holds deep. Such a one is called a companion in the Tao who guards the *dharma*. ♦ Then, she will reveal the secrets of the Tathāgata and the Primordial Inner Workings of the Founding Patriarch.²⁴⁴ ♦ What are called “giving” and “receiving” together become correct awakening.²⁴⁵ ♦ It is also said that by bestowing both wealth and the teachings, together you will ascend to the other shore.²⁴⁶ ♦

52a When getting to serious work,²⁴⁷ ♦ select a quiet spot or a famous mountain. ♦ Your house should not be tall or large.²⁴⁸ ♦ Its walls should be sturdy and thick. ♦ Its brightness and darkness should be appropriate.²⁴⁹ ♦ Your drink and food must be clean and untainted to the highest degree. ♦ Buy in advance various sorts of religious implements. ♦ When you enter the room, teacher and students must pledge to establish a common mind. ♦

When the work is complete and the Tao is perfected, you should ramble among humanity and guide the masses of deluded people. ♦ Everywhere bestow the *dharma*-rain of kindness and virtuous power, everywhere aid with the marvellous medicine of ascending to the other shore. [All] beings and self on the same path—this is the wish of the ancient Buddhas, sages and worthies.

²⁴⁴ *Zushi* 祖師. This term can refer specifically to Bodhidharma.

²⁴⁵ See note 155.

²⁴⁶ *Bi'an* 彼岸, or enlightenment.

²⁴⁷ According to the commentary, this is the ten-month work of traversing the passes (*guoguan* 過關).

²⁴⁸ The commentary warns that a large house invites gossip.

²⁴⁹ According to the commentary, if it is too bright, this will damage the *po* 魄 soul. If it is too dark this will damage the *hun* 魂 soul.

14. Resolving Doubts

SIX QUESTIONS FROM [THE MONK] LIAORAN²⁵⁰

- 53a For the first question, it was asked, “Why is it that by worshipping Buddha we will not see attainment of the Tao?”

In reply, [Huayang] said, “Buddha is in the Great Void. Why would he need worshipping? The *Diamond Sutra* says, ‘If I am seen in physical appearance, the people of the world will follow evil ways.’ Consequently, you cannot see the Tathāgata.”

It was also asked, “So worship is useless?”

In reply, he said, “Worship only makes the intention sincere. But it has no involvement with the Tao.”

For the second question, it was asked, “Why is it that by chanting the sutras we will not see attainment of the Tao?”

In reply, he said, “The sutras were created by Buddha. If it is chanting for the sake of the Buddha hearing, why does he need to hear someone else [chanting it]? If it is chanting for the sake of yourself hearing, you certainly should not chant like this. The *Diamond Sutra* says, ‘If I am sought with sound, the people of the world will follow evil ways.’

- 53b Consequently, you cannot see the Tathāgata. ‘Buddha’ is in fact a western person’s name. ‘Confucius’ is in fact a Chinese person’s family name. What blame has the Buddha against you that he wants you to chant [the scriptures]? This can be compared to wanting

²⁵⁰ This person is mentioned in the author’s introduction as one of Liu’s companions.

to take first place in the examination hall. Would calling out the family name of Confucius work or not? The Sixth Patriarch said, ‘When eastern people commit sins, they chant the Buddha’s name seeking to be born in the West. When western people commit sins, they chant the Buddha’s name to go and be reborn where?’ Therefore, what advantage is chanting with regard to the Tao?”

For the third question, it was asked, “Why is it that by undertaking the precepts you will not see attainment of the Tao?”

In reply, he said, “The precepts are [about] violations. They are in fact [from] former times, after the Tathāgata attained the Tao. Because those following him were so numerous, Mañjuśrī merely asked Tathāgata to set up these precepts and make them a method of subduing the lower classes of people and preventing them from causing trouble. The Sixth Patriarch said, ‘If your heart is good, why do you need the precepts? The Great Tao is located in the interior of *xing* and *ming*. These precepts are located outside the skin.

54a The two do not concern each other.’ Therefore, there is no attainment [by observing the precepts].”

For the fourth question, it was asked, “As for ‘the school of hitting seven,’²⁵¹ these days Buddhists proclaim it to be highest. But they do not see attainment of the Tao. On the contrary, all of its practitioners spit blood. Why is this?”

In reply, he said, “From the time the Tathāgata taught and transformed the twenty-eight patriarchs in India and the six generations [of patriarchs] in China, this school never existed. It was in fact fraudulently established by the monk Gaofeng’s²⁵² disciples, and it

²⁵¹ “Hitting seven” (*da qi* 打七) refers to a technique of training to reach attainment within a limited time, such as seven days.

²⁵² I have not been able to locate any information concerning this person.

entraps and harms later generations. Gaofeng is [only] text study and not the Tao of the Tathāgata. Moreover, what they practise is the deviant technique of stopping up the breath. The spitting of blood is because kneeling and burning incense and suppressing the *qi* 氣 damages their internal organs. Sitting and hitting the fragrant plank²⁵³ damages the vessels in the spine. No one, not even the Doctor of Lu, Bian Que,²⁵⁴ could save them. In the near future a Realized One will spontaneously appear to obliterate this school, thereby saving *xing* and *ming* of endless [numbers of] people.”

54b For the fifth question, it was asked, “There are some people who hit seven who proclaim themselves to be experiencing sudden enlightenment of Buddha-nature.²⁵⁵ Now, those who spit blood in turn teach other people to practise this. Is this really experiencing enlightenment and receiving Buddha-nature, or is it not?”

Huayang guffawed and said, “Whenever the Tao is received, the hundred meridians flow and connect in a single mass of Yang *qi* 氣 of Great Harmony. Throughout, there are no obstructions of Yin *qi* 氣. In spitting blood, then, Yin and Yang are not in harmony. This is nothing more than the error of Yin *qi* 氣 being obstructed when *qi* 氣 of fire is full. Moreover, *ming* is not protected. How could they experience enlightenment and receive Buddha-nature? If you do not wait to calculate and compare, this will become clear of itself.”

²⁵³ “Hitting the fragrant plank” (*da xiangban* 打香板) refers to a *Chan* 禪 technique where wooden planks were hit in order to produce sounds to summon people.

²⁵⁴ Bian Que 扁鵲 was a doctor from Lu 盧 (present-day Shandong 山東) who is believed to have lived during the 5th century BCE, and who is considered a founder of Chinese medicine.

²⁵⁵ *Foxing* 佛性.

For the sixth question, it was asked, “The Sixth Patriarch, having listened to sutras, thereby experienced sudden enlightenment, and responses had nowhere to lodge and arise in his heart-and-mind. Why did he need to seek the Fifth Patriarch?”

In reply, he said, “What the Sixth Patriarch was enlightened to was the Tao of *xing*. But he himself realized that the Tao of *huiming* also existed, so [travelling] many thousands of miles he sought the benevolence of a teacher to transmit *huiming*, for
 55a *huiming* requires the transmission of a teacher. Those who seek enlightenment on their own²⁵⁶ cannot receive it.”

SIX QUESTIONS FROM CULTIVATED TALENT LI SIBAI, WITH THE GIVEN NAME OF YUDAO AND THE NICKNAME OF QIONGYU, FROM JIEYI²⁵⁷

For the first question, he asked, “Previously, I, your disciple, did not trust in Buddhism at all. I heard the words of Zhuxi²⁵⁸ that called Buddhism empty talk. Because of this I rejected it and did not grasp it. Previously, a friend, Meng Di, had presented me a book by you, master. At first I did not want to see it. Later, I forced myself to look at it, and then realized that it had genuine effectiveness. With a trusting heart and without suspicion, I practised and maintained it for half a month, and fortunately I obtained the gleaming arrival of the True Seed. Inside my body, I became aware of the eight meridians²⁵⁹ evenly opening up. One evening, the illness I formerly had was cured. Now I have attained *Śarīra*. I am truly fortunate. Your disciple heard a contemporary monk open his mouth

²⁵⁶ *Kongwu* 空悟. Literally, “those who are enlightened in a void,” or those who are enlightened without a teacher.

²⁵⁷ This person is mentioned in the Authors Introduction as one of Liu’s companions. I have been unable to locate any reference to a place named Jieyi 介邑.

²⁵⁸ Neo-Confucian philosopher (1130-1200 CE).

²⁵⁹ For details concerning this term, see “Zhang Ziyang’s Scripture of the Eight Meridians” on page 76.

and describe how he had achieved enlightenment by himself and received *xing*, and that it is not necessary to cultivate and refine. He described how with cultivating and refining,
 55b there can [only] be either attainment or ruin. Are these words true or false?"

In reply, he said, "This is merely scheming for his clothing and food. He is also afraid that others will say he does not have the practice of the Tao, and thereby take away his customers. For this reason, he uses the technique of hooking [people] in. How could this ever have been genuine? If cultivating and refining is not necessary, why did the World-Honoured One have to spend six years in the Himalayas? Why did Bodhidharma have to spend nine years in Shaolin? Why did the Sixth Patriarch have to cultivate himself in seclusion for fifteen years? There is evidence in all these cases. His talk of sudden enlightenment is just a prescription for misleading the people of the world. One day his breath will stop and he will expire."

For the second question, he asked, "In attaining the Tao, is there one method²⁶⁰ of cultivation or are there two methods of cultivation?"

In reply, he said, "For all the millions of Buddhas, there is always one method. When you have yet to obtain *huiming*, there is the [particular] doctrine of each school. After you have obtained the manifestation of *huiming*, it always returns to one. This is what the World-Honoured One called 'discard the second which is not true.'"

56a For the third question, he asked, "When the *Chan* schools of today transmit the *dharma*, could this be the true *dharma* or not?" The disciple also said, "When monks become abbots, they then do not seek anyone [for instruction] as they are themselves senior monks. They climb up into the Buddha-throne and in place of Buddha preach the *dharma*. I do not know what *dharma* this is."

²⁶⁰ *Fa* 法, also *dharma*.

In reply, he said, “Bodhidharma, who arrived in China from India, and the Sixth Patriarch [both] used oral transmission to personally teach. For that reason, the Fifth Patriarch said, ‘Each teacher secretly passes on²⁶¹ the original sound.’ Nowadays, the true transmission has been lost, so recounting on paper the names of certain monks is taken to be transmitting the *dharma*. It is like a successful person calling himself Emperor Gaozu of the Han²⁶² or the Hegemonic King of Chu.²⁶³ This preaching is like small child cow-herders singing mountain songs, and it misleads foolish men and women. When those who understand observe this, [they find it] truly laughable.”

For the fourth question, he asked, “Could reading paradoxical phrases²⁶⁴ to seek to meditate be the true Tao?”

56b In reply, he said, “If it is a deviant school of Buddhism, we therefore say, ‘When they read paradoxical phrases to seek to meditate, they vie to personally prevail.’ If it is the true Tao of Buddhism, you must first practise dual cultivation with real effectiveness. Do not ask about paradoxical phrases.”

For the fifth question, he asked, “What is the reason that people who sit [in meditation] all have leakage?”

In reply, he said, “When people reach the age of fifteen or sixteen, their *qi* 炁 is full and spontaneously flows away. If you do not receive the true transmission, you will not understand using the work of fire. Not knowing how to do the work of fire, how could you have the principle of abiding in yourself? If you want to not have leakage, quickly, in

²⁶¹ Here I read *mifu* 密附 as *mifu* 密付.

²⁶² Han Gaozu 漢高祖, dynastic title of Liu Bang 劉邦, founder of the Han dynasty.

²⁶³ Chu Bawang 楚霸王, title adopted by Xiang Yu 項羽, who overthrew the Qin dynasty.

²⁶⁴ *Huatou* 話頭, the key phrase of a *gongan* 公案 (Japanese, *Kōan*).

the place of leakage, use fire to temper, and make the *jing* transform into *qi* 炁. The *qi* 炁 will rise up and will not be sent leaking out.

For the sixth question, he asked, "People of *Chan* schools of today declare that in cultivating the Tao, leakage is not a hindrance. Are these words true or false?"

In reply, he said, "This is the number one deviant way. The *Śūraṅgama-sūtra* says, 'If
57a the lustful body, the lustful heart-and-mind and the roots of lust are not cut off, you will surely fall into evil ways, and for a billion ages you will never be able to escape.'

Comparing leaking one time with common people copulating one time, the principle is the same. In heaven there have never been any Buddhas or patriarchs with bodies that leak. Where would their *Śarīra*-seed²⁶⁵ have come from? This is something the lower ranks of Buddhist should not discuss."

THIRTEEN QUESTIONS FROM THE MONK ZHENYUAN²⁶⁶

For the first question, he asked, "Where do we start work on the correct Tao?"

In reply, he said, "Where the eye of the heart-and-mind is located." He also said, "In congealing and uniting, you should realize that there must be a marvellous place where it is located. The ancients said, 'In looking back inward to congeal and unite, you must know where it leaves is at the place of *ming*.'"

For the second question, he asked, "At what time should we start work?"

In reply, he said, "If the Substance is there, then start work. The Founding Patriarch

²⁶⁵ *Shelizi* 舍利子. This has the same meaning as *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利).

²⁶⁶ This person is also mentioned in the author's introduction as one of Liu's companions.

57b said, 'The treasured, natural Substance [is present] and is alone with no companions. There is also no mind and no intention, and the Substance is stored in the middle of the sea. When it moves, you are aware of it.' At this time, then, start work."

For the third question, he asked, "In what the ancients called, 'having the dragon descend and subdue the tiger,' what are the dragon and tiger?"

In reply, he said, "The dragon is the numinous consciousness in the centre of the heart. The tiger is the warm token in the centre of the Sea of *Qi* 氣. If you want the dragon and tiger to descend and be subdued, you must first house the dragon in the cavern of the tiger, next return the tiger to the cave of the dragon, and there will then be spontaneous descending and subduing."

For the fourth question, he asked, "What is 'the fierce tiger leaving the forest'?"

In reply, he said, "It is the Yang Substance moving."

He also asked, "How is it subdued?"

In reply, he said, "Control it with the dragon and blow it with wind."

For the fifth question, he asked, "What is the True Seed?"

In reply, he said, "It is the dragon and tiger united and refined into one Substance.

58a Afterward, there is movement of its Inner Workings. It is therefore called the True Seed."

For the sixth question, he asked, "What is the *Śarīra*-seed?"

In reply, he said, "In the method of refinement where the True Seed is produced and the *dharma*-wheel is thereby obtained, it is none other than the count being complete and the external kidneys²⁶⁷ not lifting. We therefore name it *Śarīra*-seed."

²⁶⁷ In men, this refers to the testicles. In women, this refers to the ovaries.

For the seventh question, he asked, “What is the pearl of Muni?”

In reply, he said, “In the method where *Śarīra* is produced and you are thereby able to traverse it through the Three Passes behind, it is none other than it returning to the Central Palace. We therefore name it the pearl of Muni. When the ancients say, ‘The three threes²⁶⁸ in front and the three threes behind,’ it is in fact this.”

For the eighth question, he asked, “What is the Embryo of the Tao?”

In reply, he said, “It is when the pearl of Muni returns to the Central Palace and with the intention uniting two into one. The intention locating itself in the centre of the pearl is the same as a magnet pulling iron. We therefore name it Embryo of the Tao.”

58b For the ninth question, he asked, “What are the six powers?”²⁶⁹

In reply, he said, “First is the attainment of the power of the End of Leakage. After that are the five powers. If you only cultivate *xing* but do not understand *huiming*, there will only be the five powers, and you will not manage to attain the End of Leakage. If you are short this one power, you will not be able to attain Buddhahood, and will only pass the ages as an efficacious ghost.”

For the tenth question, he asked, “What is exiting *samādhi*?”

In reply, he said, “This is when the pearl inside the embryo is refined into a single unit, and when the count is complete it exits by the gate at the crown [of the head].”

For the eleventh question, he asked, “What is the transformation body?”

²⁶⁸ See note 138 for an explanation of the “three threes.”

²⁶⁹ *Liutong* 六通. This refers to the six powers of a Buddha. Aside from the End of Leakage (*loujin* 漏盡), they are “*shen* complete” (*shenzu* 神足), “heavenly eyes” (*tianyan* 天眼), “heavenly ears” (*tian'er* 天耳), “heart-and-mind of another [bodhisattva or Buddha]” (*taxin* 他心) and “*ming* in refuge” (*suming* 宿命).

In reply, he said, "It is the transformation of the body that exits *samādhi*."

He also asked, "How many levels of the method of transformation [are there]?"

In reply, he said, "It is like the movement of the ten fingers of the hand. Whether it is one finger moving or ten fingers moving always depends on thought."

59a For the twelfth question, he asked, "What is the proof of efficacy of the correct Tao as opposed to deviant schools?"

In reply, he said, "When deviant schools speak of attainment, wild talk comes from their mouths with no evidence. As for the correct Tao, when you attain *Śarīra*, then the external kidneys absolutely do not rise or move. When you attain the Embryo of the Tao, the six meridians disappear from the hands, hair that had whitened becomes black again, and teeth that had fallen out grow again. When you exit *samādhi*, there is a body outside the body. In seeking a teacher, you must examine her yourself."

For the thirteenth question, he asked, "If we do not obtain the correct Tao, what will the days following²⁷⁰ be like?"

In reply, he said, "If you plant melons, you will get melons. If you plant beans, you will get beans."

LONGJIANG, ABBOT OF THE TEMPLE OF THE VAST ASSEMBLY IN TAIYI²⁷¹

He asked, "If by means of this cultivation of stillness, miscellaneous thoughts do not arise, can we not manage to not leak and attain the power of the End of Leakage?"

²⁷⁰ This can refer to future lives as well as one's current life.

²⁷¹ I have been unable to locate any references to a place named Taiyi 太邑.

59b In reply, he said, “Cultivation of stillness only cuts off the body of lust and the heart-and-mind of lust. If you are unable to cut off the roots of lust, being unable to cut them off, you will be unable to attain the End of Leakage. If you wish to attain the End of Leakage, you must employ the work of fire and wind. The Tathāgata said, ‘Transformation by fire,’ and said, ‘The wind blows.’ This is actually the true transmission.”

THE MONK SHIZANG, ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY OF
THE BUDDHA OF MEDICINE IN HONGDU

He asked, “When you experience sudden enlightenment, there is no distinction of profane and holy. Your entire consciousness, whole and melded, resembles the Great Void. When you have been still for a long time, your lower body²⁷² fuses and moves, extending to the external kidneys. Why is this?”

In reply, he said, “This is the marvellous place of Meditation and the Inner Workings. When you begin work on *huiming*, you are able to use [this] method to gather it and return it to the original place. That is why it is called dual cultivation.”

²⁷² That is, the genital area.

Zhang Ziyang's Scripture of the Eight Meridians²⁷³

- 60a The thrusting meridian²⁷⁴ is located behind the brain. The conception meridian is located in front of the navel. The governing meridian is located behind the navel. The girdle meridian²⁷⁵ is located at the stomach. The Yin heel²⁷⁶ [meridian] is located beneath the scrotum. The Yang heel²⁷⁷ [meridian] is located at the coccyx.²⁷⁸ ♦ The Yin point²⁷⁹ is located in front of the crown [of the head].²⁸⁰ ♦ The Yang point²⁸¹ is located behind the crown [of the head].²⁸² ♦ People have eight meridians. They all belong to the Yin

²⁷³ Zhang Ziyang 張紫陽 (987-1082 CE) is one of the best known masters of inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹), and was associated with its southern school. His most famous work is the *Treatise on Awakening to Reality* (*wuzhen pian* 悟真篇). This text, *Zhang Ziyang bamai jing* 張紫陽八脈經, does not appear in any of the standard catalogues of Taoist texts, and is not one of the texts traditionally attributed to him.

²⁷⁴ *Chongmai* 衝脈.

²⁷⁵ *Daimai* 帶脈.

²⁷⁶ *Yinqiao* 陰蹻. In addition to referring to the Yin heel meridian, this seems to also refer to the Yin heel point (*Yinqiao xue* 陰蹻穴), which is the uniting pivot of the governing meridian (*dumai* 督脈) and the conception meridian (*renmai* 任脈), and is located at the perineum.

²⁷⁷ *Yangqiao* 陽蹻.

²⁷⁸ *Weilü* 尾閭. The commentary here says "up the three sections." Presumably, this refers to the three vestigial bones of the coccyx (which are normally fused in an adult).

²⁷⁹ *Yinshu* 陰臑.

²⁸⁰ The commentary here says, "One inch and three *fen*."

²⁸¹ *Yangshu* 陽臑. Normally, the eight meridians include the Yin connecting meridian (*yinwei mai* 陰維脈) and the Yang connecting meridian (*yangwei mai* 陽維脈), and not the Yin and Yang points.

²⁸² The commentary here also says, "One inch and three *fen*."

spirit,²⁸³ they are closed and do not open. Only when spirits and immortals²⁸⁴ use their Yang *qi* 氣 to clear them open can they therefore obtain the Tao.

Gathering the Yang *qi* 氣 lies only in making the Yin heel [meridian] first. As for the Yin heel meridian, scattered throughout the *Scripture of the Elixir*²⁸⁵ are many names for it. Its names are quite many. It is called the gate of the female and the door of death. It is called the Opening of returning to the root and the pass of restoring *ming*. It is called the field of the underworld and the root of death and birth. There is a spirit that rules it whose name is Taokang 桃康.²⁸⁶ Above it connects to the *Niwan* and below it penetrates to the Bubbling Spring. The collection and dispersal of True *Qi* 氣 all follow this Opening.

60b The sacrum meridian²⁸⁷ flows throughout the whole body. Full and connected, it harmonizes the *qi* 炁, raising it up to pay court. Yang lengthens and Yin dissolves. In water, fire is emitted. Inside snow, flowers blooms.²⁸⁸ The root of heaven and the cavern of the moon leisurely come and go. In all the thirty-six palaces²⁸⁹ it is spring. Those who receive it have healthy bodies and complexions restored to vigour. It is located in front of *kun* earth²⁹⁰ and the coccyx, behind the bladder, below the small intestine and above²⁹¹

²⁸³ *Yinshen* 陰神.

²⁸⁴ *Shenxian* 神仙.

²⁸⁵ *Danjing* 丹經. In the Taoist Canon, this text appears in the *Yunji qi qian* 雲笈七籤 (HY 1026, DZ 677–702) and in the *Huayang tao ju nei zhuan* 華陽陶居內傳 (HY 300, DZ 151).

²⁸⁶ This is the name of a spirit said to live in the centre of the kidneys.

²⁸⁷ *Kaomai* 尻脈.

²⁸⁸ See note 208.

²⁸⁹ That is, the whole body.

²⁹⁰ *Kundi* 坤地. This refers to the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

²⁹¹ My text has “below” written and corrected to “above.”

the numinous turtle.²⁹² This is the root where heaven and earth give birth to *qi* 炁 day by day, the place that produces lead.²⁹³ Doctors do not know that this exists.

The Secluded Elder's²⁹⁴ additional discussion of the method of regulating the breathing said, "Whenever regulating the breathing by guiding in the breath, you need only congeal the *shen* and enter it into the Cave of *Qi* 氣.²⁹⁵ In the Cave of *Qi* 氣 the *shen* silently abides. Without making the Yin heel [meridian] intersect, it intersects by itself. Without making it meet, it meets by itself." As for the utmost details of what is called "the principle of the *shen* intersecting while separated from the body," the ancient immortals have already described them soundly.

61a The Perfected One Zhang Sanfeng²⁹⁶ said, "Regulating breath is not difficult. Once the heart and the *shen* are completely still, follow the spontaneity of the breath. I only guard its spontaneity. In addition, I illuminate below with the light of *shen*. This is regulating breath. In regulating the breath, regulate and carry the breath of the Yin heel [meridian] across. With the *qi* 氣 inside your heart, unite them inside the Cave of *Qi* 氣 where the *shen* congeals."

The Secluded Elder's third discussion of the method of regulating the breathing said, "Now, uniting water with water, uniting fire with fire, uniting wind with wind, and uniting cloud with cloud is the enduring principle. In regulating the breath, take *qi* 氣 and unite it with *qi* 氣. Why treat it with force? You need only congeal the *shen* and enter it

²⁹² *Lingui* 靈龜. This refers to the penis.

²⁹³ In general, lead (*qian* 鉛) refers to Yang *qi* 氣. Mercury (*gong* 汞) refers to Yin *qi*.

²⁹⁴ In the table of contents, this and the following two paragraphs are listed separately, which suggests they may have come from separate texts.

²⁹⁵ This term seems to refer to the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田). See note 165.

²⁹⁶ Zhang Sanfeng 張三丰 was believed to have lived sometime between the Yuan and Ming dynasties.

into the Cave of *Qi* 氣, shine the light of *shen* down onto the Yin heel meridian and do not wait to unite them. As soon as you feel the *qi* 氣 connect, it will spontaneously be so.”

Nine Levels of Refining the Heart-and-Mind²⁹⁷

62a The first level of refining the heart-and-mind is for refining the heart-and-mind that is not yet purified. A heart-and-mind that is not yet purified has too much wild thought and has too much wandering attention. Wild thought arises out of desire, and wandering attention arises out of ignorance. When students sit in meditation, everything they desire they should discard as impure emotion. Unavoidably, just as wild thought is eliminated, wandering attention suddenly arises. The method [for dealing with this] is in stopping and observing.²⁹⁸ It will then gradually dissolve.

If it stops, it then stops behind the hall of the navel and in front of the Gate of *Ming*.²⁹⁹ In between these two and slightly below there is a circle of empty non-being. My heart-and-mind stops here and practises inner observation of it. The heart-and-mind shines into the void. It combines with the *qi* 炁 and [the two] protect each other. It is held fast between the compass and the L-square, comes and goes inside the square and circle. With every breath it returns to the root and unites with the spontaneous transformations. Majestically and motionless, it sets up the pure and clean dark Inner Workings. From
62b this, a line of light from the heart-and-mind and a thread of True *Qi* 炁 meet each other. Turbid and vast, peaceful and leisurely—this is the beginning work of refining the heart-and-mind and nourishing the *qi* 炁.

²⁹⁷ This text is by Li Hanxu 李涵虛, whose dates are unknown. The title of the next section attributes it to him as well.

²⁹⁸ *Zhiguan* 止觀. This is a *Tiantai* 天台 term that refers to resting the body to achieve clarity of vision.

²⁹⁹ *Mingmen* 命門. A point sometimes described as being opposite the navel, where the alchemical process begins.

The second level of refining the heart-and-mind is for refining the heart-and-mind that has entered *samādhi*. At the previous meeting of a line of light from the heart-and-mind and a thread of True *Qi* 炁, if you can proceed straight to the deep darkness, it should spontaneously penetrate out through the dark Opening.

What is to be done if the heart-and-mind in *samādhi* is not stable? Each time the intelligent spirit³⁰⁰ shifts, the heart-and-mind and *qi* 炁 are distanced from each other and you still cannot see your original face.³⁰¹ The method [for dealing with this] is at the time the heart-and-mind and breath follow each other. You should then eliminate awareness. The heart-and-mind is in the centre of the *qi* 炁 without you being aware of it. As the *qi* 炁 envelops the outside of the heart-and-mind you are not aware. Mingling and blending, you make them into a single item. This is the work of refining the heart-and-mind and uniting the *qi* 炁.

63a The third level of refining the heart-and-mind is for refining the heart-and-mind that has not yet returned. At the previous mingling and blending and making them into a single item, below the layers of Yin, One Yang comes to return.³⁰² This is called the heart-and-mind of heaven and earth. It is none other than the Single Opening of the Dark Pass.³⁰³ At this moment, *jing*, *qi* 氣 and *shen* are all in the Prior Realm. A great mist

³⁰⁰ *Shishen* 識神. This refers to *shen* 神 in its mundane, Latter Realm (*houtian* 後天) form. In its purified, Prior Realm (*xiantian* 先天) form it is called Primordial *Shen* (*yuanshen* 元神).

³⁰¹ See note 51.

³⁰² *Yiyang lai fu* 一陽來復. This refers to the *Yijing* 易經 hexagram of *fu* 復 (䷗), which includes one Yang line on the bottom and five Yin lines above. It refers to the start of the work of the fire phases (*huohou* 火候), or Six Phases (*liuhou* 六後).

³⁰³ *Xuanguan yi qiao* 玄關一竅. The appearance of this opening marks the change from the Latter Realm (*houtian* 後天) to the Prior Realm (*xiantian* 先天), from the intelligent spirit (*shishen* 識神) to Primordial *Shen* (*yuanshen* 元神). It is often thought to appear between the eyes, and is where the refined *shen* can exit.

begins to divide. At the same time, the True *Jing*, True *Qi* 氣 and True *Shen*³⁰⁴ are not distinguished, as they are indeed the True *Jing*, True *Qi* 氣 and True *Shen*.

If you are able to not move your whole heart-and-mind, then you can gather it below and transport it.³⁰⁵ You cannot help but see what had not been seen and hear what had not been heard. Before the beautiful scene appears, do not act incorrectly out of haste. Once the heart-and-mind moves, you tumble back into the Latter Realm,³⁰⁶ and consequently *jing*, *qi* 氣 and *shen* separate. The method [for dealing with this] is when the Dark Pass first appears. Immediately stand on the cloud of fire and then go to the coccyx to strengthen the heart-and-mind and soften the breath. Beating the iron drum,³⁰⁷ traverse the Three Passes and stop the breath in Kunlun.³⁰⁸ This is the work of refining the heart-and-mind and pursuing the *qi* 炁.

The fourth level of refining the heart-and-mind is for refining the heart-and-mind that is withdrawn and hidden. At the previous pacing on the cloud of fire and traversing the
 63b Three Passes, the heart-and-mind and *qi* 炁 follow each other, and once stable enter the *Niwan*. This way, in the *Niwan* Palace, the intelligent spirit is sometimes drawn into moving, so the *qi* 炁 gets cold and freezes, and certainly cannot transform into True Water³⁰⁹ and drench the Three Palaces.³¹⁰ Previous efforts are all discarded. The method

³⁰⁴ True *Jing* (*zhenjing* 真精), True *Qi* (*zhenqi* 真氣 or 真炁) and True *Shen* (*zhenshen* 真神) are the *jing*, *qi* and *shen* of the Prior Realm (*xiantian* 先天).

³⁰⁵ I believe this refers to the Substance (*wu* 物).

³⁰⁶ *Houtian* 後天.

³⁰⁷ See note 138.

³⁰⁸ This term can refer to the *Niwan* 泥丸.

³⁰⁹ This term normally refers to refined *qi* 氣 inside the fire of the heart. However, it is difficult to see how this meaning applies here.

[for dealing with this] is on the summit of Kunlun. The breath and heart-and-mind emphasize stillness, and intersect and blend with the *qi* 炁. The *qi* 炁 then transforms into beautiful liquid. From the palate above, it descends. Curl your tongue to receive the dew, and swallowing it, send it off. Focus your heart-and-mind on the Crimson Palace.³¹¹ Focus your heart-and-mind on the Yellow Court.³¹² Focus your heart-and-mind on the Primordial Sea.³¹³ Along a single path, send the echo straight down to the bottom and again wait for the appearance of the Dark Pass.³¹⁴ This is the work of refining the heart-and-mind and obtaining the *qi* 炁.

The fifth level of refining the heart-and-mind is for refining the heart-and-mind that is building the foundation. At the previous entering the *Niwan* and returning to the Cave of *Qi* 炁 the route of the river-cart already exists. Following this, proceed with your whole heart. Day and night, do not rest. When the foundation is achieved, why wait for one
64a hundred days? If you have a negligent heart-and-mind, or have a craving heart-and-mind, or if acting and stopping follow each other, the alchemical foundation is difficult to stabilize. It is in building the foundation that *jing* gathers and *shen* unites. If the work is

³¹⁰ The Three Palaces are located in the *Niwan* 泥丸. At the front is the Palace of Flowing Pearl (*liuzhu gong* 流珠宮), at the back is the Palace of Taiyi (*taiyi gong* 太乙宮), and at the top is the Palace of the Dark Elixir (*xuandan gong* 玄丹宮).

³¹¹ This refers to an area just below the heart, and is often identified with the middle Cinnabar Field (*zhong dantian* 中丹田).

³¹² The meaning of this term can vary slightly. Here it seems to be the same as the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮), where the embryo forms and develops.

³¹³ Normally, this term refers to the Primordial *Qi* (*yuanqi* 元炁). Here, however, I suspect that here it refers to the Lower Cinnabar Field (*xia dantian* 下丹田), as do other “sea” terms in this text. In the next paragraph it is referred to as the Cave of *Qi* (*qixue* 炁穴), which is associated with the Lower Cinnabar Field, and is considered the terminus of the route of the river-cart (*heche lujing* 河車路徑). This term refers to the route from the coccyx (*weilü* 尾閭) up to the *Niwan* 泥丸, down through the Yellow Court (*huangting* 黃庭) to the Lower Cinnabar Field.

³¹⁴ See note 303.

not diligent, the *jing* and *shen* will continue to disperse and be confused. How could you lengthen your years and receive the Tao? The method [for dealing with this] is in proceeding based on *zi* 子 and *wu* 午. On successive days, draw out and increase. Take *kan* 坎 and fill in *li* 離.³¹⁵ Accumulate *jing* and fill the belly. This is the work of refining the heart-and-mind and accumulating *qi* 氣.

The sixth level of refining the heart-and-mind is for refining the heart-and-mind that is realizing *xing*. At the previous rolling of the river-cart, if you gather the *jing* and assemble the *shen*, the numinous root fills up.³¹⁶ Following this, the liquid of the heart-and-mind descends and the *qi* 氣 of the kidneys rises. This is *kan* and *li* intersecting. In the centre of deep obscurity is a token.³¹⁷ It is vast like the tide, and one half *qi* 氣 of water. It is misty like fog, and one half *qi* 氣 of cloud. This is called “golden water.” As it begins to move, cultivate it into jade liquid³¹⁸ and reverted alchemical elixir.³¹⁹

64b In using your heart-and-mind, if you are not focused, it is difficult to realize *xing* entirely. The method [for dealing with this] is, on the day the golden water first arises, to separate [some of it] out from the Cinnabar Field down to the Bubbling Spring. In an instant unite it to the coccyx. Regulate and stop the True Breath.³²⁰ Rouse it and spur it

³¹⁵ This refers to the trigrams *kan* 坎 and *li* 離 from the *Bagua* 八卦. *Kan* is associated with the *qi* of the kidneys, *li* with that of the heart (sometimes with *shen* 神), which are said to exchange with each other as part of the alchemical process. *Zi* 子 and *wu* 午 are two of twelve earthly branches (*dizhi* 地支), and are associated with *kan* and *li* respectively.

³¹⁶ This can refer to the tongue filling up with saliva.

³¹⁷ *Xin* 信. See note 141.

³¹⁸ *Yuyi* 玉液. This can manifest itself as saliva, which is swallowed as part of the process of refinement.

³¹⁹ *Huandan* 還丹. This refers to the Substance (*wu* 物) of cultivation, which is reverted nine times to become pure and complete.

³²⁰ *Zhenxi* 真息. A form of breathing that is soft, slow and subtle, to the point that the breath appears to stop.

on,³²¹ and then you can make it flow back up to the Valley of Heaven³²² and swallow it down to the Yellow Court. In this way, flood it every day, and the terrain of the heart-and-mind will be comfortably cool. The blood will transform into ointment and the intention will congeal into earth.³²³ In the centre of earth, mercury arises. The *xing* of mercury is round and bright. When you encounter the Substance, do not move it. There is a numinous sword³²⁴ in your hand. What Mencius called “devoting your entire heart-and-mind” is understanding *xing*. The school of immortals calls it the inner alchemy of the Yin alchemical elixir. This is the work of refining the heart-and-mind and enlightening *xing*.

65a The seventh level of refining the heart-and-mind is for refining the heart-and-mind that is already enlightened. As for the previous golden water and river-cart, immortal masters call them inner refinement. Reaching this point, there is also the work of outer refinement. Take the outer and unite it with the inner. The True Heart-and-mind will then assemble and not disperse. Although the inner body is enlightened, the *xing* of mercury is inclined to fly away. Although the inner cultivation is finished, the Yin alchemical elixir is easy to damage. If your protection and nourishment are not pristine, then the *xing* of the heart-and-mind will be extinguished again. The method [for dealing with this] is in using the principle the empty, enlightened heart-and-mind marvellously possesses. Blend and mix sand and earth.³²⁵ Plant the seed in the other. When the other is empty, fill it out of

³²¹ That is, spur on the golden water.

³²² *Tiangu* 天谷. This refers to the Upper Cinnabar Field (*shang dantian* 上丹田) or *Niwan* 泥丸.

³²³ *Tu* 土. Earth is associated with the Centre, and the colour Yellow.

³²⁴ I believe this refers to keeping control. See also note 328 below.

³²⁵ Sand (*sha* 砂) can refer to the heart. The mercury which it is said to contain can refer to *xing* 性. I believe this phrase and the one following refer to exchanging the *qi* 氣 of the heart and kidneys (that is, *li* 離 and *kan* 坎).

the self. When the other does not exist, make it exist from the self. Cast being into non-being and enter fullness into emptiness. Kill your heart-and-mind and do not move it. In an instant, the one *qi* 炁 of the Prior Realm comes out from within emptiness and non-being.

The first phase is One Yang existing as *zhen* 震. The second phase is Two Yang existing as *dui* 兌.³²⁶ When the time comes and the phase is correct, you should harmonize the alchemical elixir. Over there spits out a string of True *Qi* 炁. It is explained as the tiger arising within water. Over here drops a point of obscure light. It is explained as the dragon coming out from inside fire. Both dragon and tiger unite in sexual intercourse in a great battle. Its name is the darkness of heaven and earth. Both body and heart-and-mind are still. Suddenly, Three Yang begins moving. It is like the trigram *qian*.
 65b It is like the tide. It is like fire. It is like mist. It is like smoke. It is like cloud. It is like frost. It is like snow. It is like flowers.³²⁷ The Yang lead inside the body is radiant. I myself now hold the sword and carry the seal.³²⁸ Step on the stars and pace the Dipper.³²⁹ Spur on the primordial harmony.³³⁰ Decoct it fiercely and refine it to the limit. Penetrating the Three Passes, go up to the *Niwan*. The pores of the whole body all open up. This is not at all the same as the previous jade liquid and river-cart. Swallow it down. Using the Prior Realm, make the *xing* and *ming* of the Latter Realm unite into one. This is none other than the great reversion of the alchemical elixir. *Xing* belongs to fire, and its count is seven; *ming* belongs to metal, and its count is nine. It returns to the origin and reverts to

³²⁶ *Zhen* 震 and *dui* 兌 are trigrams from the *Bagua* 八卦 representing east and west, dragon and tiger.

³²⁷ In the rest of the text, snow and flowers appear when the embryo is complete.

³²⁸ *Zhangyin* 掌印. That is, to be in charge. Perhaps “holding the sword” has a similar meaning.

³²⁹ *Taxing* 踏星 and *bugang* 步罡 refer to physical techniques where the practitioner walks in a pattern representing the stars of the Northern Dipper. I suspect that here this refers to returning to the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田).

³³⁰ *Yuanhe* 元和. This refers to saliva produced as a result of the process of refinement.

the source. It is therefore called the “seven returned nine reverted jade liquid great alchemical elixir.” Following this, lead comes and makes mercury, and the heart-and-mind is forever bright and is never agitated. This is the work of refining the heart-and-mind and completing *shen*.

66a The eighth level of refining the heart-and-mind is for refining the heart-and-mind that is already subdued, making the *shen* penetrating. At the previous seven returns, nine reversions and using lead to make mercury, the heart-and-mind is already in *samādhi*. You only need to warm it and nourish it, and you need to make the *qi* 氣 inside the body transform completely into *shen*. The *shen* in the body can wander outside. Accordingly, restrain it for the phases of *qi* 氣 of the twelve months of the year. Only in the two months of *mao* 卯 and *you* 酉³³¹ should it soak and bathe. The remaining ten months are for advancing and withdrawing. This is therefore called “ten months of warming and nourishing.” This is not to say that it [only] requires ten months of work. [If you do not do this], although the heart-and-mind is in *samādhi*, it will not be numinous. Refine it and forge it, and the numinous heart-and-mind will appear day by day. When it is numinous, it will then move. When it moves, it will then change. When it changes, it will then transform. Therefore, while there is the sending out of the *shen*, it will not be confused by things and emotions. This is the work of refining the heart-and-mind and completing *shen*.

The ninth level of refining the heart-and-mind is for refining the heart-and mind that is already numinous and making it return to the void. The previous warmed and nourished *shen* of the embryo has already left and is not being stimulated. It follows the heart-and-mind’s desire without going anywhere inappropriate. It treads high on the clouds and

³³¹ *Mao* 卯 and *you* 酉 are earthly branches (*dizhi* 地支). *Mao* refers to the second month and *you* to the eighth month.

66b wanders everywhere. It is numinous in the utmost and full of joy. However, if you do not empty the numinous heart-and-mind you cannot encompass the myriad existences. This is why there is the refining of emptiness. Refining emptiness means the heart-and-mind and breast are vast and large. What appears to exist³³² is all non-existent.³³³ The pure void is wholly still. Awaken to and receive the universe. This self is non-self. This void is not void. The world is destructible. Only the void is not destructible. *Qian* and *kun*³³⁴ have hindrances. Only the void has no hindrances. This is that by which *shen* fills the empty void and the *dharma* circulates throughout the countless worlds.

This is the beginning and end of refining. By no means add to it!

³³² *You* 有.

³³³ *Wu* 無.

³³⁴ In addition to their alchemical meanings, *qian* 乾 and *kun* 坤 can also refer to heaven and earth.

Perfected One Li Hanxu's Sequential Account of the Latter Realm

67a All the commentaries I have written on the *Daodejing*, the *Scripture of the Yellow Court*, the *Scripture of Great Profundity*, and the *Scripture of the Root of Non-Being* describe the functioning of the Prior Realm and are not entrances to the *dharma* for novices. To travel far, you start from the near. To climb high, you start from the low. If you do not understand the stages of the Latter Realm, it is as if the ranking people of the world, without having been elevated to the position of Cultivated Talent³³⁵ were to vainly imagine themselves as Metropolitan Graduate³³⁶ or Hanlin Academician.³³⁷ For this reason I wrote the chapter “Sequential Account of the Latter Realm” as an entry into virtuous power.

1. Gathering the Heart-and-mind
2. Seeking *Qi* 氣
3. Congealing *Shen*
4. Revealing the Opening
5. Opening the Passes
6. Building the Foundation
7. Obtaining the Medicine

³³⁵ *Maocai* 茂才. A person qualified to sit in provincial examinations for the civil service. This is a minor rank.

³³⁶ 進士. One who has passed the highest level civil-service exams. This is a rank of high esteem, often compared to a doctorate.

³³⁷ *Hanlin* [xueshi] 翰林 [學士]. A member of the prestigious Hanlin Academy.

8. Forming the Alchemical Elixir

9. Refining the Self

67b The Most High One³³⁸ has a saying: “The noble takes the base as its root. The high takes the low as its foundation.”³³⁹ The Latter Realm is the Tao of nourishing the base and the low. To be base is what teachers call “delighting³⁴⁰ in the ugly.” To be low is what the scriptures call “Going down and getting it.” Nourish the foundation of the alchemical elixir. When it is pristine, making *jing* and *qi* 氣 into treasures is the method of proceeding with the work.

You should first gather the heart-and-mind and enter within. Take the centre and make it the extremity. Take harmony and make it the rule. Take *shen* and make it the body. Take the intention and make it the function.

In seeking *qi* 氣, make the Yin heel [meridian] foremost. In its centre is a vivacious place that is not seen and not heard. Harmony is the work of focusing the *qi* 氣 and sending it to gently embrace the *shen* and make it still. In *samādhi*, give birth to wisdom. Sitting [in meditation], illuminate the absolute.³⁴¹ Copulate [*qi* 氣] with Primordial *Shen* and give birth to Primordial *Qi* 炁.³⁴² Revealing the Opening and opening the Pass is then not difficult. The Primordial *Jing* is, in the Yin heel meridian, what day after day gives rise to people’s Primordial *Qi* 炁. For practitioners to collect the Primordial *Jing*, they must seek the place of activity of the *qi* 炁 and unite it with stillness. This is called “the

³³⁸ That is, the Most High Lord Lao, or deified Laozi.

³³⁹ This is a quotation from Chapter 39 of the *Daode jing* 道德經.

³⁴⁰ Here I read *shuo* 說 as *yue* 悅.

³⁴¹ *Ruru* 如如.

³⁴² Primordial *Jing* (*yuanjing* 元精), Primordial *Qi* (*yuanqi* 元炁) and Primordial *Shen* (*yuanshen* 元神) are *jing*, *qi* and *shen* of the Prior Realm (*xiantian* 先天).

intersecting of *shen* and *qi* 氣” so male and female mingle their *jing* and the True Seed transforms into life.

68a The True Seed is the True *Qi* 氣 of the cauldron of the Latter Realm. The cauldron of the Latter Realm is the location where the Primordial *Shen* and the Primordial *Qi* 炁 intersect and unite. One of its names is “numinous father and numinous mother.” This *qi* 氣 is refined forth from the centre of the cauldron. You should then congeal your *shen* and soften your intention in order to soften and overcome the hard. Spontaneously enter the cauldron within yourself. Harmonize it, regulate it, forge it and refine it. It lies hidden in the centre of the Cinnabar Field. It exhales and inhales inside emptiness and non-being. This is called the stem of *ming*. It is also called embryonic respiration.³⁴³ Suddenly, one Substance shoots out from inside of the cauldron. Jumping and leaping, hissing and blowing, it rises straight along the thrusting meridian to the heart. This is none other than the time of Revealing the Opening. Wait until this shooting is suddenly strong, and the *shen* will change into intention. Draw it to the coccyx. Once it has bumped against the Three Passes, it flies up to the *Niwan*. It then opens the Passes.

When the Passes and the Opening have opened, then proceed with the work of nourishing yourself and discuss the Tao of building the foundation. Building the foundation is gathering other *qi* 炁 and blood³⁴⁴ to supplement our own *jing* and *shen*.

68b Although the *shen* is strong, it still fearfully moves and shakes. Consequently, use the lead of *ren* 壬³⁴⁵ to prevail over it. The lead of *ren* is what the two *qi* 炁³⁴⁶ copulate and give birth to. Initially, the *qi* 氣 of the Palace of *Kan* is the *qi* 氣 of earth. The *qi* 氣 of the Palace of *Li* is the *qi* 氣 of heaven. When heaven and earth intersect and unite, in non-

³⁴³ *Taixi* 胎息. This refers to breathing without using the mouth and nose, as an embryo breathes.

³⁴⁴ This could be a reference to sexual and dietary techniques used to accumulate energy.

³⁴⁵ This appears to refer to the embryo (*tai* 胎).

³⁴⁶ See note 62.

differentiation and intertwining they form the Cavern-child of emptiness and non-being. The Cavern-child of emptiness and non-being revolves and produces a single *qi* 氣, and thereupon makes this *qi* 炁 into the lead of *ren*. This is the time of Obtaining the Medicine.

The body of lead has *qi* 炁 but no substance. For this reason it is pure and floats up. When it reaches Kunlun you should look up with the light of the eyes. *Shen* and *qi* 炁 breathe with each other and in the crown [of the head] congeal and repose. All at once Yang reaches its extreme and Yin arises. Begin to reverse the tongue and press it up against the palate. The breath through your nose should be even, and [you should] press up against the palate for a long time. Then, fine saliva descends. The cold spring³⁴⁷ drips, and although they are not many, each drip descends the layered tower.³⁴⁸ Return your intention to the Yellow Court.

69a Yet there is still something strange. It sounds the same as rushing water. Only then do you realize that, as for the Sweet Dew of the Great Scholar,³⁴⁹ you initially must not receive too much of it. It descends and enters the Yellow Court and forms the inner alchemical elixir.³⁵⁰ After, while in [the realm of] desire, cut off desire. While in the dust [of the mundane world], escape the dust. While facing your partner,³⁵¹ forget emotion. Refine lead and subdue mercury. Expel the three corpses³⁵² and the five robbers.³⁵³

³⁴⁷ This appears to refer to saliva.

³⁴⁸ See note 202.

³⁴⁹ This also appears to refer to saliva.

³⁵⁰ *Neidan* 內丹.

³⁵¹ *Duijing* 對境 can refer to Taoist sexual practice. It is not clear what it refers to in this case.

³⁵² *Sanshi* 三尸. These are three evil spirits that reside in the body and shorten life. They are often associated with the three energies of the body: *jing* 精, *qi* 氣 and *shen* 神.

³⁵³ *Wuzi* 五賊. This refers to illnesses of the five phases (*wuxing* 五行) that shorten life.

Dissolve the six desires³⁵⁴ and the seven emotions.³⁵⁵ Your bones and *qi* 氣 will all be gold essence and your flesh and skin will all become jade substance. Again, it is only through refining yourself and purity of effort that there will be this effect. You can never arrive by passing over the stages.

³⁵⁴ The six desires are desires of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind.

³⁵⁵ The seven emotions are happiness, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hate and desire.

Chapter 3: A Discussion of the *Huiming Jing*

Introduction: Revealing Secrets

Any reader who approaches the *Huiming Jing* will see almost immediately that it does not lend itself to easy explanation or interpretation. As a text that belongs to the tradition of inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹), it is full of symbolism whose meaning and referents can seem completely mysterious. Although for some, this characteristic language may appear to be an obstacle to understanding, for others who have examined inner alchemy, it presents a challenge and opportunity. Those who have looked at it have taken a wide variety of interpretive approaches. These range from overt attempts to “decode” its symbolism in the hope of revealing a clear and comprehensible meaning beneath, to accepting and even embracing its lack of clarity as a defining characteristic of the tradition that has its own function to fulfil for practitioners. What approach shall we take to understanding the *Huiming Jing*? One useful method is to start by exploring what the author himself considers important about his text. Does Liu Huayang provide any clues as

to what he felt was important about it, why he compiled it? Of course, this question can never be fully answered, but there are certainly some important indications as to his general intent. Of particular note is one theme that recurs throughout the text and that we shall use as a starting point for our discussion: the notion that the *Huiming Jing* reveals secrets of the Buddhas and patriarchs that had previously been hidden.

For Liu, this aspect of his work has its roots in his own experience. In his quest to receive the teachings of Buddhism, he was confronted by what he considered widespread heterodox and incorrect teachings. In his travels, he claims to have met teachers in many places, of whom none understood the true basis of Buddhism. Although many claimed to possess the true transmission, what they taught was nothing more than errors and lies that led their students astray. As he says, they were nothing more than “the blind leading the blind, ensnaring immeasurable numbers of believers deep into the Nine Springs of Hell, where in the end they cannot lift their heads to see the Buddha’s radiance.”¹ Over and over in the introduction, the body of the text and the commentary, he laments the various errors and outright deceptions he saw as commonplace. What had led to this situation? First, as he says, “the later patriarchs were unwilling to fully reveal and discuss what they received and used to achieve success.”² Although they might have discussed certain aspects of their teachings, they were unwilling to reveal them completely and in a systematic way. This secrecy, combined with the mixed quality of following generations, led to his own current difficulty in finding instruction of quality. As a result, and with the tacit approval of Huyun, one of the teachers from whom he was finally able to receive the genuine transmission of the wisdom of the patriarchs, Liu compiled the *Huiming Jing* with the goal of letting out this wisdom. As he says in his introduction, the text

¹ See page 2b of the section entitled “Collected Explanations of the *Huiming Jing*.”

² See page 3b of the section entitled “Collected Explanations of the *Huiming Jing*.”

“establish[es] signs that open up the secrets of the ancient Buddhas, revealing the Primordial Inner Workings of the teacher-patriarchs.”³ For him, the *Huiming Jing* discloses for the first time in simple terms wisdom that previous masters were unwilling to discuss directly and that as a result had become all but lost.

For us, this notion of revealing secrets can be a useful starting point. What exactly is it that he is claiming to disclose? When Liu talks about revealing, we can begin to see that what he is really talking about is an emphasis on understanding and reinterpreting the ancient wisdom in terms of a particular framework: that of notions of inner energies or *qi* 氣. What also becomes clear is that, for Liu, the work of these energies involves following a systematic sequence of stages, so revealing the stages constitutes a crucial part of revealing the methods of the patriarchs. However, although we can certainly identify a system of stages in the training, the more closely we examine it, the more we see that it is less tidy and consistent than it first appears. In fact, we ultimately have to recognize that what the text reveals is actually very fluid and variable according to an almost endless number of contexts. In other words, what is revealed to lie behind the secrets is yet further secrets, and we are finally forced to realize that this obscurity is an inherent part of this system that cannot be easily decoded, translated or rendered clear. Nevertheless, it can itself be appreciated for its role in the training of the adept. What is revealed in the *Huiming Jing* ends up being not a consistent, unified picture to be puzzled and finally grasped, but instead a structure that uses both order and disorder together, each with its own role to play in the constantly-shifting world of the adept.

³ See page 3b of the “Author’s Introduction to the *Huiming Jing*.”

Revealing the Importance of *Qi* 氣

One characteristic of the *Huiming Jing* is the fact that for Liu Huayang, to disclose the secret meanings of the Buddhas and patriarchs is to provide explanations founded in notions concerning the circulation and interaction of energies throughout the body. What this means is that Liu sees the cultivation and work of *qi* as fundamental to the teachings, regardless of whether these teachings are rooted in Buddhism or Taoism. In the case of Buddhist language and symbolism, terms are mostly used in such a way that their conventional Buddhist meaning is overshadowed by associations with notions of energy.

One obvious example of this is indeed the very term *huiming* 慧命. In Buddhism, it describes a refinement of *ming* 命, which refers to a person's life circumstances, as opposed to *xing* 性, which refers to inner nature. Specifically, *huiming* describes the fact that the *dharma*-body (*fashen* 法身) is nourished by wisdom in the same way the mundane body is nourished by food, and is contrasted with *baoming* 報命 (the *ming* of karma) and *jieming* 戒命 (the *ming* of discipline). In the *Huiming Jing*, however, *huiming* takes on a much different significance, as does *xing* and *ming*. While it can be assumed that these terms preserve a flavour of their previous meanings, their main significance becomes less abstract and more physical. Now, they describe energies and substances that exist within the body and become the ingredients and products of the work of inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹). Another example of this kind of tendency is Liu's use of the term "dharma-wheel" (*falun* 法輪). Normally, this term symbolizes the teachings of the Buddha, such as the Four Noble Truths (*sidi* 四諦) and the Eightfold Path (*bazheng dao* 八正道). In this case, however, Liu Huayang associates it with the cycles of breath and refinement of the energies in the body that in inner alchemical language are normally referred to as "fire phases" (*huohou* 火後), or as Liu more often calls it, the "Inner Workings" (*ji* 機) or "six phases" (*liu hou* 六後). In addition, he specifically associates the *dharma*-wheel with the circulation of the *qi* along the Conception (*ren* 任) and

Governing (*du* 督) Meridians in a circle up the spinal column to the head and then back down the front of the torso, giving it an unmistakable and clear physiological and anatomical interpretation, rather than the more abstract and philosophical orientation of its more conventional meaning. Other examples of this tendency include his explanation of the term “Muni” (*mouni* 牟尼). Normally, this refers to Buddha Śākyamuni, but Liu explains it as the collection of energies that form the Substance (*wu* 物) of cultivation in the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田), which is usually understood as a region in the abdomen just below the navel where much of the alchemical refinement takes place. In fact, even terms that Liu directly associates with a Buddhist text take on very different meanings than appear in the very text he cites as authoritative. An example of this is the term “Buddha-child” (*fozi* 佛子), which Liu associates with the *Śūraṅgama-sūtra*,⁴ a text that he quotes on a number of occasions and that he clearly finds inspirational. In the *Huiming Jing*, this term becomes a representation of the collection and refinement of energies into an embryo that the adept nourishes in the body and that is finally born from the top of the head. This is a common idea within inner alchemy, but it is certainly different from the way the term is presented in the *Śūraṅgama-sūtra*, where it refers to followers of the Buddha or bodhisattvas. In each of these cases, Buddhist terminology is given a new and different significance based on inner alchemical conceptions of the cultivation of energy, to the point where the more conventional meaning becomes much less important.

This text contains fewer Taoist symbols than Buddhist ones, however, the Taoist terms that Liu Huayang does use are treated in a similar way. In the case of Taoist terms, the interpretations he provides based on ideas of *qi* 氣 are not uncommon elsewhere in the Taoist tradition, particularly in inner alchemy. Even so, Liu provides explanations

⁴ *Foshuo shou lengyan sanmei jing* 佛說首楞嚴三昧經 (*Śūraṅgama sūtra*). *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. Tōkyō: 1924–1929. T642.

based on *qi* of all types of symbols in a way that is more explicit than is found in many other Taoist inner alchemical texts up to that time. Liu is careful to explain clearly that such terms as the constellation of the Northern Dipper (*beidou* 北斗) should be understood as referring to the region of the body known as the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田),⁵ or that the Embryo of the Tao (*daotai* 道胎) is in fact the union of *shen* 神 and *qi*.⁶ This is clearly different from older, definitive inner alchemical texts such as the *Wuzhen Pian* 悟真篇 by Zhang Boduan 張伯端. In these texts, such language is not explained, and there is much more extensive use of a wide range of symbolism, including the use of *Yijing* 易經 terminology, which tends leave the text open to many possibilities of interpretation.⁷ Ideas concerning *qi* are certainly not absent, but are not made nearly so clear as they are in the *Huiming Jing*. Of course, the *Huiming Jing* is unique in that Liu Huayang wrote the commentary to his own text, where much of his explanation occurs. However, this fact simply underlines how important such explanations are to Liu. In the *Huiming Jing*, the focus is clearly on making students aware that any symbolism must be understood in terms of the cultivation of *qi*. It seems that for Liu Huayang, whether terms and concepts originate in Buddhism, Taoism or any other source, if they are true, then to reveal their long-hidden secrets means to show that they are all ways to cultivate and refine the energies of the individual.

That Liu Huayang considered this kind of revealing essential can also be seen clearly in the way he criticizes the practices he sees as incorrect. The grounds for his criticisms are generally that such practices ignore the fundamental work of the *qi* 氣 or are

⁵ In fact, on page 10b of the section entitled “Collected Explanations of the *Huiming Jing*,” he refers to the Northern Dipper (*beidou* 北斗) as Palace of the Dragon-King (*longgong* 龍宮), which is itself identified with the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田) in numerous places.

⁶ See page 13b of the “Chart of the Embryo of the Tao,” as well as numerous other references throughout the text.

⁷ Zhang Boduan 張伯端, *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇, HY 141, DZ 61–62.

damaging to it. One example of this is his criticism of the monk Gaofeng. The danger in practising this monk's techniques is in the effects they have on the body and the *qi*: the internal organs are damaged, the vessels of the spine are damaged, and the practitioner spits blood. As he goes on the point out, the fundamental error is that the Yin and Yang *qi* are not in harmony with each other.⁸ Later in the same section of the text, Liu responds to another question by explaining how the cultivation of stillness is not enough to attain the End of Leakage (*loujin* 漏盡) of *huiming* 慧命 out of the body. According to him, it is essential that the student employ the work of fire and wind, which refers to the work of circulating and refining the *qi*.⁹ Mental discipline is not enough: the student must work on his or her internal energy. Finally, it is useful to consider his advice to students on how to be able to differentiate true teachings from incomplete or false ones. He points out that true teachings involve the dual cultivation of both *xing* and *ming* (*xingming shuangxiu* 性命雙修), and that a focus on *xing* exclusively cannot lead to enlightenment. In this context, *ming* can be understood to involve the body and *qi*, while *xing* refers to original nature. In addition, the true teachings will demonstrate their effectiveness on the body and on the *qi*. For example, he says, "When you attain the Embryo of the Tao, the six meridians disappear from the hands, hair that had whitened becomes black again, and teeth that had fallen out grow again."¹⁰ For Liu, the way to determine if teachings are authentic is to examine them in terms of the cultivation of *qi*. To reveal the teachings is to reveal the central nature of *qi*.

⁸ See page 54b of the section entitled "Resolving Doubts."

⁹ See pages 56b and 59b of the section entitled "Resolving Doubts."

¹⁰ See page 59a of the section entitled "Resolving Doubts."

Revealing the Stages of Work

In the *Huiming Jing*, as part of the task of revealing the work of *qi* 氣 as fundamental to the teachings of the ancients, Liu Huayang places particular emphasis on the structure of this work into clear stages whose order must be followed systematically for the practitioner to be successful in his or her training. As he says, “You should learn well each successive stage—they should not be regarded presumptuously.”¹¹ Why is this so important to him? First, he emphasizes that the ancient teachers were particularly unwilling to discuss the earlier parts of the training they themselves went through in order to achieve enlightenment. Although they were willing to discuss the higher levels of practice, the earlier parts of training remained hidden. However, as he makes clear throughout the text, these parts are crucial and cannot be ignored or passed over if the student wishes to succeed. In fact, many dangers await the practitioner who wishes to begin the work of cultivation but does not have correct understanding of the stages. For the most part, these come in the form of ignorant and fraudulent people who lead practitioners astray and prevent them from making any progress in their training, even causing them great harm. As Liu says, “For some, their lusts overcome their hearts-and-minds. Some plan with the intention of achieving fortune and benefits. Some cling to their own abilities. Some call themselves Buddhas, patriarchs or born of heaven.”¹² Many such people claim that the difficult work of training is in fact not necessary or that they possess formulas for sudden enlightenment that provide a shortcut around the arduous work of training. By completing each stage one by one, the practitioner avoids the easy lure of these deviant teachings. Liu reminds students that if the work of cultivation was not necessary, the Buddha, Bodhidharma and the Sixth Patriarch would all not have

¹¹ See page 5b of the section entitled “Collected Explanations of the *Huiming Jing*.”

¹² See page 51a of the section entitled “Explanations of Various Categories.”

needed to undergo long years of training. For him, the stages provide the opportunity for all the necessary work of cultivation to occur.

What exactly are these stages in the cultivation of *qi* 氣 that that are so fundamental to the training? This question can be answered in a few different ways. First, we can look at what Liu Huayang himself explicitly describes as the stages. This description, which is found in the commentary to the section entitled “Collected Explanations of the *Huiming Jing*”¹³ and is paraphrased in the preface, specifies four:

1. The time of beginning (*xiashou shi* 下手時), which Liu associates with the work of uniting the True Seed (*hehe zhenzhong* 和合真種).
2. The time of transition (*zhuanhou shi* 轉手時), which Liu associates with the work of cultivating *Śarīra* (*xiulian sheli* 修煉舍利).
3. The time of completion (*liaoshou shi* 了手時), which Liu associates with the work of warming and nourishing the Embryo of the Tao (*wenyang daotai* 溫養道胎).
4. The time of letting go (*sashou shi* 撒手時), which Liu associates with the work of releasing the embryo and facing the wall (*chutai mianbi* 出胎面壁).

A second indication of what Liu Huayang considers to be stages can be found in the charts at the beginning of our text, which are accompanied by considerably more explanation than his description of the stages outlined previously:

1. The End of Leakage (*loujin* 漏盡). This section focuses mostly on the idea of the Opening (*qiao* 竅), which is where life is first conceived, where the work of cultivation and refinement begins, and where the energies of the body return to unity.

¹³ See page 2a.

2. The Six Phases of the *Dharma-Wheel* (*falun liuhou* 法輪六後). The chart and explanation here focus on the cyclical patterns of breathing and circulation of *qi* 氣.
3. The Two Meridians: Conception and Governing (*rendu ermai* 任督二脈). This section identifies the previous section with the circulation of *qi* along the meridians in the body. As this section states, this chart should be considered together with the two previous ones, implying that together they form different aspects of a single stage of training.
4. The Embryo of the Tao (*daotai* 道胎). Here, the embryo that grows in the practitioner's body is introduced and described as the union of *shen* 神 and *qi* 氣.
5. Sending Forth the Embryo (*chutai* 出胎). In this section, the embryo is shown to exit from the top of the head, and is associated with the light that is said to radiate from the head of the Buddha.
6. The Transformation Body (*huashen* 化身). At this stage, the embryo is illustrated as transforming into multiple forms and wandering outside the body.
7. Facing the Wall (*mianbi* 面壁). Here, the body is portrayed as vacant and in a state of primordial perfection.
8. Dissolution into Empty Void (*xukong fensui tu* 虛空粉碎圖). In this section, both the illustration and the poetic language, which are much less technical than preceding sections, suggest a return to a state of harmony and non-differentiation.

The two lists above are the only explicit descriptions of stages of progress, and admittedly together account for only a small portion of our text. However, in addition to these clear and direct statements, there is also an implicit indication of levels of progress to be found in the mass of detail throughout the text and its commentary. In the sections

that follow, we will examine some of this detail and attempt to broadly relate it to the first list of stages outlined above.

THE TIME OF BEGINNING (*XIASHOU SHI* 下手時)

As we have already seen, Liu Huayang describes this first stage as the work of uniting the True Seed (*hehe zhenzhong* 和合真種). The procedures associated with this stage dominate our text, as they take up almost as much space as the following three stages combined. In addition, there is a great variety in the terms and wording used to describe this stage. Here, we will look at the concepts that seem to be common to all the descriptions. As we examine this stage, we should in fact begin with Liu's description of the conception and development of human beings in general, as it is this that establishes the conditions confronted by the practitioner at the beginning of training. As Liu says, when a person is conceived, what first arises is the Opening (*qiao* 竅), which has no shape or appearance. Inside this Opening, the *jing* 精 and *qi* 氣 of the father and mother mingle and *xing* 性 and *ming* 命 appear, fused, bright and in a state of harmony. This state is associated with the Prior Realm (*xiantian* 先天), which refers to primordial, harmonious perfection in both the person and the universe where rhythms and interactions naturally lead to harmony and unity. However, at birth, the child suddenly leaves the Prior Realm and enters the state of the Latter Realm (*houtian* 後天), which is the normal state of the mundane world. In the Latter Realm, rhythms and interactions now lead from unity and harmony to differentiation and decay: *xing* and *ming* separate, and the person proceeds from youth to adulthood, old age and death. In particular, at the age of sixteen, the *qi* 氣 of the Prior Realm, which is also called *huiming* 慧命, takes form as *jing* 精 and leaks out of the body, ultimately leading to old age and death. *Jing*, sometimes translated as essence, is understood as the generative energy of the body, and its leakage is associated with the emission of semen in men and with menstruation in

women. In order to reverse this cycle of decay, the teachings provide a means for the practitioner to return to a state of harmony, to return from the Latter Realm to the Prior Realm.

For the practitioner, the training begins at the same place conception began: the Opening (*qiao* 竅), which has a number of names, the most important of which include the Gate of *Ming* (*mingmen* 命門) and the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田). Although it is sometimes described as being without physical location, it is also identified with the region below the navel. Inside the Opening, the practitioner must take *qi* 氣, which is associated with *ming* 命 and with the kidneys, and unite it with *shen* 神, which is associated with *xing* 性 and with the heart. The practitioner concentrates the intention (*yi* 意), which is also associated with *shen*, on the Opening, and the *qi* naturally follows. This process is referred to as “uniting and congealing” (*hehe ningji* 和合凝集), and its product is the Substance (*wu* 物), which is also identified with *huiming* 慧命, the *qi* of the Prior Realm (*xiantian zhi qi* 先天之氣), or the True Seed (*zhenzhong* 真種). The Substance must then be refined, gathered into the Cinnabar Field, and protected. This occurs by means of the Inner Workings (*ji* 機), which are also described as the Six Phases (*liu hou* 六後) or *dharma-wheel* (*falun* 法輪). The Inner Workings include the precise and delicate rhythms and measures of the work of refinement, such as inhaling and exhaling and “soaking” (*mu* 沐) and “bathing” (*yu* 浴). They are also related to concepts such as wind (*feng* 風) and fire (*huo* 火) and the Martial Fire (*wuhuo* 武火) and Civil Fire (*wenhuo* 文火). In addition, they refer to circulation along the path created by the Governing Meridian (*dumai* 督脈) up the spine to the *Niwan* 泥丸 in the head, and the Conception Meridian (*renmai* 任脈) back down the front of the body to the Cinnabar Field. As a result of a process of uniting and congealing (*hehe ningji* 和合凝集) and the turning of the *dharma-wheel*, the True Seed is formed and the End of Leakage (*loujin* 漏盡) of *huiming* is achieved.

THE TIME OF TRANSITION (*ZHUANSHOU SHI* 轉手時)

This second stage is what Liu Huayang associates with the work of cultivating *Śarīra* (*xiulian sheli* 修煉舍利). The True Seed (*zhenzhong* 真種) is completed and is returned to the Cinnabar Field (*dantian* 丹田), also referred to as the furnace (*lu* 爐), and is further refined through the turning of the *dharma*-wheel (*falun* 法輪) to become *Śarīra*, which is also identified with the pearl of Muni (*mouni zhu* 牟尼珠) and with True *Qi* (真氣). After *Śarīra* appears, it should again be gathered, and by means of the *dharma*-wheel or Inner Workings (*ji* 機), it is sent up the back, penetrating the Three Passes (*san guan* 三關) of the spine to reach the crown of the head (*ding* 頂). It then descends to the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮), which is described as an Opening (*qiao* 竅) beneath the heart, and is associated with the middle Cinnabar Field (*zhong dantian* 中丹田) or the Field of the Heart (*xintian* 心田).

THE TIME OF COMPLETION (*LIAOSHOU SHI* 了手時)

When the *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利) descends to the Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮), the Embryo of the Tao is then created from the union of the two *qi* 氣, while the intention (*yi* 意) is calm. The two *qi* seem to refer to the *qi* of the heart and kidneys, which are also associated with *shen* 神 and *qi*. The embryo must then be nourished through cycles of calm and movement. This nourishment is sometimes identified with soaking (*mu* 沐) and bathing (*yu* 浴), which lasts for a period of ten months, or with the turning of the *dharma*-wheel (*falun* 法輪). In addition, in stillness, the Substance (*wu* 物) is referred to for the first time as rising from the Bubbling Spring (*yongquan* 湧泉) points on the bottoms of the feet and then uniting with the embryo in the Central Palace.

This stage marks a key transformation in the practitioner. Up to this point, the work seems to encompass the beginning stages that we have seen Liu believes have been so neglected in Buddhist training. Accordingly, most of the space in the Huiming Jing is

taken up by discussion of the earlier stages, in particular the first stage of Beginning Work (*xiashou shi* 下手時). In contrast, from this stage on, the work concerns higher levels of attainment, and the discussion becomes less voluminous, less detailed, and less technical. This change in the training is expressed in a number of different ways. For example, activism (*youwei* 有爲), which is described as the work of congealing and uniting *huiming* 慧命, changes to non-interference (*wuwei* 無爲), which is described as the work of nourishing the embryo. Substance (*youwu* 有物), which involves the work of *ming* 命, changes to non-substance (*wuwu* 無物), which involves the work of *xing* 性. Yin *qi* 氣 changes to pure Yang and pervades the entire body. Intelligent spirit (*shishen* 識神), which is associated with the Latter Realm (*houtian* 後天) is refined into Primordial *Shen* (*yuanshen* 元神), which is associated with the Prior Realm (*xiantian* 先天). An indication of this change is that adept attains stillness, clarity and unified consciousness. The Inner Workings (*ji* 機) also change at this point, as the rhythm of the breathing changes until it is said to disappear (that is, breath does not leave or enter). This attainment is also expressed in Buddhist terms as *Nirvāṇa*, first with karmic residue and then without, as the extinction of birth and extinction (*shengmie mieyi* 生滅滅已), and as the attainment of the Six Powers (*liutong* 六通). From now on, the practitioner appears to have reached a level of advanced development.

THE TIME OF LETTING GO (*SASHOU SHI* 撒手時)

This stage marks the completion of the training as described in the *Huiming Jing*. When the embryo is complete, the practitioner sees snow and flowers fly about, which is a sign that it is ready to exit by the top of the head. The exit of the embryo (*chutai* 出胎) is described as the emission of bright light that pervades the entire universe, and is in fact associated with the appearance of the Tathāgata of Transformations who was said to have sprung from a lotus flower out of the head of the World-Honoured One in a blaze of light.

Once the child has left the body, it can then roam. It must be protected and returned for nourishment, and at this stage, the practitioner's own body attains a level of perfect health. Eventually, the child gives birth to grandchildren and expresses a multitude of transformations. For a long time, the practitioner practices stillness in *samādhi* (*dìng* 定), or "facing the wall" (*mianbi* 面壁), which is a term associated with the legendary nine-year meditation of Bodhidharma. Finally, being (*you* 有) becomes non-being (*wu* 無), distinctions disappear, and the adept attains a dissolution into emptiness and enlightenment.

What is most noticeable about the descriptions of this final stage is that technical, *qi*-based descriptions practically disappear. Although the light of the Buddha-child is associated in the commentary with both *shen* 神 and 性, and there is mention of the emission of light being related to the Inner Workings (*ji* 機), this type of discussion has nowhere near the place of prominence it occupies in the rest of the text, and indeed, there is much less discussion of any kind relating to this final stage than there is of the earlier stages. What discussion does exist tends to be poetic and dominated by a distinct *Chan* 禪 flavour. This would seem to indicate that for Liu Huayang, the final goal of the training is firmly Buddhist. Here we can see that although Liu aims to "reveal" the crucial role of *qi* 氣 in Buddhist training, his final goal is still mainly conceived in more conventional *Chan* Buddhist terms. For him, discussion of *qi* serves only to reveal the practices that allowed the Buddhas and patriarchs to achieve what they did. In other words, for him, the cultivation of *qi* is a crucial means, but not necessarily an end in itself.

Thus, having considered the experience through training of the practitioner as discussed in the *Huiming Jing*, we can see that this training can be understood as progressing through stages, both explicit and implicit. In addition to the more technical aspects of the work of the *qi* 氣 we have seen up to now, Liu Huayang also reveals a few important general requirements for adepts to achieve success as they progress through

these stages. For the most part, these requirements are related to the student's relationship with other people. First, it is emphasized that it is necessary that students work not alone, but with both companions and teacher. In particular, a teacher is required in order to complete the dual cultivation of both *xing* 性 and *ming* 命. For example, Liu points out that the Sixth Patriarch required instruction even after having achieved sudden enlightenment, because although he had realized the Tao of *xing* he had not yet received *huiming* 慧命, which can be understood as the realization of *ming*.¹⁴ Of course, the need to work with others raises the question of how to investigate the quality of people who would be teachers and companions. First, because it is so easy to be led astray, he emphasizes in a number of places the importance of verifying that what they practice and teach are effective. At each stage, it is crucial that practitioners continually seek evidence of this effectiveness, which as we have already noted, is generally understood to be found in the *qi* of the body. Second, the student must focus on virtue (*de* 德) in learning to recognize people of true character. Both Confucian and Buddhist conceptions of virtue are promoted, as the ideal companion is shown to be someone who "fosters and holds on to dedication, filial piety, humanity and rectitude. [She] is compassionate, good and saves beings. She is completely true to the Five Precepts, respects teachers and esteems the *dharma*. To her pledges she stands firm and to her vows she holds deep."¹⁵ Virtue is also held up elsewhere in the text as something the practitioner must practise in order for the training to take effect. Although it is not explored in much detail, it is mentioned enough that the practitioner must realize it forms an integral part of the training. Finally, as Liu says, "When the work is complete and the Tao is perfected, you should ramble among humanity and guide the masses of deluded people. Everywhere bestow the *dharma*-rain of

¹⁴ See pages 54b to 55a of the section entitled "Resolving Doubts."

¹⁵ See page 51b of the section entitled "Explanations of Various Categories."

kindness and virtuous power, everywhere aid with the marvellous medicine of ascending to the other shore.”¹⁶ The end of the training is not only focused on the individual attainment of the practitioner, but also on the well-being of the people in the social environment of the practitioner. Learning the secret transmission of the stages of work therefore requires of practitioners that they find companions and teacher with whom to train, continually verify the effectiveness of what these people teach as well as probing their motivations, and finally, practise virtue themselves through every stage of the training as part of the cultivation of *qi*.

Order and Disorder

As we have seen in the preceding section, when we examine the broad course of the training as presented in the *Huiming Jing*, the stages of progress are relatively easy to identify. However, the apparent clarity of this structure becomes considerably more illusory the more closely we look at any particular detail or the more precisely we try to understand the relationship between any such detail and the overall structure. As a result of this, even the broad structure of the training is not as clear as we might have assumed up to this point. In fact, this confusing lack of clarity could be said to be as fundamental a characteristic of our text as the stages. How do we reconcile these two characteristics? Together, what do they say about our text? What they confirm to us is that if we attempt to view our text as a description of the progress of the practitioner that documents consistently and in detail the precise steps he or she must go through, we will be disappointed. Rather, it is more useful for us to regard the *Huiming Jing* as a tool to be

¹⁶ See page 52a of the section entitled “Explanations of Various Categories.”

used by practitioners to assist them in practising the teachings of what is essentially an oral tradition, and the presentation of the stages and details must be understood in terms of their function as tools and not objective descriptions. What the text “reveals,” then, is a changing set of perspectives, always tentative, always shifting, that are nonetheless useful to practitioners at different times through their proceed through their training.

A number of details lead to a lack of clarity in the structure of the stages when we look at them closely. The first area of difficulty is that different terms can appear to mean the same thing, yet also contain distinctions between them. Probably the most obvious example of this is the use of a number of terms to refer to the object of cultivation. In our broad examination of the structure of the stages, we regularly associated *huiming* 慧命 with the Substance (*wu* 物), *qi* of the Prior Realm (*xiantian zhi qi* 先天之氣), Primordial *Qi* (*yuanqi* 元氣) and the True Seed (*zhenzhong* 真種). These terms for the object of cultivation are also associated with other terms that appear less frequently or only once, such as the *bodhi*-seed (*puti zhongzi* 菩提種子), the bodhisattva (*pusa* 菩薩), the mud-ox (*niniu* 泥牛) or Sea Water (*haishui* 海水). We are justified in associating these terms with each other, because the text itself, especially the commentary, often defines them in terms of each other. However, there are also many instances where the text draws distinctions between these terms. For example, *huiming* is portrayed as existing originally within the person, while in other places it is cultivated as a product of the training. While *huiming* is defined as equivalent to the True Seed in certain parts of the text,¹⁷ it is also discussed as something that must be refined in order to change into the True Seed. Then, yet elsewhere, *huiming* appears again at what appears to be an even later stage, where it is cultivated to change into the Embryo of the Tao (*daotai* 道胎). Similarly, the Substance (*wu* 物) is said to be the same as *huiming*. However, in other instances, it is implied that the Substance

¹⁷ For example, see the commentary on page 17a of the section entitled “Collected Explanations of the *Huiming Jing*.”

arises out of *huiming*. As well, the Substance is both associated with *ming* 命 and at the same time portrayed as the product of the interaction of *xing* 性 with *ming*. Sometimes the Substance is said to exist originally in the body, while at other times it is associated with elements that seem to appear only at more advanced levels of cultivation, such as *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利) or the embryo. In some instances *huiming* and the Substance appear to be generic categories that encompass a number of other, more specific terms. In other instances, they seem to be distinct phenomena. There are even occasions where distinctions that are usually made clear, such as the distinction between the True Seed, and *Śarīra*, disappear. As a result, the stages that previously seemed clear to us either multiply into myriad sub-stages or alternately merge to the point that they no longer appear present.

Another point of uncertainty concerns the timing of certain parts of the training in relation to others. In a number of cases, a particular phenomenon is described as being a prerequisite for another to occur, yet elsewhere is described as happening after the second phenomenon. A good example of this problem is the End of Leakage (*loujin* 漏盡), which is sometimes described as a result of the union of *xing* 性 and *ming* 命, the process of uniting and congealing (*hehe ningji* 和合凝集) or the interaction of fire and water. The text also suggests, however, that the End of Leakage is what allows *ming* or *huiming* 慧命 to reverse its course and return to the Opening (*qiao* 竅) to participate in the process of refinement and of uniting and congealing. Indeed, this is not an isolated example, as it is actually difficult to determine with detailed precision exactly when almost any phenomenon in the *Huiming Jing* occurs.

Of course, one of the most marked areas of confusing complexity is in the descriptions of uniting and congealing (*hehe ningji* 和合凝集), the Inner Workings (*ji* 機) and the *dharma*-wheel (*falun* 法輪), which all appear to be related phenomena. A large number of symbols and concepts are all associated here, which makes it difficult to develop a clear picture of an overall structure. For example, the reader is faced not only

with trying to understand the relationships between the many terms introduced in the “Chart of the Six Phases of the *Dharma-Wheel*,” but also must integrate them into other notions introduced throughout the text that are associated with it. These include cycles of breathing, the circulation of *qi* 氣 or perhaps Substance (*wu* 物) along meridians through the body, the interaction of the heart and kidneys and the energies associated with these organs, the operations of the Martial Fire (*wuhuo* 武火) and Civil Fire (*wenhuo* 文火) as part of the process of refinement, and so on. Although it is perhaps possible to start to create a picture that includes one or two of these areas in a consistent and comprehensible way, to achieve this in all the areas above is next to impossible, considering the mass of often unclear or contradictory detail involved. One particular challenge is that the Inner Workings seem at once to refer to a mechanism by which the various ingredients of the alchemical task are refined and made to interact with each other and also to the ingredients themselves. In other words, the process unites *shen* 神 and *qi*, or *xing* 性 and *ming* 命, to use only a few of the many available terms, to produce the Substance (*wu* 物), which is then itself circulated and refined. However, at times, the fire and wind that act upon these ingredients are themselves identified with *shen* and *qi*, yet at other times seem separate from them. Any examination in detail of the mechanism of refinement, no matter how it be described, ultimately allows only the most tentative of pictures to develop, which soon disappears when exposed to the detail of alternative, yet clearly related concepts.

In the case of the concepts of the Inner Workings (*ji* 機), but also practically all the concepts that occur in the *Huiming Jing*, another challenge to discerning a clear and detailed structure is the constant repetition and restatement that occurs throughout the text. At first, when seen broadly, this repetition can actually be helpful, as we have seen above: it allows us to draw parallels from which a general structure of stages begins to emerge. However, when we look at it in close detail, we begin to see that each repetition is different enough to create uncertainty as to exactly how it should be understood in

relationship to other repetitions of what appear to be the same concepts or processes. Part of this difficulty stems from the fact that the process of cultivation itself appears to be repetitive: the Inner Workings operate as a cycle, the *dharma*-wheel (*falun* 法輪) rotates over and over again, and the work of the True Seed (*zhenzhong* 真種) is similar to that of *Śarīra* (*sheli* 舍利) or the Embryo of the Tao (*daotai* 道胎). However, the text also has a tendency to repeat itself. Not only is each section, starting with the introductory charts, moving from “Collected Explanations” through to “Resolving Doubts,” a restatement of the entire process of training from beginning to end, but even within these sections, often in the space of a single commentary note, the entire process or any portion of it can be described, usually with a certain amount of variation from what appears elsewhere. What, then, is simple restatement, and what reflects the repetition of the training? This is very difficult to determine, and as a result, how any one statement should be related to the rest of the text is very unclear. In fact, as can be seen with the Inner Workings, the closer we look, the more repetition we find, in a seemingly endless spiral that is equally complex at any scale. What results is that a structure of stages that can seem clear from far away becomes less clear the closer we look.

Finally, this lack of clarity is also the result of a style of language that takes full advantage of the ability of literary Chinese to express ambiguity and many levels of meaning at once. The lack of clarity that we have discussed in the preceding paragraphs is a result less of clearly contradictory statements in the *Huiming Jing* than of language that is simply unclear and that often makes its point through implications that arise from juxtapositions and parallels. This allows the text or any portion of it, large or small, to lend itself to many potential meanings. Does this mean that the meaning of any statement can only be understood in relationship to its context? Perhaps, but if we focus on the distinctiveness of each context, we end up denying the presence of any overall structure, such as the stages, making our text infinitely confusing. Alternately, we can focus on the similarities between elements in our text, but closer examination will always reveal

contradictions in whatever structure we might believe we see. We are left with the challenge of trying to see structure in a text that provides us with hints at every level of detail, but at the same time presents obstacles that prevent us from pursuing these hints to a definitive, final, clear conclusion. Consequently, it is worth examining again the idea that the *Huiming Jing* reveals the secrets of the Buddhas and patriarchs. Although Liu Huayang suggests that these secrets are to be found in the stages of work, when we look at them closely, we can see that the structure of the stages itself is not entirely clear. What ends up being revealed is that behind the secrets are yet further secrets.

Given this obscurity that only gets more obscure the closer we examine its details, how can we try to understand the *Huiming Jing* as a text? To use the language of Liu Huayang, what in the end does it reveal to us? It is useful to consider if the efforts of scholars of the tradition of inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) can help us. An approach taken by some has been to treat the complexity of this tradition as a challenge to be overcome, to attempt to find the proper interpretive framework that will reveal the true meaning behind this type of text. One of the best examples of this kind of effort, which could be described as an attempt to decode the hidden meanings of inner alchemy, occurs in *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. 5, Part 5*, by Joseph Needham. In his work, Needham explores what he considers to be the physiological ideas and practices that lie behind the symbolic language of inner alchemy, and to a small extent, their development through history. For Needham, inner alchemy must be understood above all as a form of “proto-biochemistry,” and as a result its symbolism should be considered in terms of anatomy and theories of circulation in the body. In general, he attempts to relate elements of inner alchemy to modern medical theory as much as possible, and places the highest value on this type of understanding. For him, the complex symbolic language of inner alchemy can be understood as a coherent structure if we realize that the key to its interpretation is predominantly physiological.

Needham's book on inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) is highly significant for a number of reasons. First, it is a landmark study of this subject, and to date is still probably the most thorough examination of this topic to appear in English. In addition, his willingness to focus on the physiological aspects of both the theory and practice of inner alchemy served to raise awareness and understanding of this central aspect of the tradition that up to that point had not been investigated fully. If we consider Needham's approach in relation to the *Huiming Jing*, we can see that his type of interpretation is not out of place. For Liu Huayang, as we have already seen, the refinement, interaction and circulation of energies in the body is crucial, just as Needham points out. However, the teachings contained in the *Huiming Jing* are clearly also spiritual in nature, if we define "spiritual" with a clear understanding that in the Chinese tradition, it has never been completely separated from what we would call the "physical." Although Needham does briefly acknowledge this, he does not dig very deeply into the psychological or spiritual understanding of those who practised this system of training. Even more significant for us, however, is Needham's confidence that inner alchemy can be understood as a coherent system with a clear structure, provided that we approach it with the correct assumptions and are given the tools to correctly decode all the symbols we are faced with. However, as we have seen, the closer we look for structural coherence in our text, the more difficulties we run into. In fact, this kind of ambiguity is a central characteristic of our text and of inner alchemy in general. However, Needham does not explore in any detail why it exists or what role it plays, preferring instead to view it as a problem to be overcome through correct decoding.

In contrast to this kind of overt decoding, other scholars have tried to describe inner alchemy on what they would consider its own terms by examining the structure of the symbolic language it uses. For example, Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein, in *Procédés secrets*

du joyau magique,¹⁸ restricts herself to a single school within inner alchemy and immerses herself in its own concepts rather than aiming to explain her subject in light of physiology or other theories. Along with providing a translation of the *Lingbao Bifa*,¹⁹ an eleventh-century Song Dynasty text, she takes its symbolic structure head on and tries to present it as a system with its own coherence by using its own language to describe it in as much detail as possible, while relating its theories to specific meditation techniques and other physical practices. In exhaustive detail, she describes the interaction and refinement of energies at every stage of the process, from beginning to end. Unlike Needham, Baldrian-Hussein does not attempt to find an interpretive key that will unlock the complexity of the text and make it intelligible. Rather, she seems more interested in simply revealing the full detail of the symbolic structure she considers inherent in the text. Because she restricts herself to a single text and school, rather than attempting to characterize an entire tradition, Baldrian-Hussein provides a much better sense of the full detail of her subject matter. In some ways, however, her analysis is similar to Needham's in that she seems confident of the ultimate intelligibility of the system of inner alchemy. All her explanations focus on trying to fit the mass of detail in her text into a coherent structure, including stages of work. Unfortunately, she does not address the ambiguities and obscurity that are as prominent in her text as they are in the *Huiming Jing*. As a result, because she attempts to incorporate as much detail as possible, she is less successful than Needham is in presenting a picture of the tradition that is clear and understandable. Ultimately, the experience of reading *Procédés secrets du joyau magique* is not much less daunting than simply reading an original inner alchemical text, because of her attempt to fit such a wide range of detail into the structure she identifies, which is, unfortunately, as

¹⁸ Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein, *Procédés secrets du Joyau magique: Traité d'Alchimie Taoïste du XIe siècle* (Paris: Les Deux Océans, 1984).

¹⁹ Zhongli Quan 鍾離權, *Bichuan lingbao bifa* 秘傳靈寶秘法, HY 1182, DZ 874.

unstable as any structure we might tentatively identify in the *Huiming Jing*. Nevertheless, those who are seeking a detailed view of the many symbolic structures that can be found in the tradition of inner alchemy will find Baldrian-Hussein's work to be valuable.

Finally, an intriguing and promising approach for us as we try to deal with the problem of complexity and ambiguity that occurs in the *Huiming Jing* is presented by Isabelle Robinet. Unlike Needham and Baldrian-Hussein, Robinet does not aim to overcome the confusion presented by inner alchemical (*neidan* 內丹) texts. Rather, she embraces it and explores what she feels is its crucial role in supporting the training of the adept. In *Introduction à l'alchimie intérieure taoïste: De l'unité et de la multiplicité*,²⁰ she asserts that the unique language of inner alchemy springs from the recognition, as the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* emphasize, that truth is ultimately beyond words, yet that words are nevertheless necessary tools if a person wishes to penetrate more and more deeply into the reality of things. The symbols to be found in inner alchemy allow practitioners to journey within themselves physically, spiritually and intellectually to explore the ingredients of the alchemical task that exist there, as well as the relationships that exist between these ingredients. They can then begin to work with these ingredients, manipulating, combining, recreating and transforming them, ultimately creating a new person. Without language, this work would be impossible, as there would be no starting point or framework within which adepts could operate—the universe of mystery would remain inaccessible. However, as Robinet says, there is a danger of stagnation and sterility if the symbols are allowed to overshadow the reality to which they only imperfectly point. The practitioner must be constantly shaken up, and the symbolic frameworks constantly torn down, only to be recreated, reversed, opposed, united, otherwise manipulated and destroyed again in an ongoing cycle, and in ways that leave

²⁰ Isabelle Robinet, *Introduction à l'alchimie intérieure taoïste: De l'unité et de la multiplicité* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1995).

the mind reeling and therefore open to gradually deeper and deeper insight. Accordingly, any intellectual anchor, any firm ground on which the practitioner can begin to feel secure must remain tentative and eventually be shown to be false once it has served its purpose. As a result, it is impossible, and given the process described here, meaningless to try to determine what any one term refers to. Terms are only important in their relationships to each other, in the contexts in which they appear. Many terms can point to a single reality or principle, while at the same time many principles can be associated with a single term. Thus, according to Robinet, we can never uncover a final structure or develop a clear and consistent understanding of what an inner alchemical text is describing, but at the same time we can and should try to understand the tentative structures that we encounter. Only when we see both together and explore the interplay between these two principles can we begin to realize how such a text functions.

Robinet's ideas seem to reflect quite well what we encountered in the *Huiming Jing*. As we have seen already, a kind of provisional order can be seen in the way the symbols in the text are structured. However, the symbols interact and change to the point that we can never know exactly what they mean or how they relate to each other. While we can see a tentative coherence in the structure of meaning in our text, it is never completely stable. Although the text does display the kind of fluid structure that Robinet describes, does it offer any hints that suggest the role of this obscurity in training the practitioner is similar to what she proposes? Not directly—language, symbols and meaning are not discussed in the way they are in the *Laozi* or *Zhuangzi*, for example, or by certain other inner alchemical teachers that Robinet cites, such as Li Daochun 李道純.²¹ Liu Huayang does not say much at all about how the text should be used, except that the practitioner can rely on it to reveal the secrets of the teachings. However, there are a few indications

²¹ Robinet, 75-84.

that do help us. The first is the emphasis Liu places on the absolute necessity of working with a teacher. Despite the fact that he says that the text reveals the secrets of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, and even that a student “need not go to some other mountain to seek further help,”²² he makes the need for a teacher clear enough in the rest of the text that it cannot be seriously disputed. What this suggests is that he does not believe that the *Huiming Jing* can simply be read, understood and followed, no matter how much effort the student puts into untangling its intricacies. Instead, it implies that he acknowledges that words cannot express the ultimate truth of the teachings, and must therefore have some other role, which tends to support Robinet’s ideas. Indeed, when Liu talks about wisdom and understanding, it is associated with the silence and illumination of *samādhi* (*ding* 定) and the dissolution of the intelligent spirit (*shishen* 識神). It would be surprising if the text had been written with the assumption that it would speak only to the intellect as a step in this direction. It seems much more likely that the structure of the text would aim to engage, yet ultimately confound the intellect to achieve its transformation into something more profound, much as Robinet suggests.

What, then, is the role of the *Huiming Jing* in the experience of the adept? The progress described in our text would seem to require many years of work, perhaps a lifetime. Practitioners would very likely refer to the text over and over, with different concerns and different perspectives based on different internal experiences each time. It seems reasonable that any term, phrase or extended symbolic structure would have different significance to the same person at different times, and would point to new experiences each time. To take a random example, any phrase such as “If you shine the light back inwards and congeal your intention to enter it into the Northern Sea, then the Primordial Treasure will surely follow the return of the intention to the Northern Sea”

²² See page 4b of the “Author’s Introduction to the *Huiming Jing*.”

must take on an endless variety of meanings depending on the changing experience and circumstances of the student. Research such as that of both Needham and Baldrian-Hussein has great value in its ability to uncover what some of these meanings could be. However, whatever they are, in the end they would likely only be tentative and destined to ultimately disappear. This suggests that the *Huiming Jing* is best seen as a kind of reference guide to support oral instruction rather than a narrative with a beginning, middle and end. Perhaps Liu envisions a practitioner reading the text until he finds a passage that reflects his experience at the time or deals with his concern of the moment. Perhaps he sees a teacher encouraging a student to read the text in order to make a particular point to her, or to allow her to come to a new realization. The ways the text could be used are likely countless. However, it is also probable that once the question had been answered or the lesson learned, the text would take on a new role or meaning appropriate for the next situation. It is significant that the final chart of the introductory section of the *Huiming Jing* shows only an empty circle and contains no technical discussion. The ultimate reality that Liu Huayang aims to transmit is beyond words and beyond description. For him, words and concepts, including those found in our text, are only tools in the end, and in the end they all dissolve into empty void.

Conclusion

As we saw at the beginning of this discussion, a concern of Liu Huayang in compiling the *Huiming Jing* was the loss of the transmission of the secrets that had allowed the Buddhas and patriarchs to achieve enlightenment. In order to make these teachings available to the world, he took what he felt was the unprecedented step of revealing the secrets of their cultivation. However, as we have seen, revealing secrets is not the same as revealing

absolute truth. Rather, it seems that his aim was to provide tools to practitioners that would enable them to embark on the process of inner alchemical (*neidan* 內丹) training, which is how, according to him, the Buddhas and patriarchs achieved what they did. To avoid the dangers posed by the ever-present teachings of deviant schools, practitioners first needed to understand that the techniques that lead to enlightenment all concern the cultivation of the energies that exist inside the person. Second, they had to realize that this cultivation is a rigorous process with stages that need to be followed without shortcuts. Accordingly, he presented a system of stages that provide a doorway to the inner alchemical process. That process, however, is at heart one that defies systematization or easy description. Once embarked on it, practitioners are faced with language meant to allow them to penetrate ever deeper into the mysteries of the internal universe and transform themselves into something new. This language is complex and full of rich symbolism that can be explored and understood in a myriad of ways. However, implicit in it is also the understanding that words cannot reflect reality with complete accuracy. As a result, practitioners are faced with the interplay of structure and chaos, the alternate affirmation and breakdown of all the concepts of training. It is finally only through this process, our text seems to suggest, that they will reach enlightenment.

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Appendix I: Tonal Analysis of Poetry

The poetry that accompanies the charts in the first section of the text appears to be “regulated *shi*” (*lüshi* 律詩). Accordingly, the tonal patterns of the lines of each couplet alternate based on their Early Middle Chinese pronunciation. This alternation makes it possible to see which lines form couplets together. The analysis below shows the pattern for each poem.

For the purposes of this type of regulation, the four tones, “level” (*ping* 平), “rising” (*shang* 上), “departing” (*qu* 去) and “entering” (*ru* 入), are grouped into two categories. The first consists of the level tone only, while the second, called “oblique” (*ze* 仄), includes the other three tones. Below, I have use the symbol “o” to represent level tones and “x” to represent oblique tones. Pronunciation follows Edwin Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991.

CHART OF THE END OF LEAKAGE (*LOUJIN TU* 漏盡圖)

欲 juawk	成 ɕɿajŋ	漏 ləw ^h	盡 ɕɿin ^h	金 kim	剛 kaŋ	體 t ^h ej ^h		x	o	x	x	o	o	x
勤 gɿn	造 ɕɿaw ^h	烹 p ^h aɿŋ	蒸 tɕɿŋ	慧 ɣweɿ ^h	命 miaŋ ^h	根 kən		o	x	o	o	x	x	o
定 teɿŋ ^h	照 tɕɿaw	莫 mak	離 liə	歡 xwan	喜 xi	地 di ^h		x	x	x	o	o	x	x
時 ɕɿɿ	將 tɕɿaŋ	真 tɕɿin	我 ŋa ^h	隱 ɣin ^h	藏 ɕɿaŋ	居 kiə		o	o	o	x	x	o	o

CHART OF THE SIX PHASES OF THE *DHARMA*-WHEEL
(*FALUN LIUHOU TU* 法輪六候圖)

Here and below, although minor irregularity in the tonal pattern may occasionally appear, it is not significant enough to obscure the underlying pattern:

分 pun	開 k ^h əj	佛 but	祖 tso'	源 ŋuan	頭 dəw	路 lɔ ^h	o o x x o o x
現 ɣɛn ^h	出 tɕ ^h yt	西 sej	方 puəŋ	極 gik	樂 lak	城 dʒiajŋ	x x o o x x o
法 puap	輪 lwin	吸 xip	轉 trwian'	朝 driaw	天 t ^h ɛn	駕 kaɪ ^h	x o x x o o x
消 siaw	息 sik	呼 xɔ	來 ləj	往 wuan	地 di ^h	歸 kuj	o x o o x x o
片 p ^h ɛn ^h	時 dʒɪ	成 dʒiajŋ	六 luwk	候 ɣɛw'			x o o x x
一 ʔjit	刻 k ^h ək	會 ɣwaj ^h	源 ŋuan	頭 dəw			x(o) x x o o
大 da'	道 daw ^h	從 dzuawŋ	中 truwŋ	出 tɕ ^h yt			x x o o x
元 ŋuan	機 kij	莫 mak	外 ŋwaj ^h	求 guw			o o x x o

CHART OF THE TWO MERIDIANS: CONCEPTION AND GOVERNING
(*RENDU ERMAI TU* 任督二脈圖)

現 ɣɛn ^h	出 tɕ ^h yt	元 ŋuan	關 kwaɪn	消 siaw	息 sik	路 lɔ ^h	x x o o o x x
休 xuw	忘 muan ^h	百 paijk	脈 məɪjk	法 puap	輪 lwin	行 ɣaijŋ	o x(o) x x x o o
常 dʒiaŋ	教 kaɪw ^h	火 xwa'	養 jiaŋ'	長 driəŋ	生 ɣiajŋ	窟 k ^h wət	o x(o) x x o o x
檢 kiam'	點 tɛm'	明 miajŋ	珠 tɕuä	不 pət	死 si'	關 kwaɪn	x x o o x x o

CHART OF THE EMBRYO OF THE TAO (*DAOTAI TU* 道胎圖)

有 wuw'	法 puap	無 muə	功 kəwŋ	勤 g'in	照 tɕiaw ^h	徹 tr ^h iat	x x o o o x x
忘 muan ^h	形 ɣejŋ	顧 kɔ ^h	裏 li'	助 dʒiä ^h	眞 tɕin	靈 lejŋ	x(o) o x x x o o
十 dʒip	月 ɲuat	道 daw'	胎 t ^h əj	火 xwa'			x x x o x
一 ʔjit	年 nɛn	沐 məwk	浴 juawk	溫 ʔwən			x(o) o x(o) x o

CHART OF SENDING FORTH THE EMBRYO (*CHUTAI TU* 出胎圖)

身 ɕin	外 ŋwaj ^h	有 wuw'	身 ɕin	名 mjiəŋ	佛 but	相 sɪəŋ ^(h)	o x x o o x x
念 nɛm ^h	靈 lejŋ	無 muə	念 nɛm ^h	即 tsik	菩 bɔ	提 dej	x o o x x o o
千 ts ^h ɛn	葉 jiap	蓮 lɛn	花 xwaɪ	由 juw	炁 k ^h ij ^h	化 xwaɪ ^h	o x o o o x x
百 paijk	光 kwan	景 kiajŋ'	耀 jiaw ^h	假 kaɪ ^h	神 ʒin	凝 ŋjŋ	x o x x x o o

CHART OF THE TRANSFORMATION BODY (*HUASHEN TU* 化身圖)

分 pun	念 nɛm ^h	成 dʒiəŋ	形 ɣejŋ	窺 k ^h jwiə	色 sik	相 sɪəŋ ^(h)	o x o o o x x
共 guawŋ ^h	靈 lejŋ	顯 xɛn'	迹 tsiajk	化 xwaɪ ^h	虛 k ^h iə	無 muə	x o x x x o o
出 tɕ ^h yt	有 wuw'	入 ɲip	無 muə	承 dʒiŋ	妙 mjiaw ^h	道 daw'	x x x o o x x
分 pun	形 ɣejŋ	露 lɔ ^h	體 t ^h ej'	共 guawŋ ^h	眞 tɕin	源 ɲuan	o o x(o) x x o o

CHART OF FACING THE WALL (*MIANBI TU* 面壁圖)

神 ʒin	火 xwa'	化 xwaɪ ^h	形 ɣɛjŋ	空 k ^h əwŋ	色 ʂik	相 siaŋ(ʰ)	o x x o o x x
性 siajŋ ^h	光 kwaŋ	返 puan'	照 tɕiaw ^h	復 buwk	元 ŋuan	眞 tɕin	x o x(o) x x o o
心 sim	印 ʔjin ^h	懸 ɣwɛn	空 k ^h əwŋ	月 ŋuat	影 ʔiajŋ'	淨 ɕiajŋ ^h	o x o o x x x
筏 buat	舟 tɕuw	到 taw ^h	岸 ŋan ^h	日 ɲit	光 kwaŋ	融 juwŋ	x o x x x(o) o o

CHART OF DISSOLUTION INTO EMPTY VOID
(*XUKONG FENSUI TU* 虛空粉碎圖)

In this poem, in addition to determining which lines form couplets together, we must also work to discern the order of the couplets themselves. In regulated *shi* poetry, the tones of even numbered syllables should alternate within a line and the resulting pattern should also alternate from line to line. There can also be alternation from couplet to couplet. The following sample tone structure illustrates all these patterns:

_ x _ o _ x _
 _ o _ x _ o _
 _ o _ x _ o _
 _ x _ o _ x _

Although in the poems of our text we have examined up to now there is not always alternation between couplets, the other tonal rules are consistently applied and there is always balance between couplets, be it in the form of alternation or repetition. As a result, for this poem I have chosen to follow Richard Wilhelm in using a line order that remains as conventional as possible while at the same time providing the cleanest and most consistent tonal pattern within lines, between lines and between couplets:

不	生	不	滅
pət	ɕiaŋ	pət	mjiat
無	去	無	來
muə̌	kʰiə̌h	muə̌	ləj

x o x x

o x o o

一	片	光	輝	周	法	界
ʔjit	pʰɛnʰ	kwaŋ	xuj	təuw	puap	kɛ:ɟʰ
雙	忘	寂	淨	最	靈	虛
ɕaiwŋ	muənʰ	dzejk	dziaŋʰ	tsuəjʰ	leɟŋ	kʰiə̌

x x o o o x x

o x(o) x x x o o

虛	空	朗	徹	天	心	耀
kʰiə̌	kʰəwŋ	laŋʰ	trʰiat	tʰɛn	sim	jiawʰ
海	水	澄	清	潭	月	溶
xəjʰ	əwiʰ	drin	tsʰiaŋŋ	dam	ŋuat	juawŋ

o o x x o o x

x x o o o(x) x o

雲	散	碧	空	山	色	淨
wun	sanʰ	piajk	kʰəwŋ	ɕəin	ɕik	dziaŋʰ
慧	歸	禪	定	月	輪	孤
ɣweɟʰ	kuj	dʒian	dɛɟŋʰ	ŋuat	lwin	kɔ

o x x o o x x

x o o x x o o