

## The Representation of Time in the Zhouyi Cantong Qi

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## Résumé

Attribué aux Han mais remontant dans son état présent aux Tang, le Zhouyi cantong qi, associé originellement aux Apocryphes et à la tradition exégétique du Livre des Mutations, met en lumière un autre aspect du rapport entre Taoïsme et Apocryphes traité magistralement par Anna Seidel dans son étude "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments ". La représentation de l'œuvre alchimique dans le texte étudié ici se base en partie sur des conceptions cosmologiques élaborées à l'époque Han. Son examen révèle quelques aspects importants des idées sur le temps dans l'alchimie chinoise.

Si la composition des élixirs, comme l'écrivent souvent les alchimistes chinois, reproduit et accélère le processus par lequel les minéraux se transmutent naturellement en or à l'intérieur de la terre, la perfection représentée par l'or porte avec elle l'expiration du temps. Cet état intemporel correspond à la domination du xiantian ("Avant le Ciel") et est symbolisé par la ligne entière du Livre des Mutations, qui représente l'Un, appelé aussi le "Yang pur". L'engendrement de l'Un par le non-être (wu) indique le premier stade de la cosmogonie. Sa séparation en deux principes complémentaires représente le second stade. L'entrée dans le houtian ("Après le Ciel") a lieu au stade suivant, quand la nouvelle conjonction du yin et du yang engendre le cosmos gouverné par les lois de l'espace et du temps.

La connaissance du dao ou du principe intemporel interne à la mutation est possible, selon les textes alchimiques chinois, parce que le houtian, et toute entité en dépendant, conserve une "particule" (dian) de Yang pur dans son état originel tel qu'il est dans le xiantian. Dans l'œuvre alchimique, cette particule est représentée par l'élixir, une entité privée d'aspects temporels et donc capable de restituer à la matière, dégradée par l'action du temps, son aspect pur et incorruptible représenté par l'or. Les phases de l'œuvre alchimique sont représentées et réglées par les mêmes signes qui décrivent les caractéristiques du xiantian et son extension dans le houtian. La mutation cyclique est le contenant visible (la "fonction", yong) du principe invisible (la "substance", ti). La montée et la descente de la ligne entière le long des trois positions du trigramme (cycle mensuel), ou les six positions des hexagrammes (cycle annuel), servent à représenter la présence de la "particule de Yang pur" intemporelle dans le temps. L'alchimie applique ces conceptions aux "temps du feu" (huohou), qui gouvernent le réchauffement de l'élixir dans le waidan (alchimie externe) et la circulation des constituants primaires de la personne dans le neidan (alchimie interne).

Il n'y a donc pas que le temps qui est porté à son accomplissement (waidan) ou reconduit à son début (neidan) : dans les deux disciplines, l'élixir possède les mêmes qualités intemporelles que la "particule de Yang pur" parce qu'il est engendré en accord avec les phases de sa constante présence dans le temps.

Un appendice à cet article examine les rapports du Zhouyi cantong qi avec les Apocryphes et la tradition exégétique Han du Livre des Mutations, sa transmission durant l'époque des Six Dynasties, et les modifications apportées au texte par Peng Xiao (?-955), dont l'œuvre fut à son tour rééditée au début du treizième siècle.

## THE REPRESENTATION OF TIME IN THE *ZHOUYI CANTONG QI*\*

Fabrizio PREGADIO

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From one who worships, thinking "Time is Brahma", time reflows afar... There are, indeed, two forms of Brahma; time, and the Timeless. That which is prior to the sun is the Timeless and partless; but that which begins with the sun is the time that has parts.

*Maitrī Upaniṣad, VI.15*

(quoted in Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Time and Eternity*, 15)

As Anna Seidel has shown in her "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments," the remnants of the corpus of writings known as *weishu* 緯書, or apocrypha, hold keys for a more accurate understanding of the history and doctrines of Taoism in Han and later times. Closely associated in content with the system of the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經) and formally attached to this and the other Classics, the apocrypha were primarily concerned with the principles that regulate the functioning of the cosmos and thus were intended to direct the course of the sovereign's actions. "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments" was the first study to examine in detail a theme prominent in these writings: the tokens (sacred objects, scriptures, talismans, charts, registers of divine names) and the omens by which heavenly powers granted and authenticated the investiture of legendary or historical rulers. In a masterly work,

based on sources sometimes so fragmentarily preserved as to defy intelligibility, Anna Seidel demonstrated the continuity between these themes and Taoist doctrines, showing that the Han and Six Dynasties doctrines of Taoist initiation and transmission matched the *wei* lore of dynastic investiture and succession.

The *Zhouyi cantong qi* 周易參同契 (“Token of the Agreement of the Three in Accordance with the *Book of Changes*”) illustrates another facet of the links between Taoism and the apocrypha and the sources of the Han exegetical tradition of the *Changes*. As shown in the appendix below, the original version of this work was associated with both corpora. The shared background of notions, images and vocabulary yielded a different text, which over time became the foremost Chinese alchemical scripture. Often designated by such appellations as “the ancestor of all writings on the elixirs” 萬卷丹經之祖, the *Zhouyi cantong qi* (hereafter *Cantong qi*) formed the basis for a larger textual and doctrinal tradition than that of any other alchemical work. The text articulates the doctrines canonized in parts of the *Book of Changes*, applying them to the alchemical discipline. It uses lines, trigrams and hexagrams of the *Changes*, and other cosmological devices, to represent the cosmogonic process, construct a cosmological model, and describe facets of the alchemical discipline. Hidden in a highly allusive language and thick layers of symbols and images is an exposition of the doctrine that inspired a variety of commentaries and other works, in both the Taoist and Neo-Confucian traditions.<sup>1</sup>

Our focus will be the representation of time as it emerges from various passages of the text. This will lead us to touch on some important themes in the Chinese alchemical doctrines—for example, the relation between timelessness and time, the use of various sets of images to represent and measure time, and their significance from an alchemical point of view.

### “Before the Heaven” and “after the Heaven”

According to several commentators, the subjects dealt with in the *Cantong qi* and referred to in its title are Taoist doctrines (*huanglao* 黄老), cosmology or the system of the *Book of Changes* (*dayi* 大易), and alchemy (*luhuo* 爐火). Both the *Laozi* 老子 and the *Book of Changes* are often quoted or alluded to in the *Cantong qi*.<sup>2</sup> The doctrines

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<sup>1</sup> A reflection of the influence of the *Cantong qi* is also found in the identically titled Buddhist work, attributed to Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700-791) and still held in high esteem within the Sōtō 曹洞 lineage of Japanese Zen. On this text see the study by James Robson published in this volume of *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*.

Here and below, “device” renders the French term *dispositif*, adopted by Marc Kalinowski in many of his works. See, for example, the introduction to his *Cosmologie et divination dans la Chine ancienne*. Cf. Bibliography below, pp. 172-173.

<sup>2</sup> References to the *Laozi* are in zh. 1, 8, 20, 21, 23, 40, and 61. Sentences of the *Book of*

expressed in the *Laozi* provide the necessary ground for the alchemical work, which is performed in accordance with the laws of cosmology but intends to transcend them. In both *waidan* 外丹 (“external alchemy”) and *neidan* 内丹 (“internal alchemy”), time is the main focus of this endeavor. Chinese alchemists, as Nathan Sivin has pointed out,<sup>3</sup> often compared the compounding of an elixir to the process by which minerals naturally transmute themselves into gold within the earth. An obvious but major implication of this idea is that the perfection represented by gold brings the expiration of time. While the *waidan* practice accelerates time and brings it to an end, *neidan* takes the opposite path, leading an adept backward along the stages of the time cycles and receding to the inception of time. In either case, the accomplishment of the alchemical process grants access to timelessness, or immortality.<sup>4</sup>

The domains of the *Laozi* and the *Book of Changes*—which I shall refer to below as the Principle (*dao* 道) and manifestation (*yi* 易 or “change”)—coincide in many regards with the distinction between *xiantian* 先天 (“before the Heaven”) and *houtian* 後天 (“after the Heaven”).<sup>5</sup> Both expressions refer to the “opening of Heaven” (*kaitian* 開天), the spontaneous generation of the cosmos from Primordial Breath (*yuanqi* 元氣) or Pure Yang (*chunyang* 純陽). In the representation of cosmogony that is central to the Chinese alchemical doctrines, Primordial Breath expands with a movement often compared to the rotation of the Great Dipper around its axis. In this process, Pure Yang divides itself into the two complementary principles, *yin* and *yang*. Their re-union generates manifestation and change, or the *houtian*. The two other modes of the Principle—*yuanshen* 元神 or Primordial Spirit and *yuanjing* 元精 or Primordial Essence—act as a foundation for non-material and material manifestation, respectively. Due to the process of inversion that governs the shift from *xiantian* to *houtian*, Primordial Spirit and Primordial Essence become

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*Changes* are quoted or echoed in *zh.* 1, 6, 9, 13, 15-17, 19, 40, 43-45, 47, 49, 59, and 76. This interpretation of the title of the *Cantong qi* is supported by a passage in *zh.* 85. According to another explanation, based on some lines of *zh.* 16, the “three” are Heaven, Earth and Man.

<sup>3</sup> See Nathan Sivin, “The Theoretical Background of Elixir Alchemy,” 221-279, and “Chinese Alchemy and the Manipulation of Time.”

<sup>4</sup> *Waidan* and *neidan* mark two distinct attitudes toward time only in their use of cosmological devices that represent and regulate the course of the practice. In *waidan* as well time is brought back to its origin by recreating within the crucible conditions similar to those prevailing before manifestation. Kristofer Schipper and Wang Hsiu-huei, “Progressive and Regressive Time Cycles in Taoist Ritual,” 197, take note of the coexistence of two positions with regard to time in *waidan* as they remark: “The fire-phasing in the furnace reproduces the time cycle of the calendar year while the elixir inside the vessel goes through the nine transformations of the embryo,” which in alchemy are re-enacted in reverse.

<sup>5</sup> More exactly, the *Book of Changes* deals with the “extension” of the *xiantian* into the *houtian*. Focusing on time, which is, together with space, the matrix of change, it ultimately consists of a description, through numerology and abstract symbols, of the features of Being as it appears in manifestation. Divination is one application of this cosmological system.

enclosed in entities of the opposite sign. In human beings, in particular, the cosmogonic process causes Primordial Spirit (*yin*) to be enclosed in the mind/heart (*yang*), and Primordial Essence (*yang*) to be enclosed in the kidneys (*yin*).

Cosmogony, thus, takes place in three main stages: (1) generation of Being, i.e., the One, from Non-Being (the *dao*, or the Absolute beyond any attribute); (2) division of the One into *yin* and *yang*; (3) production of the cosmos by the coupling of *yin* and *yang*. The first two stages pertain to *xiantian*, while the third marks the shift to *houtian*.<sup>6</sup> The emblems of the *Book of Changes* are one of several sets of representations, all corresponding to each other, used to refer to the principles outlined above. The multiple denotations of its unbroken — and broken -- lines, in particular, parallel the three stages of cosmogony. First, the unbroken line stands for the One before its separation into the complementary principles. Second, it represents the *yang* aspect of the One in the *xiantian*, complemented by its *yin* aspect, or the broken line. Third, the unbroken line denotes *yang* within *yin* in the *houtian*, and is paralleled by the broken line that denotes *yin* within *yang*.

When the alchemical texts express their doctrines through the emblems of the *Changes*, the principle sought by the alchemist is represented by the unbroken line. The third signification of this line is essential to the representation of time in the *Cantong qi* and deserves closer attention. The emblems of the *Changes* are related to other devices, e.g., the Five Agents (*wuxing* 五行), the ten Stems of Heaven (*tiangan* 天干), and the twelve Branches of Earth (*dizhi* 地支).<sup>7</sup> A passage in *zh.* 9 of the *Cantong qi* applies these emblems to the principles underlying manifestation:

坎戊月精	<i>Kan</i> is <i>wu</i> , and is the essence of the Moon,
離己日光	<i>li</i> is <i>ji</i> , and is the radiance of the Sun.
日月爲易	The Sun and Moon make change,
剛柔相當	the hard and the soft match each other.

<sup>6</sup> This cosmogonic scheme is also announced in *zh.* 42 of the *Laozi*: the *dao* generates the One; the One begets the two; from the union of the two a third (the “three”) is born; the many (*wanwu* 萬物 or “ten thousand things”) are the sum of the individual entities thus produced. Isabelle Robinet, “Original Contributions of *Neidan* to Taoism and Chinese Thought,” 309-310, compares the cosmogonic schemes of the *Book of Changes* and the *Laozi*, noting that Chinese alchemy displays a marked preference for the latter. The stages of the process described in the *Laozi* can, nonetheless, be represented by the emblems of the *Book of Changes* (see Table 3 below).

<sup>7</sup> For a diagram representing the correspondences among these devices see Peng Xiao’s “Diagram of the Bright Mirror” (“Mingjing tu” 明鏡圖) in his *Zhouyi cantong qi dingqi ge mingjing tu* 周易參同契鼎器歌明鏡圖 (The “Song of the Tripod” and the “Diagram of the Bright Mirror” of the *Token of the Agreement of the Three According to the Book of Changes*; CT 1003), 8a-b. See also a similar illustration (with the Great Dipper at the center) in Yu Yan’s 俞琰 *Yiwai biezhuàn* 易外別傳 (The “Separate Transmission of the *Changes*”; 1284; CT 1009), 14b. These diagrams do not pertain only to alchemy, but to any discipline based on the laws of cosmology. See Kalinowski, *Cosmologie et divination dans la Chine ancienne*, 57-74.

The noteworthy feature of this representation is that the female trigram *kan* ☵ is associated with the Moon but includes a *yang* unbroken line, matching the Stem *wu* 戊 or the male aspect of the One. The male trigram *li* ☲, vice versa, is associated with the Sun but incorporates a *yin* broken line, matching the Stem *ji* 己 or the female aspect of the One.

For this reason, *kan* and *li* are said to be the visible “functions” (*yong* 用) in the *houtian* of the unbroken and the broken lines, which are their invisible “substance” (*ti* 體) in the *xiantian*. The opening section of the *Cantong qi* refers to this:

乾坤者易之門戶	<i>Qian</i> and <i>kun</i> are the gates of change,
衆卦之父母	the father and the mother of all the hexagrams.
坎離匡郭	<i>Kan</i> and <i>li</i> are the walls,
運轂止軸	the correct axle in the revolving hub.

*Li* and *kan* of the *houtian* are compared here to walls that enclose the authentic *yin* and *yang* of *xiantian*. As a “correct axle in the revolving hub,” they are at the center of manifestation and its temporal cycles.<sup>8</sup>

The relationship between *xiantian* and *houtian*, or analogous correlates, is a key element in alchemy and other doctrines, bound to show that the two sides of the dichotomy are radically different and yet fundamentally one. An axiom common to these doctrines is that existence and any of its impermanent constituents (including time) cannot be identified with the Principle but are among the changing and transient attributes that the Principle can assume. In Taoism, this is expressed in the proposition that existence and its constituents are not the *dao* but are images (*xiang* 象) of the *dao*. In a formulation specific to and recurring in *neidan* texts, knowledge of the *dao* within change, or of *xiantian* within *houtian*, is possible because the *houtian*, and every entity within it, harbors a “particle” (*dian* 點) of Primordial Breath or Pure Yang in the same pristine state as in the *xiantian*.

### Tracing the particle of Primordial Breath

This “particle,” and the ways in which it is represented, is at the core of the alchemical work. *Zhang* 16 of the *Cantong qi* is concerned with the purpose of these representations:

元精眇難睹	Primordial Essence is subtle and difficult to observe:
推度效符證	[therefore] scrutinize and reckon its tokens.
居則觀其象	Ceaselessly contemplating its images,
準擬其形容	adapt and comply to its attributes.

<sup>8</sup> For a diagram representing *li* and *kan* as the “walls” of authentic *yin* and *yang* see Hu Wei’s 胡渭 *Yitu mingbian* 易圖明辨 (“Discriminating among Diagrams of the Changes”; 1706), 3.19a (Siku Quanshu ed.). *Juan* 3 of Hu Wei’s work also includes a choice of passages on the *Cantong qi* drawn from works of various dates and provenance.



Primordial Essence (the principle of material manifestation, or the *yang* aspect of Primordial Breath) is sought by the alchemist to restore matter to its original state by “projection,” a process also denoted by the term *dian*. Once detected, or recognized, the “particle of Primordial Breath,” which corresponds to the Philosopher’s Stone of Western alchemists, should be projected onto matter to transmute it back into its pristine condition. This “particle” is the elixir itself. The *waidan* elixir, often referred to as *jing* 精 or “essence,” is an entity deprived of temporal aspects and therefore capable of restoring matter degraded by the action of time to a pure and uncorrupt state, represented by gold. In the remarkably more complex *neidan* practice, part of the work consists of recovering Primordial Essence by cycling its material counterpart (semen) backwards.

In both *waidan* and *neidan*, the steps of the practice are represented and regulated by the same emblems that serve to describe the features of *xiantian* and its extension into the *houtian*. The alchemical practice is an application, in the domain of time and space (the cosmos), of the metaphysical principles that we have surveyed above. For this reason, the practice provides an adept with temporary support for re-integrating the *houtian* into the *xiantian*.<sup>9</sup> In both *waidan* and *neidan*, the alchemical process is typically represented by devices based on the *Book of Changes*, which make it possible to represent time cycles of different magnitude, scale them upwards or downwards, and nest them into each other. Alchemy applies these devices to the system of “fire phasing” (*huohou* 火候), which governs the heating of an elixir in *waidan*, and the circulation of the prime constituents of the adept’s person in *neidan*. Trigrams and hexagrams are used to represent single phases within these cycles.<sup>10</sup> Referring to *Laozi* 11, *zh.* 8 of the *Cantong qi* shows that these emblems, although concerned with time, are a means to transcend time.

以無制有	Being is produced from Non-being:
器用者空	the use of a vase resides in its emptiness.
故推消息	Therefore infer the ebb and flow,
坎離没亡	and <i>kan</i> and <i>li</i> will disappear and be forgotten.

As “the use of a vase resides in its emptiness,” so the rising and falling *yin* and *yang* of the *houtian* hide within themselves the *yin* and *yang* of the *xiantian*. The alchemical work on the temporal cycles brings about the disappearance of *li* 離 and

<sup>9</sup> Though it can be expressed in alchemical language, the realization of the fundamental oneness of *xiantian* and *houtian* (that is, the extinction of any difference between them) lies beyond the domain of the alchemical practice. For this reason, the *neidan* texts that describe the alchemical discipline as a three-stage process (refining of essence into breath, of breath into spirit, and entrance into Emptiness, *xu* 虛) barely provide indications about the last stage.

<sup>10</sup> For examples of the use of the “fire phasing” in *waidan* and *neidan* see Sivin, “The Theoretical Background of Elixir Alchemy,” 266-278, and Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein, *Procédés Secrets du Joyau Magique*, 88-107, respectively.

*kan* ☵ and the restoration of *qian* ☰ and *kun* ☷. This is the first stage of the re-integration of *houtian* and *xiantian*, or of time and timelessness.

Change being the visible container of the invisible Principle, the trigrams and hexagrams of the *Book of Changes* serve to trace the presence of the timeless *dao* in the temporal cosmos. What flows through them is nothing but the “particle of Primordial Breath,” whose action is represented by the ascent and descent of the unbroken line along the three positions of the trigrams, or the six positions of the hexagrams. *Zhang* 48 of the *Cantong qi* is concerned with this line:

循據濬璣	Moving around in accordance with Xuan and Ji (i.e., the Great Dipper),
升降上下	rising and declining, ascending and descending,
周流六爻	it flows through the six lines [of the hexagrams],
難可察賭	but is difficult to survey.
故無常位	This is because it has no constant position
爲易宗祖	— it is the Principal Ancestor of change.

Alternatively, change can be represented by the movement of both the broken *yin* line and the unbroken *yang* line. *Zhang* 7 alludes to this second option.

二用無爻位	The two functions ( <i>yong</i> ) have no [fixed] positions in the lines:
周流行六虛	they flow in cycles among the six empty spaces [of the hexagrams].

The flow of the broken and unbroken lines through trigrams and hexagrams is apparent in the two main devices that the *Cantong qi* adopts to represent time, which we will now examine. Both are associated with Yu Fan 虞翻 (164-233), the last great commentator of the Han exegetical tradition of the *Book of Changes*.

### The Contained Stem (*najia* 納甲)

Attributed in its original form to Jing Fang 京方 (77-37 B.C., of whose line of transmission Yu Fan is a later representative), this device essentially consists of matching the eight trigrams to the ten Stems of Heaven. *Qian* ☰ is associated with *jia* 甲 and *ren* 壬, *kun* ☷ with *yi* 乙 and *gui* 癸, and each remaining trigram with one Stem, as shown in Table 1 below. The main development of this pattern is ascribed to Yu Fan. Elaborating on the sentence, “Of the images suspended [between Heaven and Earth], none is greater than the Sun and the Moon” 縣象莫大乎日月, in the *Xici* 繫辭 (Appended Sayings) portion of the *Book of Changes*, Yu Fan applied the *najia* device to a representation of the moon cycle. This pattern is the subject of *zh.* 13-15 and 46-48 of the *Cantong qi*, where six trigrams are associated with nodal days in the waxing and waning of the moon.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> On the application of the *najia* device in the *Cantong qi* see Suzuki Yoshijirō, *Kan Eki kenkyū*, 632-635; Wang Ming, “*Zhouyi cantong qi kaozheng*,” 252-254; and Imai Usaburō, “*Shūeki sandōkei to Sōgaku*,” 13-14. Yu Fan’s passage is preserved with other fragments of

DAY	PHASE	TRIGRAM	STEM (AND DIRECTION)
3	beginning of waxing ( <i>shuo</i> 朔)	zhen 震 ☳	geng 庚 (W)
8	first quarter ( <i>shangxian</i> 上弦)	dui 兌 ☱	ding 丁 (S)
15	full moon ( <i>wang</i> 望)	qian 乾 ☰	jia 甲 (E)
16	beginning of waning ( <i>jiwang</i> 既望)	sun 巽 ☴	xin 辛 (W)
23	last quarter ( <i>xiaxian</i> 下弦)	gen 艮 ☶	bing 丙 (S)
30	end of cycle ( <i>hui</i> 晦)	kun 坤 ☷	yi 乙 (E)

TABLE 1. The *najia* device as developed by Yu Fan and applied in the *Cantong qi*.

*Li* ☳ and *kan* ☵ do not match any moon phase, as they represent the immobile Center and do not become part of the cycle. Precisely for this reason they constitute a major feature of this device. In the night between the end of one lunar cycle and the beginning of the next, the moon, *kan*, moves to *gui* 癸, associated with the north. There it meets the sun, *li*, corresponding to the Stem *ren* 壬 and, again, the north. The sun and the moon join their essences, represented by the inner lines of the corresponding trigrams and by the Stems *wu* 戊 and *ji* 己. Both Stems are associated with the center. In the conditioned state, the union of the essences of the sun and the moon at the end of a time cycle produces the next cycle. In the *neidan* practice, where time processes are reproduced backwards, their reiterated conjunction generates the “embryo of immortality.” Cosmologically, this conjunction restores the original couple of male and female trigrams, *qian* and *kun*, through the exchange of the inner lines of *li* and *kan*.

### The Twelve-stage Ebb and Flow (*shier xiaoxi* 十二消息)

This device represents cyclical change by twelve so-called “sovereign hexagrams” (*bigua* 辟卦) in which, similar to the *najia* pattern, the broken and unbroken lines flow first upwards and then downwards. While the application of the *najia* device to the moon phases takes the month as a time unit, the twelve sovereign hexagrams reproduce the upturn and decline of *yin* and *yang* throughout the year.<sup>12</sup> Yu Fan mentions the “Twelve-stage Ebb and Flow” in two fragments of his *Yijing* commentary. In one of them he names the twelve hexagrams in sets of

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his lost *Yijing* exegesis in Li Dingzuo’s 李鼎祚 (Tang, dates unknown) *Zhouyi jijie* 周易集解 (Collected Explications of the *Book of Changes*), 14.350 (Congshu Jicheng ed.). It consists of a note on a sentence in section A.11 of the *Xici* (text in the Harvard-Yenching *Concordance to Yi Ching*); transl. Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, 319. This passage is also discussed and compared to the *Cantong qi* in Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, II: 426-427. For graphical representations of the *najia* device see *Yitu mingbian*, 3.27a-b and 29b.

<sup>12</sup> See Suzuki, 165-167 and ff.

three. Each hexagram represents one month, and each set—beginning with *tai* 泰 ䷊, associated with the first month of spring—matches one season.<sup>13</sup> Table 2 shows the associations mentioned by Yu Fan in the order in which they are usually arranged, starting with the hexagram *fu* 復 ䷗ that represents the beginning of the growth of *yang*. In addition to the months of the year, the table shows the associations of the sovereign hexagrams with other duodenary series used in alchemy: the Branches of Earth, the pitches (*lü* 律), and the watches of the day (*shi* 時). The last association allows scaling down time from the year to the day.

䷗	䷊	䷊	䷗	䷗	䷀	䷋	䷋	䷋	䷋	䷖	䷖	䷁
復	臨	泰	大壯	夬	乾	姤	遯	否	觀	剝	坤	
fu	lin	tai	dazhuang	guai	qian	gou	dun	pi	guan	bo	kun	
11月	12月	1月	2月	3月	4月	5月	6月	7月	8月	9月	10月	
zi 子	chou 丑	yin 寅	mao 卯	chen 辰	si 巳	wu 午	wei 未	shen 申	you 酉	xu 戌	hai 亥	
黃鐘	大呂	太簇	夾鐘	姑洗	仲呂	蕤賓	林鐘	夷則	南呂	無射	應鐘	
huangzhong	dalü	taicou	jiazhong	guxi	zhonglü	ruibin	linzhong	yize	nanlü	wuyi	yingzhong	
23-1時	1-3時	3-5時	5-7時	7-9時	9-11時	11-13時	13-15時	15-17時	17-19時	19-21時	21-23時	

TABLE 2. The *shier xiaoxi* device and its association with other duodenary series.

The section of the *Cantong qi* dealing with the “Twelve-stage Ebb and Flow” (*zh.* 49-60) describes each stage of the process in an allusive way: the names of the pitches, for instance, are sometimes contracted into a single character (e.g., *cou* 簇 for *taicou* 太簇, and *xi* 洗 for *guxi* 姑洗), while the Branches often appear hidden within other characters (e.g., *wei* 未 within *mei* 昧, and *shen* 申 within *shen* 伸). In both cases, the graphs refer to the cosmological marker but also retain their proper meaning within the poem.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Zhouyi jijie*, 13.324. Yu Fan comments here on the sentence, “Because of its changes and its continuity, it (i.e., the system of the *Book of Changes*) corresponds with the four seasons” 變通配四時 (*Xici* A.5; transl. Wilhelm, 302). The second reference is in *Zhouyi jijie*, 13.314 (commentary on *Xici* A.2; transl. Wilhelm, 288).

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed analysis of this passage see Ho Peng Yoke, “The System of the *Book of Changes* and Chinese Science,” 31-34 (summarized in Joseph Needham *et al.*, *Science and Civilisation in China*, V.3: 60). On the application of the *shier xiaoxi* device in the *Cantong qi* see Suzuki, 629-631; Wang Ming, 254-257; and Imai, 16-18.

### From the *Book of Changes* to alchemy: lead and mercury

In the *Cantong qi* and the texts that borrow its language, the “particle of Primordial Breath,” timeless but running throughout time and its cycles, is also represented through alchemical emblems. Chinese alchemy employs various sets of representations to refer to its doctrinal principles. One consists of minerals and metals; another of the Five Agents and associated devices such as the Stems of Heaven and the Branches of Earth; another of the human body, especially the five viscera (*wuzang* 五臟) and the *dumai* 督脈 and *renmai* 任脈 channels.<sup>15</sup> The first two sets of images are shared by *waidan* and *neidan*, while the third is distinctive of *neidan*. In the first representation, the “particle of Primordial Breath” or Pure Yang is symbolized by lead; in the second, by Water; in the third, by the “breath” (*qi* 氣) of the kidneys (or *yang* within *yin*).

Lead, Water and the breath of the kidneys all correspond to the unbroken line in the *Book of Changes*. Because of this correspondence, these emblems share the ambivalence of this line. On one hand, as we have seen, the unbroken line stands for the One before its separation into the two complementary principles. In this instance, *yang* is usually qualified as “pure” (*chun* 純) and is the same as Primordial Breath. On the other hand, the unbroken line also represents the *yang* aspect of the One, complemented by its *yin* aspect but enclosed within *yin* entities in the *houtian*. In the *Cantong qi* and in the texts that adopt its system, the One of the *xiantian* is represented by lead. This lead is gold, or the elixir, or the particle of Primordial Breath of the *xiantian*. The complementary *yin* and *yang* of the *houtian* are symbolized by lead and mercury, respectively. Here lead becomes the heavy, dark, plunging *yin* principle; its counterpart is the light, luminous, volatile mercury, representing the *yang* principle. Similarly, the Water of pure *yang* in the *xiantian* is substituted by *yin* Water and *yang* Metal in the *houtian*. In the person, the *yang* “breath” of the *yin* kidneys is complemented by the “liquor” (*ye* 液) of the heart (*yin* within *yang*).

Looking at the same correspondences from the point of view of the alchemical emblems, the lead of *xiantian* corresponds to the single unbroken line, while the lead and mercury of *houtian* correspond to *kan* ☵ and *li* ☲, respectively. These multiple representations are summarized in the table below (note the inversion that occurs with the passage from *xiantian* to *houtian*).

<sup>15</sup> The immediate referents of the first set of emblems, minerals and metals, are natural substances in *waidan*, and the prime constituents of the adept’s person in *neidan*. “Person” (*shen* 身) and “body” (*ti* 體) are two different entities; thus the kidneys are a bodily organ, but alchemically refer to the receptacle of authentic *yang* in the person. Many *neidan* authors, however, point out that the “particle of primordial *yang*” is actually in the *xuanpin* 玄牝 (Mysterious Female, or—more exactly—“Mysterious” [*yang*] “and Female” [*yin*]), a point in the person which cannot be exactly located in any part of the body. For clear statements in this regard see Chen Chongsu’s 陳冲素 (Yuan dyn.) *Guizhong zhinan* 規中指南 (“Compass for Peering into the Center”; CT 243), 2.2b-7a. On the Taoist representation of the body see Catherine Despeux, *Taoïsme et corps humain*.

<i>XIANTIAN</i> 先天 (“BEFORE THE HEAVEN”)		→	<i>HOUTIAN</i> 後天 (“AFTER THE HEAVEN”)	
(Oneness)	→	(polarity)	→	(manifestation)
	<i>qian</i> ☰	authentic <i>yang</i> 真陽	<i>kan</i> ☵	<i>yin</i> 陰
			lead	water
			kidneys	<i>wu</i> 戊 (= 真陽)
pure <i>yang</i> 純陽 (Gold, Lead, Water, —)	↗		↘	
	<i>kun</i> ☷	authentic <i>yin</i> 真陰	<i>li</i> ☲	<i>yang</i> 陽
			mercury	metal
			heart	<i>ji</i> 己 (= 真陰)

TABLE 3. Emblems of the shift from the *xiantian* to the *houtian*.

One of several sub-units of the *Cantong qi* devoted to describing this process or facets of it, corresponding to *zh.* 23-26, is significant for its emphasis on lead as an emblem both of temporal, corrupt matter and of the timeless, authentic principle that it hides and reveals. The main passages are in *zh.* 23 and 24, which include expressions often borrowed by *neidan* texts. *Zhang* 23, it is also worth noting, quotes a passage from *Laozi* 28 in its first line, and a passage from *Laozi* 70 in its next to the last line:

知白守黑	To know the White keep to the Black
神明自來	and the divine light will come of its own.
白者金精	The White is the essence of Metal,
黑者水基	the Black is the foundation of Water.
水者道樞	Water is the axis of the <i>dao</i> :
其數名一	its figure is 1.
陰陽之始	At the origin of <i>yin</i> and <i>yang</i>
玄含黃芽	it mysteriously holds the Yellow Sprout.
五金之主	It is the lord of the five metals,
北方河車	the northern direction, the River Chariot.
故鉛外黑	Therefore lead is black outside
內懷金華	but hides the Golden Flower,
被褐懷玉	[like a man] wearing rough garments who hides a piece of jade,
外爲狂夫	but outside looks like a fool.

White and black are the colors associated with mercury and lead, and with the agents Metal and Water, respectively. Commentators disagree as to the referent of the emblem “white.” For some of them it represents mercury, for others gold. The disagreement is only apparent, however, because in either case “white” stands for the authentic substance contained within corrupt, “black” lead. As *yang* within *yin* this authentic substance is the opposite of lead, i.e., mercury; but this *yang* is also the Pure Yang of *xiantian*, i.e., gold. Therefore Water, in spite of being only one of the Five Agents in the conditioned state, carries the Yellow Sprout (*huangya* 黃芽), the germ of the elixir mentioned in the passage just translated. Lead, likewise, is

dark on the outside but conceals the white, luminous Golden Flower (*jinhua* 金華).

*Zhang* 24 brings this to a paradoxical formulation:

金爲水母	Metal is the mother of Water,
母隱子胎	but the mother hides herself in her son's womb.
水者金子	Water is the child of Metal,
子藏母胞	but the child harbors his mother's venter.

The first and third lines refer to the mutual production (*xiangsheng* 相生) order of the Five Agents, where Metal is followed by Water. The second and fourth lines allude to the inversion of this process in alchemy, where Metal is extracted from Water. In the sequence of the Five Agents, Water is the son of Metal; but in the alchemical process, it is Water (corrupted lead ☵) that generates Metal (or Authentic Lead, Gold, the unbroken line). This reversal makes for the inversion that takes place with the shift from *xiantian* to *houtian*.

*Zhang* 25 is concerned with the next stage of the process. Hidden within black lead, Gold is of its opposite color when extracted and turns into red through the action of fire. The “outer protection” mentioned in this passage is the crucible. The elixir that forms inside the crucible is, in Chen Zhixu's 陳致虛 (ca. 1330) words, the very “Breath of the Authentic Oneness Before the Heaven” (*xiantian zhenyi zhi qi* 先天真一之氣).<sup>16</sup>

採之類白	When you extract it, it is classified as white;
造之則朱	when you temper it, it becomes red.
鍊爲表衛	To refine it make for it an outer protection,
白里貞居	and place the White in its middle.
方圓徑寸	Square [like Earth] and round [like Heaven], its size is only one inch;
混而相拘	[ <i>yin</i> and <i>yang</i> ] are mingled in it, and keep to each other.
先天地生	It is there since before Heaven and Earth were born,
巍巍尊高	eminent, majestic, imposing.

*Zhang* 26 closes this section with a poetic description of the crucible.

## Conclusion

Like the two forms of Brahma, the *dao* is both the Timeless and time. Alchemy performs, in the domain that is proper to it, the important task of bringing an adept

<sup>16</sup> *Zhouyi cantong qi fenzhang zhu* 周易參同契分章注 (“Commentary of the Token of the Agreement of the Three According to the Book of Changes, with an Arrangement into Paragraphs”), 21a (Daozang Jiyao ed.). Note the parallel between the line “Square and round, its size is only one inch” in this *zhang* and the lines “The *niwan* has rooms for each of the Nine Perfected / Square and round, their size is only one inch” 泥丸九真皆有房 / 方圓一寸處此中 in the *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (“Book of the Yellow Court”; section 7.11-12 of the *Neijing* 內景 version in the EFEO *Concordance du Houang-t'ing king*, edited by Kristofer Schipper).

to the realization that what appears as corrupt and subject to the action of time is actually an aspect of the timeless principle. To do so, it uses emblems that serve both to represent the fundamental oneness of the *dao* and manifestation, and to lead an adept towards the realization of their oneness.

As the *xiantian* is in the *houtian*, and as time is a temporal repository of the Timeless, so is authentic lead to be found within corrupt lead. Releasing the hidden principle, or perceiving that, in the words of the *Cantong qi*, “it is there since before Heaven and Earth were born,” is the task of *waidan* and *neidan* alchemists. Whatever practice they follow, they achieve their work by reproducing the pattern of time in order to transcend it and attain timelessness, or immortality. This is possible not only because they advance to the end of time or recede to its beginning, to the extent that any distinction exists between these two attitudes. The emblems that they rely on enable them to trace out the constant presence of timelessness throughout time.

## APPENDIX

### Historical notes on the *Cantong qi*

The history of the *Cantong qi* is a subject of importance for the reconstruction of the whole history of Chinese alchemy, and especially the *neidan* tradition. This appendix, based on the first results of research on this topic, is mainly concerned with the early history of the text. A more detailed study, dealing with such themes as the genealogies of the commentaries through the Yuan period, the so-called “ancient text” (*guwen* 古文) of the *Cantong qi*, and other closely related sources, will be published elsewhere.

The authorship of the *Cantong qi* is traditionally attributed to Wei Boyang 魏伯陽, a legendary character said to come from the Shangyu 上虞 commandery of Guiji 會稽 in modern Zhejiang. According to the most popular account, Xu Congshi 徐從事 (“Xu the Attendant”), a native of Qingzhou 青州 in modern Shandong, was the first to receive the text and contributed a commentary. At the time of Emperor Huan 桓帝 of the Later Han (r. 146-167), Wei Boyang transmitted his work together with Xu’s commentary to Chunyu Shutong 淳于叔通, who also came from Shangyu and began to circulate the scripture.

While some accounts of Chunyu Shutong, as we shall see, reflect the relation of the *Cantong qi* with the apocrypha, its association with the Han “Studies of the Changes” (*yixue* 易學) is manifest in the work of the last great representative of this tradition, Yu Fan 虞翻 (164-233). A descendent of the lineage that includes Meng Xi 孟喜 (fl. 69 B.C.) and Jing Fang 京方 (77-37 B.C.), the two main Former Han exegetes of the *Changes*, Yu Fan is the first author whose work shows acquaintance with the *Cantong qi*. A gloss on the character *yi* 易 (“change”) in the *Jingdian shiwen* 經典釋文 (early seventh century; Baojing Tang 抱經堂 ed. of 1791, 2.1a) attributes to him a reference to a sentence in the *Cantong qi* (“The Sun and Moon make change” 日月爲易) found in zh. 9 of the received text. The ambiguous wording of the gloss even leaves room for the possibility that Yu Fan wrote the earliest known independent commentary on the *Cantong qi*. In one of two possible interpretations, the gloss



reads: “[According to] Yu Fan’s commentary [on the *Changes*], the *Cantong qi* says that this character is formed by a sun with a moon below” (「虞翻注。參同契云字從日下月。」). The punctuation implicit in the second possible reading, “Xu Fan’s commentary on the *Cantong qi* says...” (「虞翻注參同契云。字從日下月。」), fits the pattern of quotations in the *Jingdian shiwen*. There is no mention of such a commentary in bibliographic sources, but a reference to it in one of the two Tang exegeses of the *Cantong qi* supports this reading (see the commentary attributed to the immortal Yin Changsheng 陰長生, CT 999, 3.11a). Other evidence on Yu Fan’s familiarity with the *Cantong qi* may have been located by Suzuki Yoshijirō, who suggested that Yu Fan drew on zh. 13-15 for a passage of his commentary on the *Changes* (*Kan Eki kenkyū*, 602-603; we have dealt with this passage above, in the section on the “Twelve-stage Ebb and Flow”).

The *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (A.D. 100; ed. of 1873, 9B.18a) attributes the same sentence alluded to by Yu Fan to a “secret text” or some “secret texts” (*bishu* 祕書), an apparent reference to the apocrypha (see the exhaustive discussion in Wang Ming, 242-248). Ineffectual for showing either that the original *Cantong qi* was a *wei* attached to the *Book of Changes*, or that it dated from before the end of the first century, this is the first of several discrete pointers to the background that the *Cantong qi* shares with the apocrypha. The three-character title following the name of the parent Classic, which the *Cantong qi* has in common with most *weishu* (cf. Wang Liqi, “Chenwei wulun,” 383-386), is only the most conspicuous indication in this regard. The word *qi* 契, also frequent in the titles of *wei* texts, belongs to a group of near synonyms that, as Anna Seidel remarked, “assimilates the apocrypha to contracts” between Heaven and man (“Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments,” 309). Like *fu* 符 (*symbolon*, tally), *qi* sometimes designates an object, bestowed by Heaven either directly or through the mediation of a master, which grants the potentiality to communicate with Heaven. The *Cantong qi* is one of these objects: it is said to contain no method for the compounding of elixirs, but to be *itself* an elixir. In the words of an early Song text (*Longhu huandan jue* 龍虎還丹訣, CT 909, 1.1a; cf. Sivin, “The Theoretical Background of Elixir Alchemy,” 249), “for the Elixir of Return (*huandan* 還丹) there is no formula; the *Jinbi jing* 金碧經 and the *Cantong qi* are its formulae.” (The *Jinbi jing* is preserved as *Jindan jinbi qiantong jue* 金丹金碧潛通訣 in j. 73 of the *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 [ca. 1025; CT 1032]. It consists of a shorter paraphrase of the *Cantong qi*, marked by a tendency to replace the *Cantong qi* imagery with a language closer to alchemy, and by an inferior level of literary refinement. In the Song, the *Jinbi jing* was re-edited and distributed as the “ancient text,” *guwen* 古文, of the *Longhu jing* 龍虎經, which according to several accounts was the scripture that originally provided inspiration to Wei Boyang.)

Connections of the *Cantong qi* with the *wei* writings are also intimated by at least two passages in the received text. A description of the transcendence acquired by the adept (zh. 28) concludes with the line “he will obtain the Script and receive the Chart” (「膺籙受圖」), one of similar expressions that in the apocrypha designate the mandate granted by Heaven to a sovereign. (In a wording very similar to the *Cantong qi*, 「受籙應河圖」, this expression appears in a *wei* on the *Book of Changes*; cf. *Qian zuodu* 乾鑿度, in Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, eds., *Isho shūsei*, IA: 48. In later times, the same expression defined the Taoist ceremony of transmission; see Seidel, “Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments,” 308-309.) In another passage (zh. 11), the *Cantong qi* mentions Confucius and alludes to the initial sentences of the Classics that the *wei* were attached to; both features, which would

hardly be expected if the *Cantong qi* had originated as an alchemical text, fit the context of the *wei* writings, sometimes deemed to have been written by Confucius long before their supposed re-emergence in Han times. A further, more ambiguous indication is a pun in the final *zhang*, where some characters can be rearranged to form the phrase “composed by Wei Boyang” 魏伯陽造. Similar cryptograms were both a pastime of Han literati and a technique of divination documented in the apocrypha and elsewhere (Wang Ming, 247-248, discusses this passage and provides some examples drawn from apocryphal texts), but the final portions of the *Cantong qi* are among those most likely to have been added after the Han.

The tradition concerning Chunyu Shutong’s role in the composition and transmission of the *Cantong qi* provides a clearer focus for the evidence examined above. Unlike Wei Boyang, Chunyu Shutong is a historical character, whose connections to prognostication point to a milieu close to those that produced the apocrypha. The most elaborate account concerning him is found in Tao Hongjing’s 陶弘景 (456-536) *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (CT 1016, 12.8a-b), where he appears in a section devoted to the bureaucracy of the otherworld. According to this narrative, Chunyu was proficient in numerology (*shushu* 數術) and used to ingest pills of sesame seeds and deer bamboo. At the time of Emperor Huan he was District Magistrate of Xuzhou 徐州 (in modern Jiangsu). Emperor Ling 靈帝 (r. 168-189) appointed him General-in-Chief, but he declined the summons and went to Wu 吳, where he received the *Hongjing dan jing* 虹景丹經 (Book of the Elixir of the Rainbow Luminosity) from the immortal Huiche zi 慧車子. Tao Hongjing’s own notes quote a short passage on Chunyu’s life as coming from the *Cantong qi*, which may have appeared in a lost preface to the text or in one of its early versions. Chunyu is depicted there as a disciple of Xu Congshi, from whom he learned the art of prognostication. Chunyu Shutong’s connections to the science of prediction are amplified in other works that relate his divinatory feats and make him an expert on the *Book of Changes* and the apocrypha. His dealings with both divination and alchemy acquire meaning in the light of the affiliations between the two disciplines, which apply the same cosmological system in different directions. (Sources on Chunyu Shutong’s connections to divination are collated in Yu Jiayi, *Siku tiyao bianzheng*, 10.1211-1214; see also Wang Ming, 242 n. 1.)

The later history of the *Cantong qi* will be the object of a separate study. Briefly stated, evidence shows that the *Cantong qi* circulated in southern China after the Han: the Six Dynasties authors who mention the *Cantong qi*—Jiang Yan 江淹 (444-505), Tao Hongjing, Yan Zhitui 顏之推 (531-591), and possibly Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343)—either came from or were closely associated with Jiangnan. At that time, Jiangnan preserved a branch of the Han “Studies on the *Changes*” and the lore of the apocryphal texts (see Michel Strickmann, *Le Taoïsme du Mao Chan*, 98-103). The Jiangnan-based lineage of Yu Fan must have been instrumental in the preservation and transmission of the *Cantong qi*. The spread of alchemical practices in this area also made it an ideal soil for its transformation into a treatise on the elixirs. The little-known tradition represented by Hugang zi 狐剛子 may have been among those that used the *Cantong qi* as scriptural authority. The now scattered body of writings associated with this legendary alchemist contained the earliest alchemical texts largely based on metals, including lead and mercury (the two foremost substances in the *Cantong qi*). Traditions associating Hugang zi either with Wei Boyang or with Ge Hong’s line of transmission suggest a southern origin for these texts, and in the first case point to links with the *Cantong qi*. A confirmation of these links comes from the two-juan anonymous

commentary to the *Cantong qi* (*Zhouyi cantong qi*, CT 1004), which highlights methods attributed to Hugang zi. As Chen Guofu was the first to show (*Daozang yuanliu xukao*, 377-378), this commentary dates from around A.D. 700. A quotation from the preface of this commentary in two cognate Tang texts, to which Meng Naichang called attention (*Zhouyi cantong qi kaobian*, 28-29), supports this indication, as do substitutions for taboo characters and mentions of personal names. The *Cantong qi* had taken its present form by the beginning of the eighth century, as shown by this commentary, by the textually cognate commentary attributed to Yin Changsheng (CT 999), and by Liu Zhigu's 劉知古 (before 661-after 742) *Riyue xuanshu lun* 日月玄樞論 ("Treatise on the Sun and the Moon, the Mysterious Axis"; preserved in the *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文, 334.12a-21a, and in an abridged and inferior version in the *Daoshu* 道樞, CT 1017, 26.1a-6b). Liu Zhigu provides a synopsis of the *Cantong qi* and its first *neidan* interpretation, and, in doing so, quotes passages found in the three *juan*, or *pian*, of the received version.

In the Five Dynasties, Peng Xiao 彭曉 (?-955) submitted the text of the *Cantong qi* to a substantial rearrangement. Comparison of his text with the two Tang recensions shows that the variants he introduced consist, along with the division into *zhang*, of some inversions and relocations of lines, and of a large number of substitutions of single words. The exact extent of these variations, however, is difficult to ascertain. This is implied in a postface written in 1208 by the astronomer Bao Huanzhi 鮑澣之 (fl. 1207-1210), which is solely preserved in the *Daozang* edition (*Zhouyi cantong qi dingqi ge mingjing tu*, 6b-8a). In this valuable document, which has not yet received the attention it deserves, Bao praised the recension by Peng Xiao as the best available at his time but noted that it was not exempt from errors and that its divisions into *zhang* were not always accurate. Due to later alterations, moreover, the copy preserved in the Imperial Library—which Bao must have had access to when he worked at court—differed from the other versions circulating by his time. Bao then goes on to remark that before him the text was revised by Zheng Huan 鄭煥, but his edition included many errors. Later Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) established a better text in his *Zhouyi cantong qi kaoyi* 周易參同契考異 (CT 1001), but his divisions into *zhang*, as well as his commentaries, were occasionally faulty. This prompted Bao to collate as many editions as possible of the *Fenzhang tong zhenyi* and produce what he believed would be a critical edition. For the main text of the *Cantong qi* he based himself on Zhu Xi's recension, while for Peng Xiao's own notes he relied on Zheng Huan's edition. He followed, however, other editions when they agreed with each other against Zhu Xi and Zheng Huan. Another rule that informed his work was to leave the main text unaltered when a passage differed from the quotation of the same passage within the commentary. Based on the examples that Bao himself provides of his alterations, Peng Xiao's original text was much closer to the Tang text of the *Cantong qi* than it is now.

Being substantially the same as the one in the *Daozang*, all other available editions of the *Fenzhang tong zhenyi* are based on Bao Huanzhi's revision, and none preserves the original text established by Peng Xiao. Further evidence of alterations is provided by a quotation from the lost commentary by Zhang Sui 張隨, who lived one century after Peng Xiao (*Zhouyi cantong qi dingqi ge mingjing tu*, 1a). The *Fenzhang tong zhenyi*, nonetheless, maintains its standing as a watershed between the earlier and the later recensions, for most of which it served as textual basis.

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