

NAN-CHING THE CLASSIC OF DIFFICULT ISSUES

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The Origin of the Nan-ching

The compilation date of the Nan-ching remains a matter of controversy. Three decades ago, Fan Hsing-chun suggested that the Nan-ching was written at some time during the era of the Six Dynasties, probably during the fifth or sixth century A.D.²⁵ In an essay elucidating his arguments, Fan Hsing-chun quoted Liao P'ing (1851-1914?), who was the first to propose such a late compilation date. Among other arguments, Liao P'ing pointed out that a new attitude toward women, beginning at the time of the Ch'i and Liang dynasties, had forced physicians to modify their diagnostic techniques: "Since the times of Ch'i and Liang it was no longer a matter of course to touch the throat or feet of women for diagnosis. Hence this method [of pulse diagnosis at the wrist] was established so that [physicians could continue] to earn their livelihood."²⁶

Taki Mototane (Tamba Genkan) author of a comprehensive medical bibliography (Chung-kuo i-chi k'ao), had reached different conclusions when he suggested a compilation date during the Eastern Han dynasty (that is, during the first or second century A.D.). He pointed out that the concept of yüan-ch'i ("original influence"), although introduced by Tung Chung-shu of the second century B.C., found entrance into common usage only during the Eastern Han. Similarly, the concepts of "males are born at yin; females are born at shen,"²⁷ "this is why wood sinks into the depth, while metal floats at the surface,"²⁸ and "metal is generated at chi, water is generated at shen; drain the fire of the south, fill the water of the north"²⁹—none of which had been included in either the Su wen or the Ling-shu—should also be regarded as facets of Eastern Han thought.³⁰

A later compilation date had already been excluded by Taki Mototane's father, Taki Motohiro, who had interpreted a line in the preface to the Shang-han lun of Chang Chi (142-220?) as referring to the Nan-ching.³¹ This line is worded hsüan yung Su-wen Chiu chüan Pa-shih-i nan Yin yang ta-lun T'ai-lu yao-lu. It had been read by Chang Chih-ts'ung (1610-1674) as "in compiling [the Shang-han lun] I made use of the Su-wen with its eighty-one difficult issues discussed in nine chapters." Chang failed to realize that Chiu chüan referred to a separate book—quoted, for instance, by the Mai-ching and in the I-shin-po as Chiu chüan yün ("The Nine Chapters state..."), possibly for lack of a proper title.³² Also, in the eleventh century edition of the Shang-han lun (preserved in Japan), the line quoted appears as a commentary added to Chang Chi's text by a later editor. Still later editors may have included these remarks in the main text. Hence, as Fan Hsing-chun concluded, there is no evidence that Chang Chi knew of the Nan-ching, and the first ten characters of the line in question should be read as "in compiling [the Shang-han lun] I made use of the Su-wen and of the Chiu chüan, both having eighty-one sections."³³

Soon after Fan Hsing-chun had voiced his views, Ho Ai-hua—in two essays published in 1958 and 1960—rejected these arguments and suggested a compilation date at some time during the Western Han dynasty (that is, during the second or first century B.C.). He pointed out that in analysing the line in the preface to the Shang-han lun, one should take into account not only its first ten characters but also the entire sentence, because two more book titles were mentioned in it, and he saw no reason not

to interpret Chiu chüan and Pa-shih-i nan as book titles too. Ho Ai-hua suggested reading the line in question as follows: "in compiling [the Shang-han lun] I made use of the Su-wen, the Chiu chüan, the Pa-shih-i nan, the Yin yang ta-lun, and the T'ai-lu yao-lu."³⁴ Ho took it for granted that this phrase had been written by Chang Chi himself (he did not discuss the "commentary" interpretation), and he quoted another sentence from Chang Chi's preface to prove that the Nan-ching had been written earlier. The Nan-ching, Ho argued, had introduced pulse diagnosis at the wrists, an innovation that had led to the disregard of the Nei-ching methods of vessel diagnosis—that is, of pulse feeling at the side of the larynx and at the feet, in addition to palpation of the wrists. Ho stated that this development must have taken place before Chang Chi's time because in his preface, Chang complained:

Today's physicians do not take great pains to seek instructions from the classics in order to expand their knowledge; they rely only on abilities transmitted in their families. From beginning to end they follow their old precepts. When they are confronted with an illness, they approach the patient with smart speeches. Disregarding what would be essential in such [a situation], they simply prescribe decoctions and feel [the vessels at] the inch[-section]—but not even at the foot[-section]. They rely on [an examination of the vessels at] the hands and disregard the feet, they do not care about an investigation of all three diagnostic sections [of the body, which would include an examination] at the jen-ying [points at the throat] and at the ankles, in order to assess the frequency [of the movement in the vessels] and of [the patient's] breathing.... They act like someone who gazes through a narrow tube in order to observe heaven!³⁵

Ho Ai-hua saw further evidence for Chang Chi's awareness of the teaching of the Nan-ching in numerous references, in the Shang-han lun itself, to wrist diagnosis at the inch-, gate-, and foot-sections, arguing that Chang Chi was most probably quoting from the Nan-ching (since these concepts had been introduced by the Nan-ching). Similarly, Ho Ai-hua regarded Wang Shu-ho's (210-285) Chia-i ching and Huang-fu Mi's (214-282) Mai-ching as influenced, beyond any doubt, by various Nan-ching innovations in vessel diagnosis.³⁶

A significant number of the questions raised in the eighty-one sections of the Nan-ching are introduced by the phrase ching-yün ("the scripture states" or "the classic states"). An exact title of that scripture or classic is not mentioned. Also, while some of the issues referred to as statements quoted from that scripture may indeed be found—in identical or somewhat altered wording—in the Su-wen or the Ling-shu, other statements introduced by ching yün do not appear in the textus receptus of these ancient classics. Ho Ai-hua did not consider the possibility, voiced by other authors, that these statements may have been part of Su-wen or Ling-shu passages that have been lost in the meantime, or that they may be fictitious quotations designed merely to raise and discuss a specific issue. He wrote:

When the text of the Nan-ching quotes the text of the Nei-ching, it does not distinguish between Su-wen and Ling-shu but says in all instances merely "the classic states." This is sufficient

evidence not only to fully disclose the erroneous and commonly held view that the Su-wen appeared first while the Ling-shu is of later origin, but also to prove that the Nan-ching must have been written before the Nei-ching was split into Su-wen and Ling-shu.³⁷

Ho Ai-hua, in contrast to Taki Mototane, considered the diagnostic scheme outlined in the Nan-ching to be identical with the scheme followed by the physician Shun-yü I, whose approach to diagnosis is referred to (if in less detail than is needed to substantiate Ho's conclusion) in the Shih-chi. Thus Ho concluded that the Nan-ching was written either by Shun-yü I himself or by some other author of Shun-yü I's school.³⁸ Traditionally, though, most commentators have attributed the Nan-ching to semi-legendary or legendary personalities, who are assumed to have lived and spread their wisdom many centuries before Shun-yü I. Pien Ch'io, a shadowy physician of about the fifth or sixth century B.C. whose biography appears in the Shih-chi, seems to have been linked to the Nan-ching since the Sui-T'ang era. The name Pien Ch'io has been associated with itinerant shaman-healers from Shantung province who clad themselves in feathers, suggesting an ability to rise into the skies;³⁹ it may also have been a designation conferred upon or adopted by various healers during the time of the Chou (this is suggested by records hinting at the existence of a Pien Ch'io in different centuries).⁴⁰ In his Shih-chi of 90 B.C., Ssu-ma Ch'ien identified Pien Ch'io as a man called Ch'in Yüeh-jen, but he did not give any details concerning Pien's actual dates. According to Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Ch'in Yüeh-jen "made himself a name especially with vessel diagnosis," and "to this time, whoever discusses vessel [diagnosis] bases [his arguments] on Pien Ch'io."⁴¹ Yet no reference appears in this biography to a specific book written by Pien Ch'io. (According to the biography, Pien Ch'io promised to his mysterious teacher Ch'ang-sang chün not to transmit his knowledge to anyone else before the latter transferred his abilities to Pien Ch'io.) At the time of the Han, at least two texts existed which had allegedly been compiled by Pien Ch'io himself. The official history of the Han dynasty lists a Pien Ch'io nei-ching and a Pien Ch'io wai-ching (in addition to a Huang-ti nei-ching, a Huang-ti wai-ching, and other nei- or wai-ching titles), but we have no clues suggesting any relationship between these Pien Ch'io titles and the Nan-ching that is extant. In fact, Taki Mototane discovered what is currently regarded as the earliest known reference to Pien Ch'io as the author of the Nan-ching. Wang Tao, in his *Wai-t'ai pi-yao*, (ca. A.D. 725), quoted from the *Shan-fan fang*, a prescription work compiled around A.D. 600 by Hsieh Shih-t'ai who, in turn, quoted a Pien Ch'io as making statements that appear in today's Nan-ching.⁴² Not much later, Yang Hsüan-ts'ao (seventh or eighth century) began the preface to his Nan-ching commentary with the unambiguous statement: "The Huang-ti pa-shih-i nan ching was compiled by Ch'in Yüeh-jen from Po-hai," i.e., by the Pien Ch'io of the Shih-chi.⁴³

The appearance of a reference to the Yellow Emperor in the title named by Yang Hsüan-ts'ao may indicate a separate—and possibly earlier—tradition crediting the legendary Huang-ti (the Yellow Emperor) with the authorship. In what may be the earliest known reference to the Nan-ching and its origin (if we disregard the controversial line in the *Shang-han lun* for a moment), the Yellow Emperor appears as the originator of the Nan-ching because the text resulted from a discussion between Huang-ti and two of his consultants. Huang-fu Mi (214-282) wrote in his *Ti wang shih chi*:

"Huang-ti ordered Lei-kung and Ch'i Po to discuss [with him] the courses of the conduit-vessels. He questioned them about eighty-one issues and created the Nan-ching."⁴⁴

Wang Po (648-676), an exceptionally gifted scholar of the T'ang era, may have attempted a compromise between the Yellow Emperor tradition and the Pien Ch'io tradition when he wrote:

The Huang-ti pa-shih-i nan ching is a secretly recorded medical classic. In ancient times [this text] was handed over by Ch'i Po to [the Yellow Emperor] Huang-ti. From Huang-ti it was handed over, through nine [generations of] instructors, to I Yin. I Yin handed it over to T'ang, and from T'ang it was handed over, through six [generations of] instructors, to T'ai-kung. T'ai-kung handed it over to Wen wang. From Wen wang it was handed over, through nine [generations of] instructors, to the physician Ho. From the physician Ho it was handed over, through six [generations of] instructors, to Ch'in Yüeh-jen. Ch'in Yüeh-jen was the first to put [this text] down in writing.⁴⁵

It was only in the late nineteenth century that Liao P'ing, the conservative author of the Nan-ching ching-shih pu-cheng (see the following section of this Introduction and appendix A), found it difficult to link a work that he considered to be in many respects far from the truth conveyed by the "classic" Huang-ti nei-ching with an author who had lived in classical antiquity. To make his point, Liao did not shrink from manipulating the preface of his conservative but far less rigid predecessor Hsü Ta-ch'un, whose Nan-ching commentary entitled Nan-ching ching-shih Liao had selected as a basis for his own comments. While Hsü had attributed the Nan-ching to a pre-Han origin, Liao changed the line in his edition of Hsü's work so that Hsü appeared to have suggested a Western Chin (265-317) origin of the Nan-ching. In his own commentary to this line, Liao then refuted this as too early and suggested an even later compilation date during the era of the Six Dynasties (i.e., during the fifth or sixth century).⁴⁶

Earlier in these prolegomena, I have referred to the Nan-ching as a work of the first or early second century A.D.; it may even have been written a few decades before the first century A.D. I concur with the opinion that the Shang-han lun was influenced by the Nan-ching, and I agree with those commentators who saw a significant gap between the language and the concepts used by the Nan-ching and those found in the Nei-ching—a gap that signals development as well as difference. I am convinced (as shall be elucidated further in my notes to the individual difficult issues) that the Nan-ching was compiled to overcome the heterogeneity and unsystematic nature of the Huang-ti nei ching anthology of medical schools and concepts—and especially to draw the conceptual and clinical consequences from the "discovery" of the circulation of vapor-influences in the organism. In my opinion, the Nei-ching texts on needling and diagnosis reveal a stage of development that is not only later than that indicated by the texts unearthed from the Ma-wang-tui tombs (168 B.C.) but also later than that indicated in the biography of Shun-yü I (216-150?) in the Shih-chi (compiled in 90 B.C.). Thus the Nei-ching texts cannot have been compiled before the late second or first century B.C. (although some parts of the Nei-ching—for instance, those on wind divination— appear to be older, and some are much younger).⁴⁷ The Nan-ching, then, could have been written after the appearance of

the Nei-ching texts on needling and vessel diagnosis, and before the appearance of the Shang-han lun in the second century and of Huang-fu Mi's *Ti wang shih-chi* in the third century A.D.

The Reception of the Nan-ching in Later Centuries

The message offered by the Nan-ching must have been quite convincing in at least one respect. Vessel diagnosis concentrating on the wrists was adopted not only by many physicians (who were criticized by Chang Chi—or by a later commentator to his preface—for an all too simplistic practice both of diagnosis in general and of wrist diagnosis as well) but also by the leading pre-Sung authors of medical works with sections on diagnosis that have been transmitted to us from pre-Sung times. This applies—in addition to the Shang-han lun—to the Chia-i ching and the Mai-ching (both of the third century A.D.), as well as to Sun Ssu-miao's *Ch'ien-chin i fang* of the early seventh century.

The impact of and interest in the Nan-ching must have been considerable in subsequent centuries: the Nan-ching provoked an endless series of commentaries attempting to plumb the depths of its message. The bibliographical section of the Sui History (compiled during the seventh century) mentions a Huang-ti pa-shih-i nan ching and adds the remark: "The Liang (Ch'i-lu) refers to a Huang-ti chung nan ching, 1 ch., with a commentary by Lü Po-wang. [The work is] lost." If the usual interpretation that this remark in the Sui History was indeed based on Juan Hsiao-hsü's (479-536) *Ch'i-lu* is correct, one should assume that the first commentary on the Nan-ching was published before the year 500, but did not survive (at least as an independent work) until the early T'ang era. Yang Hsüan-ts'ao, the second Nan-ching commentator, referred to his predecessor as "Wu t'ai-i-ling Lü Kuang". As Japanese scholars have pointed out, several persons are known whose personal name Kuang was changed into Po following a taboo placed on the former after the ascension to the throne of the Sui emperor Yang-ti in 605.⁴⁸ And Fan Hsing-chun observed that it was quite common, during the era of the Six Dynasties, to drop the central or final character of a person's name in literary references. Hence the original name of the man who is generally considered to have written the first Nan-ching commentary may have been Lü Kuang-wang.⁴⁹

The dating of Lu's lifetime, though, is more problematic than the identification of his personal name. The usual reading of Wu t'ai-i-ling would be "Head of the Imperial Physicians during the Wu dynasty." This interpretation appears to be substantiated by a statement found in section I ssu of chapter 724 of the Sung encyclopedia *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* of 983, where the preface to a "Needle Scripture from the Jade Chest" (*Yü kuei chen ching*) is quoted with the following information:

Lü Po was still young when he made himself a name with his medical practice. He was an expert in the differentiation of illnesses on the basis of vessel diagnosis. He wrote a lot about this. In the second year of ch'ih-wu of the [dynasty] Wu, he became Head of the Imperial Physicians (t'ai-i'ling). He compiled the *Yü-kuei chen ching* and wrote a commentary on the *Pa-shih-i nan ching*. [His works] became very popular.

Accordingly, Lü Po—alias Lü Kuang (-wang)—was a man of the Eastern Wu dynasty; the second year of ch'ih-wu corresponds to A.D. 239.

This dating of Lü's lifetime was contested in 1957 by Fan Hsing-chun, who had at least one earlier witness for a different opinion. In a book by the Sung author Tang Yung-nien entitled *Shen-mi ming-i lu*, one Fan Shu-mi wrote that the *Nan-ching* "was transmitted until the time of the Sui when Lü Kuang from Wu wrote a commentary on it."⁵⁰ (Lü Fu's remarks from the Yuan era—also quoted by Fan Hsing-chun—that "during the times of the Sui a commentary version by Lü Po-wang existed, but is no longer transmitted" cannot be taken as hinting at Sui dates for Lü himself.) Fan Hsing-chun went a long way to prove his point that "Wu" refers to a place name, and that "second year of *ch'ih-wu*" and "Head of the Imperial Physicians" are data that were made up by unknown authors of the sixth, seventh, or early eighth century.

Fan Hsing-chun construed two arguments. First, Fan interpreted the wording of the title of a third book associated with Lü—the "Golden Sheath and Jade Mirror" (*Chin-t'ao yü-chien*)—as well as a reference to "obscure teachings" (*hsüan tsung*) in Yang Hsüan-ts'ao's characterization of Lü's commentary, as evidence that Lü had been an adherent of the doctrines of Taoism. Fan concluded that because the Eastern Wu under Emperor Sung Ch'üan were known to have been opposed to Taoism, no follower of Taoism could have risen to a dominant position in the medical offices of the court.⁵¹ Yet even if Lü had been a Taoist and Sung Ch'üan an anti-Taoist, one could point out examples of emperors disregarding such ideological discrepancies when they called in a physician who had demonstrated superior clinical abilities.

Secondly, Fan Hsing-chun argued that Lü's *Yü-kuei chen ching* must have been written later than the fourth century for the following reason. The bibliographical section of the Sui History mentions a *Ch'ih-wu shen-chen ching* (but without naming an author). The two T'ang histories attributed this book to a man named Chang Tzu-ts'un (without providing details on his lifetime). The Ta-t'ang *liu tien*, compiled in the early eighth century, referred to this book as a teaching manual on needling for professors and students of the imperial medical office. And the Ming author Yao Chen-tsung, stated: "The *Ch'ih-wu shen-chen ching* seems to have been written on the basis of Lü Kuang's *Yü-kuei chen ching*. Hence the title of the reigning period [during which Lü Kuang served as *t'ai-i ling*] was added [to the title *Shen chen ching*]." ⁵² Fan Hsing-chun identified Chang Tzu-ts'un—the otherwise unknown author of the *Ch'ih-wu shen-chen ching*—as Chang Ts'un, the author of a treatise on needling who may have lived during the fourth century. Fan concluded that if the *Ch'ih-wu shen-chen ching* and the *Yü-kuei chen-ching* did indeed show similarities (both texts have been lost for centuries), then the former was written first (during the fourth century by Chang Ts'un) and the latter was written afterward (but prior to the Sui dynasty). Fan explained the *Ch'ih-wu* in the title as a reference to an ancient place name, used centuries before Chang Ts'un's lifetime for an area where Chang may have lived (he also provided further examples where place names associated with an author had been adopted to precede the title of a book). Later, *Ch'ih-wu* was misinterpreted by authors, Fan wrote, as a reference to the *ch'ih-wu* reigning period of the Eastern Wu dynasty; similarly, because Lü's work was so similar in contents to the *Ch'ih-wu shen-chen ching*, Lü's own native town of Wu was misinterpreted as another reference to the Eastern Wu dynasty. Finally, Fan suggested, someone invented the "second year" and the official title *t'ai-i ling*, thus laying the

foundations for the "erroneous" statements by Yang Hsüan-ts'ao and the authors of the T'ai-p'ing yü-lan.

Perhaps the facts are as complicated as Fan Hsing-chun saw them. We should, however, keep in mind that it must have been rather difficult for him to reconcile Liao P'ing's and his own idea of a fifth or sixth century origin of the Nan-ching with a third century appearance of the first Nan-ching commentary. If we assume an Eastern Han compilation date for the Nan-ching, there is little reason to doubt Yang Hsüan-ts'ao of the eighth century and the T'ai-p'ing yü-lan of the tenth century and to follow instead a hint by the obscure Fan Shu-mi of the eleventh century. Until further evidence to the contrary has come to light, I shall consider Lü Kuang (-wang) as a third century author.

Yang Hsüan-ts'ao, the author of the second Nan-ching commentary, has been surrounded by much less controversy than his predecessor. In the closing words of the preface to his commentary, he identified himself as a district military official. He is commonly assumed to have lived during the first century of the T'ang era (seventh and early eighth century) because a first reference to his work appeared in Chang Shou-chieh's Shih-chi cheng-i, which was written during the first half of the eighth century.⁵³

Although the remark, in the Sui History, on Lü Kuang (-wang's) Nan-ching commentary classified Lü's work as "lost," at least fragments of it must have come to the attention of Yang Hsüan-ts'ao. Yang's reference, in his preface, to his predecessor's work leaves it open as to whether Lü himself had commented on only a fraction of the Nan-ching or whether the "missing half" had been lost in the meantime:

[Lü's] explanations do not even comprise half of the entire [text of the Nan-ching], the rest is missing.... I have commented on those parts [of the text] now that had not been elucidated by Mr Lü; where Mr. Lü's comments remained insufficient, I have expanded them." ⁵⁴

In addition to this commentary, Yang wrote a second treatise on the Nan-ching, the Pa-shih-i nan yin i, in which he analyzed, as we learn from the title of the long-lost book, "the pronunciation and meaning" of individual characters appearing in the Nan-ching.

Yang Hsüan-ts'ao may have been a virtuous Confucian because his career as an official did not prevent him from continuing a profound interest in medicine. "I am very much interested in therapeutics," he wrote, "and I have always sought instruction in its principles. In particular, I have been taught the contents of this classic, and I have been absorbed in its analysis for the past ten years without interruption. Although I still have not penetrated its deepest levels of meaning, I think I have been able to grasp its general message."⁵⁵

Yang Hsüan-ts'ao accepted the message of the Nan-ching without reservation. His own and Lü's commentary (as well as some early Sung commentaries) mark the first phase in the reception of the Nan-ching in Chinese medical history—a phase characterized by an unquestioned faith in the Nan-ching as the authoritative exegesis of the fundamental principles of the medicine of systematic correspondence:

The Huang-ti pa-shih-i nan ching was compiled by Ch'in Yüeh-jen from Po-hai. Yüeh-jen had been instructed by [Ch'ang] Sang-chün in his secret arts and, as a result, he understood the principles of medicine. He was quite capable of penetrating [the body with his eyes], of recognizing the depots and the palaces, and of opening the intestines and exposing the heart. Because he stood on one level with the Pien Ch'io of the times of Hsien Yüan, he was given the honorary name Pien Ch'io. His home was the state of Lu. Hence he was called the "physician from Lu." Some people believe that the [physician from] Lu and Pien [Ch'io] were two different persons. That is a mistake, though. The Huang-ti nei-ching consists of two volumes with nine chapters each. Its meaning is quite obscure, and it is extremely difficult to analyze it in its entirety. Hence Yüeh-jen selected only the most essential elements [of the Nei-ching], and he combined its two sections in [this Nan-] ching, with its total of eighty-one sections. [Ch'in Yüeh-jen] wrote scroll after scroll in order to widen access to the [principles of medicine]; he inquired about the obscure and traced out hidden meanings in order to transmit them to posterity. He called [his work] "Eighty-One Difficult Issues" because the principles [dealt with in this book] are very profound and comprehensive, and not easily understandable. [The book] contains the all-encompassing doctrine of a sage. Hence the name of Huang-ti precedes [the title. The book] represents the heart and the marrow of medical literature, it is the pivot in one's rescue from illness! As one says, its author has made use of the elephant's teeth and of the unicorn's horn; he has gathered the feathers of the kingfisher male, and the down of the kingfisher female.⁵⁶

We cannot yet be totally sure, but it is quite possible that the Nan-ching superseded the Nei-ching as "the pivot in one's rescue from illness"—that is, as a standard work for the concepts of the medicine of systematic correspondence—and that its doctrine acquired an authoritative dominance that may have continued, in some circles, well into the second millennium. The Nan-ching received extraordinary attention among medical authors; during the Sung era alone at least twenty commentaries were written, while almost no one took the pains to lay open the secrets of the more voluminous Nei-ching.

The Nan-ching may already have reached Japan, together with the Nei-ching, in the sixth century; Japanese authors published at least fifty commentated Nan-ching editions in subsequent centuries.⁵⁷ A first reference to the Nan-ching from Korea dates from the year 1058.⁵⁸ When the Mongols decided, after their invasion of China, to translate representative works from various realms of Chinese knowledge into their own language, they did not choose the Nei-ching but selected the Nan-ching as the sole medical classic to be rendered into Mongolian.⁵⁹ At the same time a Persian version of the Nan-ching appeared.⁶⁰

Despite all this interest in the Nan-ching, its impact obviously remained restricted to theoretical discussions and to the practice of diagnosis. Actual therapeutic practice in traditional Chinese medicine hardly followed the conceptual stringency advocated by the author of the Nan-ching, and the conclusions drawn from the "discovery" of circulation achieved only partial recognition. To this day,

physicians practicing the medicine of systematic correspondence rely almost exclusively on wrist palpation as a means for assessing the movement in the vessels. In contrast, actual needling therapy continues to apply "pre-circulation" concepts, in that the conduits are still pricked as if they, together with their contents, constitute twelve separate units. Could it be that the strict and consistent application of the theories of systematic correspondence advocated by the Nan-ching failed to correspond to clinical experience? One might argue that the needling of specific points spread all over the body produces certain physiological effects that were observed and reaffirmed by Chinese clinicians and that were theorized, first, in terms of an understanding of eleven separate vessels distributed in the body (see the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts) and, later, in terms of a belief in twelve (and more) conduits penetrating the organism. (And it may well be that these two stages were preceded by a demonological interpretation of the need for and effects of penetrating the skin with "celestial lancets".)⁶¹ The third stage in this development (or fourth, if one includes a demonological phase)—namely, the integration of the concept of a circulation of the contents of these twelve main conduits—may have overtaken the paradigm of systematic correspondence; it remained a theoretical achievement that was only partially accepted by practitioners (i.e., in diagnosis). Therapeutic practice—that is, circuit-needling—continued along the lines dictated by experience, not by theory. The basic contradiction in traditional Chinese medicine which resulted from this partial rejection and partial acceptance of the Nan-ching's level of theory and practice should be a matter of further consideration.

The fate of attempts during the Sung-Chin-Yüan era to reconcile pharmaceutical experience and practice with the doctrines of systematic correspondence,⁶² and the insignificance of the yinyang and Five Phases theories compared to the persisting dominance of concepts not related to the paradigms of systematic correspondence in the combat of tangible disease entities (in contrast to functional disorders)⁶³—all this might be interpreted as further evidence suggesting certain limits in these theories' ability to reflect processes occurring in the real world and, hence, limits in their actual therapeutic applicability.

Such thoughts, however, may have plagued only a minority of those medical intellectuals during the Sung era who took a closer look at the Nan-ching, although some of them did find it difficult to reconcile the apparent discrepancies and contradictions between the Nei-ching and the Nan-ching. In this second phase in the reception of the Nan-ching in later centuries, we witness a growing emphasis on such differences—an emphasis, though, that was combined with efforts to understand these differences as two possible expressions of one and the same issue (if not simply as errors in writing committed by later copyists). Hence the authors of this period sought to explain why the Nei-ching and the Nan-ching differed (in contrast to the third phase, when a tendency emerged simply to blame the author of the Nan-ching for misunderstanding the Nei-ching wherever the former differed from the latter).

The fourth year of the reigning period t'ien-sheng of the Northern Sung (A.D. 1026) marks the first firm date in the history of Nan-ching editions. According to Wang Ying-lin's Yü-hai, Chao Tsung-ch'üeh and Wang Ch'üan-cheng, two officials occupied with the edition of classic texts, were ordered by Emperor Jen-tsung to prepare a revised edition not only of the Su-wen and the Chu-ping

yüan hou lun but also of the Nan-ching. In their efforts to edit the latter, they may have been joined by Wang Wei-i, the renowned author of the T'ung-jen shu-hsüeh chen chiu t'u ching ("Illustrated Scripture on the Transportation Holes of the Bronze Man for Needling and Cauterization") and an official of the Han-lin academy—although we lack final proof for his participation. The resulting "T'ien-sheng edition" of the Nan-ching was published five years later, in 1031, by the Imperial Academy. It has been lost in the meantime. However, a man named Li Yüan-li of the Southern Sung dynasty (1127- 1280) appears to have collected materials from all commentated and uncommentated Nan-ching editions known to him (separate manuscripts with Lü's and Yang Hsüan-ts'ao's commentaries seem to have existed in private libraries until Yüan times),⁶⁴ and to have published them in a combined edition. This work was lost in China but was rediscovered in Japanese libraries and reprinted in Japan during the Edo period (1764-1849); it was then brought back to China.⁶⁵ The front page of the Japanese Edo edition lists the following persons and their contributions:

Ch'in Yüeh-jen	author
Lü Kuang	commentated
Ting Te-yung	wrote a supplementary commentary
Yang Hsüan-ts'ao	elucidated
Yü Shu	elucidated again
Yang K'ang-hou	continued to elucidate
Wang Chiu-ssu	revised
Wang Chih-hsiang	revised again
Shih Yu-liang	pronunciation and explanation
Wang Wei-i	revised once again

Chinese bibliographical works, like Juan Yüan's Ssu-k'u wei-shou shu mu t'i-yao, the Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an shu-lu, and Lin Heng's I ts'un ts'ung-shu, have identified Wang Chiu-ssu as the Wang Chiu-ssu of the Ming History, and they have listed him, as the latest of the persons just named, as the editor responsible for this edition (the 1955 Commercial Press edition of the Nan-ching chi-chu repeated this information). However, as Taki Mototane⁶⁶ and Ma Jixing have demonstrated,⁶⁷ the Wang Chiu-ssu who appears as the first Nan-ching "reviser" cannot have been the man of the same name listed in the Ming History: the birthplaces associated with the two are different; Wang Chiu-ssu appears before Wang Wei-i in the listing quoted above; and Li Chiung, the thirteenth century Southern Sung Nan-ching commentator, spoke of "ten commentators" before him, possibly referring to the same persons listed in the Nan-ching chi-chu edition of Li Yüan-li. Still, the list of ten includes both Ch'in Yüeh-jen, the presumed author of the Nan-ching (Li Chiung may have thought of him as a commentator to the Nei-ching), and Wang Wei-i, who is not referred to anywhere else as a Nan-ching editor or commentator. The full title of the Li Yüan-li edition is Wang Han-lin chi chu Huang-ti pa-shih-i nan ching, and it is quite possible that Wang Wei-i, the famous "Han-lin scholar Wang," was added to the list only to give this particular edition the attractive name that Li Yüan-li himself did not have.

The Nan-ching chi-chu, we may assume, combines six Sung and pre-Sung commentators in addition to Shih Yu-liang's notes on individual characters. Unfortunately, Yang Hsüan-ts'ao and Yang K'ang-hou are both designated simply as "Yang" and—except for two instances in which the latter obviously mentions the former—their commentaries can hardly be distinguished; the contributions of Wang Chiu-ssu and Wang Ting-hsiang (referred to in the list as Wang Chih-hsiang) are not clearly differentiated, either.

Ting Te-yung (fl. 1056-1063) is known for two medical works, including his Nan-ching commentary and a collection of prescriptions against illnesses caused by cold. He may have been the first to use graphic tables to illustrate the meaning of individual difficult issues. The preface to his Nan-ching commentary has been preserved and should be noted for an early acknowledgment of what he terms "defects and omissions":

Throughout the centuries, the Nan-ching was handed on by single persons only until Hua T'o of the Wei [dynasty] burned the text while he was in prison. Still, the writings of [Chang] Chung-ching and [Wang] Shu-ho—who lived between the Chin and Sung [dynasties]—quote this text and amply use its teachings. The Head of the Imperial Physicians of Wu, Lü Kuang, has rearranged this classic; he changed its original meaning considerably. That is to say, given the fact that the remnants of the text of the Nan-ching were rearranged in many instances under the hands of Lü Kuang, it is obvious that it must be marked by defects and omissions.⁶⁸

Yü Shu (fl. 1064-1067), also named in Li Yüan-li's list, was a scholar who left his Confucian civil service career to study medicine; nothing is known about the background or person of Shih Yu-liang. Growing doubts developed during the Sung era concerning the value of the classics in general and the "classical" nature of the Nan-ching in particular; these may have prompted a number of authors to stress the authority of the Nan-ching as a classic and to defend its views as totally in line with the wisdom of antiquity. Su Tung-p'o, the famous poet of the eleventh century who is also known to have had a profound interest in medicine, wrote:

The Classic of Difficult Issues in medicine is filled with reason in each of its sentences, and expresses laws in each of its words.... If someone puts forth new ideas and discards the old learning because—in his eyes—it is of no use, this person is either stupid or crazy! Vulgar physicians, for example, do not discuss [illnesses] on the basis of the classics. They issue drug prescriptions to heal illnesses, and they do indeed achieve some successes with this approach. But when it comes to illnesses where one must act on the spot, and where one must arrive at a decision whether [the patient] is bound to die or will survive, in such cases they are not worth speaking about on the same day together with those who know the classics and study the old! Today's people vainly expect [the vulgar physicians] to achieve success after success, or to win out against the people in antiquity. Hence they say that one can get along without studying the Nan-ching. This is definitely a mistake!⁶⁹

About two hundred years later, Li Chiung reiterated this emphasis on the orthodox nature of the teachings conveyed by the Nan-ching when he stated in a preface to his own commentated Nan-ching edition:

The first medical classic dates back to the Yellow Emperor. The [Nan-ching] was associated [through the wording of its title] with the Yellow Emperor in order to clarify its purpose [of elucidating difficult issues in the Yellow Emperor's classic]. From beginning to end this book is grounded on [principles] handed down [from antiquity]; it contains no personal views or strange doctrines.⁷⁰

Concurrent with the general rejection of the "personal views and strange doctrines" associated with the so-called Sung teaching, and following a renewed emphasis on the "original" Han (and pre-Han) sources of Confucianism, the many discrepancies between the Nei-ching and the Nan-ching began to be seen in a different light. During the first millennium, the innovations presented by the Nan-ching appear to have been accepted as such, but the search for the "true" classics during Ming and Ch'ing times seems to have lacked any understanding of the concept of "progress" beyond these authoritative origins of wisdom and knowledge. The Nei-ching is the classic, it was pointed out, and what need could there be to improve on it? The extreme conservatism of Chinese renaissance stood in fundamental contrast to European renaissance (although occurring almost simultaneously). The latter took classic learning as a starting point for advances into ever-changing, ever-expanding realms of knowledge, while Chinese renaissance placed a final moratorium on the change and expansion of ancient theories and paradigms—a moratorium that was not observed ubiquitously but that appears to have been effective enough to reverse the former Chinese lead in knowledge and technology. Lü Fu, a Ming commentator of the Nan-ching whose exact lifetime is unknown, signalled the transition to this third phase of the reception of the Nan-ching in Chinese medical history. He defended the Nan-ching as a classic and at the same time acknowledged that it was not grounded in the Nei-ching in its entirety. The possibility that the author of the Nan-ching may have contributed some ideas of his own in order to overcome certain deficiencies of the Nei-ching was not an acceptable solution to the problem:

In the thirteen chapters of the Nan-ching, Ch'in Yüeh-jen has meticulously related the classic of the Yellow Emperor as if the latter had been his ancestor. He used questions and answers in order to elucidate [the classic's meaning] to its students. Of the [statements introduced by] "the scripture states" many do not correspond to the original text of the Ling [-shu] or Su [-wen]. Hence there must have been such a book in antiquity that was lost in the meantime.⁷¹

Other commentators followed Ting Te-yung and blamed the discrepancies simply on errors committed by copyists of later times, on partial losses of the manuscript resulting from various catastrophies, and on faulty reconstruction attempts by later editors.

It was Hsü Ta-ch'un, the eminent physician and author of the early eighteenth century and an outstanding representative of Han teaching in medicine, who for the first time openly denied the Nan-ching the status of a classic. He began two essays on the Nan-ching (both worthy of being quoted in full) with a very unambiguous statement to this effect:

The Nan-ching is not a classic. Its aim is to explain difficult issues in the text of the classic. Hence it poses questions concerning these difficult issues and, then, clarifies them. Therefore it is called Nan-ching. That is to say, it provides an explanation of difficult issues (nan) in the text of the classic (ching). The purpose of this book, therefore, is to investigate the meaning of the original classic, to elucidate its final principles, to dissolve doubtful aspects, and to provide guidance for students of later times. It is, indeed, of great help for anybody who reads the Nei-ching. However, some parts of it lack final perfection. In the dialogues, sometimes text passages from the classic are quoted for explanation where the text of the classic was quite clear originally. [In the Nan-ching,] however, the decisive points are either omitted, or the wording of the classic is even obscured [by the commentary]. In other cases nothing is explained at all, or [the Nan-ching] contradicts the two [books of the Nei-] ching, or [the Nan-ching] misinterprets [the Nei-ching]. These are its shortcomings. [The Nan-ching] contains several passages, and elucidates [a number of] subtle principles that did not appear in the Nei-ching but that are, in fact, suitable for clarifying some obscure meanings of the Nei-ching and for supplementing what had not been sufficiently developed in the Nei-ching. Hence [the Nan-ching] can be considered as an additional instruction that is well worth being handed down together with the Nei-ching into eternity. I am not sure whether [the Nan-ching] was compiled by Yüeh-jen. Maybe Yüeh-jen was introduced [as the author] simply to demonstrate that this book existed in antiquity. From Sui-T'ang times on, [the Nan-ching] received great attention; very many people highly appreciated it, and there was nobody to approach it critically. As a consequence, practicing physicians read the Nan-ching and [believed it to] comprehend all the meaning of medicine. They considered [this book] to be the main stream. How could they have [known that one] penetrates even deeper [into medicine] by investigating the Nei-ching, by searching for differences and agreements [between the Nan-ching and the Nei-ching], and by seeking to discover what was a gain and what was a loss [in the compilation of the Nan-ching]? All writings handed down through the ages have deficiencies and errors; if no one dares to criticize [these errors], they will be repeated forever. Why should the Nan-ching be an exception?! Further details can be found in my "Explanation of the Nan-ching on the Basis of the Classic."⁷²

The Nan-ching is not a classic; it [is a work] that takes up, in the form of questions and answers, all those subtle statements and unclear thoughts of the Ling [-shu] and the Su [-wen] which had underlying principles that had not been elaborated completely. In this way, [the Nan-ching] elucidated the meaning [of the Ling-shu and of the Su-wen]. When the people in ancient times devised the meaning of the title of some book or treatise, they never did this without great care. When they used the term nan, they meant "discussion" (pien-lun). How, on

earth, could a classic be titled a "discussion"? Hence one knows that the Nan-ching is not a classic. Since antiquity, all those who speak about medicine base their arguments on the Nei-ching. It was only during Han times that the Nei-ching teaching was divided [into several currents]. That is, Ts'ang-kung specialized in diagnosis, Mr. [Chang] Chung-ching specialized in prescriptions, and Mr. Hua T'o specialized in various methods of needling and [moxa] cauterization. None of them departed from the Nei-ching, but each of them followed separate instructions. Beginning with the Chin and T'ang era, the number of different traditions increased steadily. But [the followers of these traditions] argued merely about the techniques of medicine, not about the basic principles of medicine. Hence they departed from the sages [who wrote the Ling-shu and the Su-wen] more and more. The Nan-ching remained the only work that was based entirely on the words of the Nei-ching in order to expound the latter's meaning. Here and nowhere else did the transmission of the teaching of the sages begin.

Still, I have some doubts concerning this [work]. In some of its statements, [the Nan-ching] provides explanations along the lines of the text in the [Nei-]ching. Elsewhere, its explanations contradict the text of the classic. And, occasionally, its explanations turn the text of the classic upside down, as if [the Nan-ching] had followed here instructions from a very different book. Someone has established here his own teachings, and it is impossible to check the origin or history [of these ideas]. They were meant to contradict the teachings of the sages entirely, but there is no basis to be used as evidence that they are right or wrong. If, of course, one draws on the text of the Nei-ching itself to explain the Nei-ching, then everything is based on the Nei-ching. If one proves the classic with the classic, it will be obvious what is right and wrong. The present book already has a history of more than two thousand years. Tens of authors have written commentaries on it, but none of them has ever dared to attest to its heterodox meanings. And even though, among [the statements in the Nan-ching], there are some that are extremely dubious, the [commentators] have twisted themselves to explain them [as being rooted in the Nei-ching]. On the contrary, they have criticized parts of this book that are correct. It is beyond my apprehension how all the people of earlier times could be so ignorant!

One reason may be that the critical study of the classics has begun only recently. All that is known so far is how to trace the history [of the classics] in order to find out their origins; if the origins cannot be discovered, [the people conducting such studies] stop in the middle of the way. So far, no one has started from the sources to trace the history. Now, if one looks at the Nan-ching from the perspective of the Nan-ching, there is nothing that could be criticized. If, however, one looks at the Nan-ching from the perspective of the meaning conveyed by the Nei-ching, then the Nan-ching has many flaws, indeed!

In the beginning, I greatly revered this [book]. After studying it for a long time I gradually developed some doubts as to whether it might be wrong in some aspects. When I studied it even longer, I lost my faith even in [some statements] which until then I had believed must be correct. What I believe [now] is that the Nan-ching cannot [have been written to] disobey the Nei-ching. Hence, because it was written to elucidate difficult issues [of the Nei-ching], I have, first of all, pointed out the basic concepts of the Nei-ching, and I have investigated its logic

structure. By adding my comments and explanations alongside the text [of the Nan-ching], I have demonstrated where it differs from and where it agrees with [the Nei-ching], and I have distinguished what is right and wrong [in the Nan-ching]. Some sections [of the Nan-ching] contain unusual patterns and strange ideas that are not based on the Nei-ching; they serve, however, to clarify [certain statements of] the Nei-ching. These must have come from a separate school of instructions. In some cases I had to discuss whether or not these [unusual patterns and strange ideas] can be accepted without being able to refer to [any specific statements in] the Nei-ching. I have pointed out those sections [of the Nan-ching] where a commentary based on the Nei-ching would have led to contradictions and have added the necessary evidence. The Nan-ching cannot serve as a basis for criticizing the classic. All I intend is to elucidate the [nature of the] Nan-ching to the world and to later generations. I wish them to know that the Nan-ching is a commentary to the Nei-ching, with origins which reach back that far. Hence I have called [my work] ching-shih ("explanation on the basis of the classic"). The Nan-ching was compiled to explain the classic; I now, in turn, use the classic to explain the Nan[-ching]. If one uses the Nan[-ching] to explain the classic, the [meaning of the] classic will become clear; if one uses the classic to explain the Nan[-ching], the Nan[-ching] will become clear. All this concerns the principles of medicine which I mentioned [in the beginning], not the techniques [of medicine].⁷³

If Hsü Ta-ch'un was insightful enough to acknowledge the fact that some of the Nan-ching's "passages and principles not appearing in the Nei-ching are suitable for clarifying some obscure meanings in the Nei-ching and for supplementing what had not been sufficiently developed in the Nei-ching," Liao P'ing (1851-1914?), a prolific author and medical conservative, did not indulge in such attempts to appreciate the value of the Nan-ching. In his commentated edition of Hsü Ta-ch'un's Nan-ching ching-shih, the Nan-ching ching-shih pu-cheng, he blasted the Nan-ching for its "absurdities," for its "murderous qualities," and for the "crimes" of its author which, Liao assumed, must have led to the killing of countless people by physicians who accepted the teaching of the Nan-ching as their clinical guideline. Liao—who was the first to assign a fifth or sixth century compilation date to the Nan-ching—also called "apocryphal" all those medical texts of the first millennium that had been influenced by the teachings of the Nan-ching. I have included Liao P'ing's views among the commentaries quoted in the present edition because they mark both an extreme opinion and the conclusion of the discussion of the merits and shortcomings of the Nan-ching in traditional, imperial China.

Quite a few commentaries on the Nan-ching have been published since the establishment of the republic, but they reflect a different era—an era marked by the need to defend traditional Chinese medicine against Western medicine (and to play down the internal contradictions), and by the need to reinterpret the concepts of traditional medicine in the light of Marxist ideology (thus demonstrating their value in a socialist society).

Three views, quoted in full from recent publications in the People's Republic of China, provide some insight into the current state of an ongoing discussion:

YEN HUNG-CH'EN AND KAO KUANG-CHEN ON THE NAN-CHING (1978)

The original title of the Nan-ching was Huang-ti pa-shih-i nan-ching. According to tradition it has been compiled by the famous physician Pien Ch'io from the era of the Warring States. The book is written as a commentary, using a question-and-answer style. Starting from diagnosis, the depots and the palaces, as well as the conduits and the methods to fill or drain, it elucidates the central meaning of the Nei-ching. It exerted a great influence on the medical people of later times.

The Nei-ching and the Nan-ching are the most valuable items contained in the great treasure-house of Chinese medicine and pharmacy. The rich theoretical knowledge and the practical experience contained in these [two works] have guided all sections of Chinese medicine for the past two thousand years without interruption, and have contributed positively not only to the development of the medicine of mankind in its entirety but also, in particular, to the development of the medicine of the East. As time progresses, Chinese medicine must undergo further development too. The future development of Chinese medicine must be sought in a combination of Chinese and Western medicine, in the generation of a new, integrated medicine and pharmacy for China. That is the great mission bestowed on us by history. In the course of the combination of Chinese and Western medicine, medical departments from all over the country have already undertaken great efforts, and they have been rewarded with tremendous success. The facts prove beyond all doubt that these recent successes have been achieved only because the foundations of the fundamental theories of Chinese medicine expounded in the Nei-ching and in the Nan-ching have been analyzed and combined with the positive aspects of modern medicine. Research and analysis of the Nei-ching and of the Nan-ching—that is to say, the adoption and further development of the heritage in the treasure-house of Chinese medicine—are of extraordinarily realistic and far-reaching historical significance. Still, the compilation of the Nei-ching and of the Nan-ching occurred in the distant past. Their literary style is old and creates considerable difficulties for anyone venturing to study them. Most of all, they were influenced by the limitations of the historical conditions in those times, and it was, therefore, unavoidable that both of them contain a certain amount of garbage. Here a clear line of separation must be drawn: the valuable has to be adopted; any garbage has to be eliminated. This way it can be achieved that both [works] will exert an even stronger guiding influence.⁷⁴

KU TE-TAO ON THE NAN-CHING (1979)

Long ago, the authorship of the Nan-ching was ascribed to Ch'in Yüeh-jen (Pien Ch'io); however, this has been doubted by many in the past because this book is mentioned neither in the Pien Ch'io biography of the Shih-chi, nor in the [bibliographical] section "I-wen chih" of the official history of the Han dynasty. The fact that the Nan-ching was not compiled before the Western Han era can be seen most of all from its content; it was influenced, quite obviously, by the "divination" doctrines which exerted a mystifying influence on the yinyang and Five Phases [theories]. There are some people who believe that the [Nan-ching] was compiled during the era of the Six Dynasties; such a date, though, must be too late. First of all, a Pa-shih-i nan was already mentioned in the author's preface to the Shang-han tsa-ping lun and second, the bibliographical section of the Sui History refers to a commentary of [the Nan-ching] that was compiled by Lü Kuang of the era of the Three

Kingdoms. That would imply that [the Nan-ching] cannot have been written later than during the Eastern Han. When, in more recent times, some authors have stated that this book was compiled by a person living during the time of the Eastern Han, this appears quite believable.

The Nan-ching is a theoretical work that was compiled—in an ask-about-difficult-issues style—to explain an ancient medical classic; altogether the book discusses eighty-one problems. Hence its title is "Eighty-One Difficult Issues." Most of the problems discussed were taken from the Nei-ching; they include pulse diagnosis, the conduits, the depots and the palaces, the transportation holes, needling, and a section on illnesses. In the section on pulse diagnosis, the san pu chiu hou of the Nei-ching are interpreted as the three sections (san pu)—inch, gate, and foot—of the inch-opening, each of which has three indicator [-levels] (san hou) called "near the surface," "center," and "in the depth." That reflects a concentration of pulse diagnosis on the one location of the inch-opening. In the section on the conduits, the doctrine of the "eight single-conduit vessels" appears for the first time. Also, [this section] contains a relatively systematic explanation [of the system of conduits], thus eliminating a weakness of the Nei-ching, where [this particular subject was treated] in a rather disorderly fashion. In the section on the depots and palaces, [the Nan-ching] introduced the doctrine "the left kidney is the kidney, the right kidney is the gate of life," and it emphasized the function of the so-called moving influences between the kidneys. In this way, it laid the foundation for the "gate of life" theories of later centuries. In addition, [the Nan-ching] introduced the doctrine "the Triple Burner has a name but no form," thus initiating a senseless and unproductive struggle that continued for more than a thousand years. In the section on illnesses, [the Nan-ching] differentiated [the illness] "harm caused by cold" into five kinds—namely, "to be hit by wind," "to be harmed by cold," "[to be harmed by] moisture and warmth," "heat illnesses," and "warmth illnesses." Also, with respect to accumulation illnesses, it distinguished between those occurring in the depots and those occurring in the palaces, maintaining that the depots are subject to chi-accumulations while the palaces may be subject to chü-accumulations. Furthermore, [this section] contains references to names and symptoms of accumulations in the five depots. With regard to needling, [the Nan-ching] introduced the principle "in case of a depletion, fill its mother; in case of a repletion, drain its child." All of these [doctrines] exerted a significant influence on the development of Chinese medicine.

And yet, because this book itself had been influenced by "divinatory" doctrines, it has spread quite a lot of mystical and obscure poison by making absurd statements such as "male infants are born in yin [periods], and belong to the yang; female infants are born in shen [periods], and belong to the yin"; "when the vessels lose the yang, one sees demons"; "metal is generated in chi [periods], wood is generated in shen [periods], drain the fire in the south, replenish the water in the north"; and also when it discusses the question why the liver—which is associated with the [phase of] wood—is located in the lower [section of the body] and why the lung—which is associated with the [phase of] metal—is located in the upper [section of the body], although wood floats on water while metal sinks down, and so on. All such [statements] exerted a horrible influence on the healthy development of the theories of Chinese medicine.

In conclusion one may say that, by and large, the Nan-ching serves to explain the Nei-ching; it does not contain anything really new. Those elements that were introduced by this book are, as indicated

above, partly useful, partly harmful; they contain minor positive and major negative aspects. Hence it would be quite inappropriate to assign too great a value to this book or to rank it together with the Nei-ching and call it a "classic."⁷⁵

THE TEACHING AND RESEARCH STAFF FOR ANCIENT LITERATURE AT THE SHANGHAI COLLEGE OF CHINESE MEDICINE ON THE NAN-CHING (1980)

Another name for the Nan-ching is Huang-ti pa-shih-i nan ching. The entire book was written in a question-and-answer style; it discusses eighty-one medical issues from the areas of physiology, pathology, diagnosis, and therapy. It is concerned mainly with an explanation of the most important contents of the Nei-ching. The content [of the Nan-ching] is rich; its wording is concise. It contains comprehensive theoretical treatises, and it offers innovative concepts when it introduces, for instance, the technique of "using only the inch-opening" for diagnosing the [movement in the] vessels, or when it states "the yang network [conduit] is the network [conduit] of the yang walker; the yin network [conduit] is the network [conduit] of the yin walker." The Nan-ching enjoyed great appreciation by the physicians at all times; together with the Nei-ching it is called the classic of medicine. It is an important medical book of our country's ancient times.⁷⁶

Preliminary Note

The oldest version of the Nan-ching documented today is probably Li Chiung's edition of 1269; it is preserved in the cheng-t'ung edition of the Tao-tsang of the mid-fifteenth century. If not marked otherwise, I have made use of the Tao-tsang version as the basis of the present edition. The textual differences among the Tao-tsang version and other early editions available today (such as the 1590 printing of Hua Shou's Nan-ching pen-i or the 1472 Japanese printing of Hsiung Tsung-li's Wu-t'ing tzu su-chieh pa-shih-i nan-ching) are almost negligible (references to those differences will be found in the Notes). It is difficult to state whether all the editions extant date back to one common source compiled later than the original Nan-ching, or to the original Nan-ching itself.

To present a translation as true to the original Chinese text as possible, I have put in brackets all additions necessitated in English by the succinctness of the original Chinese wording. Hence, by reading between the brackets the reader will gain an idea of the original style of the Nan-ching. Altogether, twenty commentators are quoted. The numbers to the left of their names in the Commentaries section of each difficult issue refer to the sentences or groups of sentences marked with corresponding numbers in the Chinese and English versions of the Nan-ching text. Wherever several authors are quoted on one and the same sentence or group of sentences in the Nan-ching, their comments are listed in chronological order. The names of the commentators quoted, the dates of their original writings, and the editions of their works used here are as follows (for details and Chinese characters, see appendix A):

Commentator	Date of Writing	Editions used
Lü Kuang(-wang)	3d c.	1. <i>Nan-ching chi-chu</i> . <i>Ssu-pu pei-yao</i> 四部備要, Taipei 1973 2. <i>Nan-ching chi-chu</i> . Ed. Ch'ien Hsi-tso 錢熙祚 (19th c.), Shanghai 1955
Yang Hsüan-ts'ao	7/8th c.	
Ting Te-yung	1062	
Yü Shu	1067	
Yang K'ang-hou	1098	
(Yang Hsüan-ts'ao and Yang K'ang-hou were quoted as Yang in the <i>Nan-ching chi-chu</i> ; except for a few passages it is impossible to identify which of the two Yangs is the author of a specific comment.)		
Li Chiung	1269	<i>Huang-ti pa-shih-i nan-ching tsuan-t'u chü-chieh</i> <i>Cheng-t'ung tao-tsang</i> 正統道藏, Taipei 1977
Hua Shou (with quotations from commentaries by Chi T'ien-hsi, Ch'en Ssu-ming [i.e., Ch'en Jui-sun], and Hsieh [Chin-sun?])	1361	1. <i>Nan-ching pen-i</i> <i>I-t'ung cheng-mai ch'üan-shu</i> 醫統正脈全書, Taipei 1975 2. <i>Pien Ch'io nan-ching</i> <i>Ku chin t'u shu chi-ch'eng</i> 古今圖書集成, Taipei 1958
Chang Shih-hsien	1510	
Hsü Ta-ch'un	1727	<i>Chiao-cheng t'u-chu pa-shih-i nan-ching</i> n.p. (Hung-pao chai shu-chü 鴻寶齋書局) 1912 <i>Nan-ching ching-shih</i> <i>Hsü Ling-t'ai i-shu ch'üan-chi</i> 徐靈胎醫書全集, Taipei 1969
Ting Chin	1736	<i>Ku-pen nan-ching ch'an-chu</i> } <i>Chen-pen i-shu chi-ch'eng</i> , Taipei 1971 <i>Nan-ching ku-i</i> } 珍本醫書集成, Kao-hsiung 1961 <i>Nan-ching cheng-i</i> }
Katō Bankei	1784	
Yeh Lin	1895	
Tamba Genkan (alias Taki Mototane)	1819	
Liao P'ing	1913	<i>Nan-ching ching-shih pu-cheng</i> <i>Liu-i-kuan ts'ung-shu</i> 六譯館叢書, n.p. 1913
Wang I-jen	1936	<i>Nan-ching tu-pen</i> , Taipei 1973
Nanking	1962	<i>Nan-ching i-shih</i> , Nanking 1962
Huang Wei-san	1969	<i>Nan-ching chih-yao</i> , Taipei 1969

Unschuld's Footnotes

25. Fan Hsing-chun, "Huang-ti chung nan ching chu Yü-kuei chen-ching tso-che Lü Kuang ti nien-tai wen-t'i," Shanghai i-hsüeh tsa-chih 10 (1957): 32-35 (see appendix B).
26. Ibid., 34.
27. See "difficult issue" 19.
28. See "difficult issue" 33.
29. See "difficult issue" 75.
30. Taki Mototane 1956, p. 79.
31. Ibid.
32. Fan Hsing-chun 1957, p. 35.
33. Ibid.
34. Ho Ai-hua, "Wo tui Nan-ching chu-tso nien-tai wen-t'i ti shang-chio," Shanghai chung-i tsa-chih 4 (1958): 42; and Ho Ai-hua, "Kuan-yü Nan-ching ti chi-ko wen-t'i," Jen-min pao-chien 2 (1960): 169 (see appendix B).
35. See Chang Chi, *Shang-han lun*, (Shanghai, 1983), preface, p. 4.
36. Ho Ai-hua 1958, p. 42.
37. Ho Ai-hua 1960, p. 169.
38. Ibid.
39. Kano Yoshimitsu, "Isho ni miero kiron", in Onozawa Seiichi et al. (eds.), *Ki no shiso* (Tokyo, 1980), 284-285. Liu Tun-yüan, the discoverer of the Han reliefs depicting Pien Ch'io as a human-headed bird, suggested that the latter might have been influenced by the Indian gandharva myth of human-headed birds acting as skilled physicians. Cf Liu Tun-yüan, "Han-hua-hsiang-shih shang ti chen chiu t'u", *Wen-wu ts'an-k'ao tzu-liao* 6 (1972): 47 f. Pien Ch'io and his innovative art had already been linked to Indian influences by Wei Chü-hsien in his essay "Pien Ch'io ti i-shu lai tzu Yin-tu," *Hsin chung-i k'an* (October 1939). For a refutation of Wei's arguments, see Lu Chüeh-fei, "Pien Ch'io i-shu lai-tzu Yin-tu chih-i," *Hua-hsi i yao tsa-chih* (November 1947); see also appendix B.
40. Wei Chü-hsien suggested that all the different "Pien Ch'ios" mentioned in the *Han-fei-tzu*, the *Chan-kuo tz'u*, the *Shih-chi* and other sources of that time refer to healers practicing "Western medicine" (i.e., Indian medicine). See Ch'en Pang-hsien, *Chung-kuo i-hsüeh shih* (Taipei, 1969), 24.
41. See *Shih-chi*, ch. 105.
42. Taki Mototane 1956, pp. 79-80.
43. See Okanishi Tameto 1969, p. 106.
44. See *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*, ch. 721.
45. Quoted in *Wen-yüan ying-hua*, ch. 735, "Hsü" 37, "Tsa hsü" 1: Huang-ti pa-shih-i nan.
46. See Hsü Ta-ch'un's preface to his *Nan-ching ching-shih* in Liao P'ing's *Nan-ching ching-shih pu-cheng*, where the last sentence reads *jan shih hsi Chin i-hou shu yün*. Compare with Hsü Ta-ch'un 1969, preface, p. 2; Taki Mototane 1956, pp. 94-95; and Okanishi Tameto 1969, p. 99, where this line reads *jan. Shih liang Han i-ch'ien shu yün*.
47. For details, see Unschuld, *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas*, section 3.3.
48. Fan Hsing-chun 1957, p. 32.

49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., quoted from T'ai-p'ing yü-lan, ch. 724.
51. Ibid., p. 34.
52. Ibid., p. 32.
53. Taki Mototane 1956, p. 81.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., pp. 80-81.
57. See appendix C.
58. Okanishi Tameto 1974, p. 18.
59. Walter Fuchs, "Analecta zur mongolischen Übersetzungsliteratur der Yüan Zeit," *Monumenta Serica* 11 (1946):42. See also Herbert Franke, "Chinese Historiography under Mongol Rule," *Mongolian Studies. Journal of the Mongolian Society* 1 (1974): 23.
60. Karl Jahn, "Wissenschaftliche Kontakte zwischen Iran und China in der Mongolenzeit," *Anzeiger der phil.-hist.Kl. der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 106 (1969):202. It should be noted that, in addition to the Nan-ching, the Mai-chüeh existed in Persian translation, a work attributed to Wang Shu-ho (it may have been written under Wang's name many centuries later) that has been published in China together with the Nan-ching in numerous editions. See also Jutta Rall, "Zur persischen Übersetzung eines Mo-chüeh," *Oriens Extremus* 7 (1960): 152-157. I am grateful to Professor H. Franke for bringing these references to the Mongolian and Persian translations of the Nan-ching to my attention.
61. For details on a possible demonological context of early needling, see Unschuld, *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas*, section 3.3.4.
62. Ibid., section 7.2.3.
63. Paul U. Unschuld, "Lepra in China," in J.-H. Wolf (ed.), *Aussatz, Lepra, Hansen-Krankheit* (Würzburg, 1986), in press.
64. According to Ma Chi-hsing's (Ma Jixing's) as yet unpublished *Chung-i wen-hsien hsüeh*, the famous Ming bibliophile, printer, and scholar Mao Chin (1599-1659) was still able to localize such manuscripts.
65. Okanishi Tameto 1974, pp. 17-18.
66. Taki Mototane 1956, p. 84.
67. Ma Chi-hsing, *Chung-i wen-hsien hsüeh*, unpublished ms.
68. Taki Mototane 1956, p. 74.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid., p. 75.
71. Ibid., p. 77.
72. Hsü Ta-ch'un 1969, p. 113.
73. Ibid., preface, pp. 1-2.
74. Yen Hung-ch'en and Kao Kuang-chen, *Nei Nan ching hsüan-shih* (Chi-lin, 1979), 1-2 (see appendix A).

75. Ku Te-tao, Chung-kuo i-hsüeh shih-lüeh, (T'ai-yüan 1979), 87-88.

76. Anonymous collective (the teaching and research staff for ancient literature at the Shanghai College of Chinese Medicine), Ku-tai i-hsüeh wen-hsüan (Shanghai, 1980), 24.