

Dating the *Hsiang-fa Chueh-i Ching*

(像法決疑經)

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Sons of good families, in the future age when myriad ills rise, monks and laymen should cultivate alike the great friendliness and compassion. They should be able to bear all kinds of derision and keep in mind how from beginningless time, all men have been their father, their mother, their brother, their sister, their spouse or their relative. Because of that, they should show all men compassion, helping all according to their ability, even risking their lives to so help the needy in all kinds of skillful means.¹

Introduction

The importance of original Chinese Buddhist texts for understanding Chinese religion and social mores has only recently come to be recognized. These apocryphal texts can tell us so much more about the state of Buddhism in China than some canonical Sanskrit-based texts can. Sanskritic texts might tell us much about Buddhism in its Indian setting and derivatively the implementation of its program in China but Chinese *sūtras* produced in China are direct testimony to native realities.

The following is taken from a larger study which analyzes one such original *sūtra*, the *Hsiang-fa chueh-i ching* (*HFCIC: Sūtra to Allay Doubts During the Age of the Semblance Dharma*), now collected in the *Taisho Daizokyo* 2870, vol.

85, 1335c-1338c. The excerpt here will date this text and place it in a very specific historical setting. The larger study focuses on the relationship between religious ideals and economic behavior and uses the *HFCIC* to reconstruct an important page in the history of the Chinese *sangha* roughly from the fifth to the eighth century A.D.

There are important prior studies of this text. These include Yabuki Keiki's pioneering study on the Three Stages sect (1927),² and, more recently, Makita Tairyō's work on "spurious *sūtras*,"³ as well as Kimura Kiyotaka's study on early Hua-yen Buddhism in China.⁴ These Japanese scholars recognized that the *HFCIC* is an important sixth century Chinese composition and that it influenced significantly the course of future Chinese Buddhist thought and institutions. In English, there is now a translation of this text by Kyoko Buswell (Master of Arts thesis, University of California, Berkeley) with an introductory essay which places this text in the tradition of other original Chinese *sūtras* of the same period, especially with reference to other preceptory texts within the Buddhist tradition. These studies however have not thoroughly explored the *HFCIC*'s intimate tie to the crisis brought about by popular, urban, temple piety that characterize Loyang Buddhism in the early sixth century in China. They also tend to date this text later than I would. For my part, I have taken my lead from T'ang Yung-t'ung's *magnum opus* where he suggested that the *HFCIC*, in indicting state officials with plundering *sangha* property, was in fact recording the success of T'an-yao's *sangha*-households (*seng-hu*) experiment. It was the very success of this program in enriching the *sangha* that brought on the government action.⁵ This suggestion would tie this sixth-century work to a major fifth-century institutional innovation in the

Buddhism of Northern Wei. Not only that, it would also point to certain resultant structural changes appearing in the Northern *sangha* during the sixth century which the *HFCIC* considers as a betrayal of the original economic ideal.

Concerning the economic history of the Chinese *sangha* in that period, there are the vanguard research of Naba Toshisada,⁶ and in his footsteps, the works of Chikusa Masaaki.⁷ In French, we have the well-known study of Jacques Gernet.⁸ Chinese scholars, Marxist or non-Marxist, have also been keenly interested in the economic infrastructure of Buddhist temples of this period.⁹ If we do not always refer to their findings, it is because (a) not all scholars take into consideration the religious inspirations that led to the rise of allegedly corrupted temples and monks, and (b) they rely on Tun-huang records and therefore address the mature temple economy from the mid-eighth century on. However, here we are dealing here with the simpler days of the 450-550 period, with the rural, monastic manorialism (*sangha*-households) and its conflict with urban, lay-dominated temples. A qualification is called for. Tsukamoto and Gernet did look into the inputs of Buddhist precepts in this institution—for example, how, though individual monks should keep a vow of poverty, the corporate Sangha as a Jewel needs not. Yet Tsukamoto and Gernet have stopped with precedents. It is Tomomatsu Entai's analysis of the "principle of equal distribution"—the earliest and ultimate Buddhist ideal of economic justice—that will give us the clue to understanding the principle behind the design of the *sangha*-households as the "merit-field of compassion" (i.e. social welfare) and the unintended but natural displacement of it by the "merit-field of reverence" (i.e. the wasteful extravagance) that would be the

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urban temples.¹⁰ Space however will not permit us to go into the full story here.

To so root the *HFCIC* in a specific institutional crisis in Northern China requires us to (a) date its compilation more exactly than the attempts to date and to (b) isolate two ideological—not compositional—tiers in the text, one pre-Loyang and one post-Loyang.¹¹

Dating the HFCIC to 517-520 A.D.

The traditional way of dating this text is in reference to its inclusion or absence in the standard *sūtra*-catalogues of the sixth century. The *HFCIC* is not listed in the Liang dynasty catalogue, the *Chu san-tsang chi-chi* compiled by the monk Seng-ju in the south some time between 510 and 518 (T 2146.55, 1a-114a). Thus, if we allow a year's lapse for the knowledge of the existence of this apparently Northern text to reach the Southern capital, 517 may mark a reasonable upper limit to its time of composition.¹² The lower limit can be more easily set. The *Li-tai san-pao chi* catalogue compiled by Fei Ch'ang-fang in 597 knew its existence in two fascicles and judged it already "suspect" as being possibly a Chinese fabrication text (T 2034.49, 112c). Fei was relying here on the *Chung-ching mu-lu* (a common designation of such collections) compiled three years earlier (594) by the monk Fa-ching, the so-called *Fa-ching lu*. Fa-ching had already so classified it under the category of "*i-ching* (suspected works)," that is, works "(whose) title [claiming to be *fo-shuo*, Buddha-spoken, *buddhavacana*] and whose content disagree with one another (such that) current cataloguers hold them suspect; their literary form and overall principle is similarly at odds (such that) the matter [of their authenticity] requires further looking into." (T 2146.55, 126b. The characterization for that class of work is

in 126c1-2.) To that judgment, Fei added “[the usual] information concerning the translator is missing”—a reason to doubt its authenticity.¹³ Later the *Chung-ching mu-lu* compiled by Yen Chung in 602 called it a *i-wei-ching* (suspected fabrication), remarking that “the title seems true enough, but the contents are the works of men.”¹⁴

Using these references in the early catalogues as clues, Makita found the *HFCIC* to be composed in China some time in the late sixth century.¹⁵ Noting how the *HFCIC*, in its list of eschatological woes, mentioned no anti-Buddhist persecutions, Kimura narrows it to the third quarter of the sixth century on the assumption that, had the author witnessed the 574-576 persecution of the *sangha* by Chou emperor Wu, he would have alluded to it.¹⁶ Both Makita and Kimura failed to use the eschatological self-dating by the *HFCIC* to date its composition. This is a difficult but not impossible task. We know that the *HFCIC* is one of the many eschatological texts produced in the North in the sixth century.¹⁷ The question is how early in the sixth century. One way to determine that is to look at its picture of the end. Compared to the *HFCIC*, the *Hsiao fa-tsang mieh ching* (*The Lesser Sutra on the Demise of the Dharma*),¹⁸ paints a darker picture of the times, and openly refers to the “disappearance of the Dharma-basket.” Therefore, it should reflect “the chaos that came toward the end of the Wei rule.”¹⁹ The *HFCIC* with a much milder eschatological scenario should be dated earlier.

For one thing, it perceives of the decline of the Dharma as something regrettable but natural. Said the Buddha to his tearful following gathered around him during his *parinirvāṇa* thus:

Stop, do not cry. For this is the way of the world. Where there is good,

there also has to be evil. Where there is prosperity, there also has to be decline.²⁰

There is no hint here of an imminent end, nor of cosmic evil enslaving mankind. There is no apocalyptic fire or flood either. There is no reliance on *mantras* or *dhāraṇīs*, said to be one mark of eschatological gospels. There is no radical reliance on “other power” either. In fact, despite some negative remarks about evil men, it had not lost faith in man’s ability to do good. It ultimately endorses the very merit-making that, when misplaced, it harshly criticized. It only wants more genuine charity. All that suggests that it is far removed from the widespread and extreme eschological anxiety that came after 566 in the North.

And that the title of the work confirms. The *HFCIC* is a overtly *hsiang-fa* (Semblance Dharma) text; it is not a *mo-fa* (Degenerate Dharma) gospel and does not bill itself as such. Except for a passing remark on how one day, even the Semblance Dharma would eclipse, the *HFCIC* claims knowledge only of the True (*cheng*) and the Semblance (*hsiang*) Dharmas. It never uses the term *mo-fa* itself. As such, it belongs to that class of eschatological texts that know only a “two-ages” instead of a full “three-ages” scheme.²¹ If so, the date of this text is more likely before 566, since after 566 the full three-ages scheme gained wide acceptance in the North. Although not impossible, it is hard to imagine the author of the *HFCIC* adopting a less anxious scheme after the anxious one had gained currency.²²

However, there are more reasons for dating this text earlier. As a *hsiang-fa* text, the *HFCIC* sees itself as a fairly early one. It dated itself somewhere within the first hundred years of the Semblance Dharma era, which it

understands to have dawned 1,000 years since the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. (See actual passage to be cited later.) If we know when it dated the Buddha's great demise, we can pinpoint this text fairly well. Two unknowns are involved here: the eschatological timetable and the *parinirvāṇa* date. Because opinions on these changed in time, a review of the history of such opinions can help us date the text. Now of the timetables in use during the fifth and sixth century, the *HFCIC* should be using the one derived from the *Karuṇā-puṇḍarīka sūtra*, the currency of which can be located in certain circles up to a certain time. But first, a quick review of the four major timetables the Chinese used then:

The Length of the Three Ages by Years Post-Parinirvāṇa

	True	Semblance	The Origin of the Thesis
1.	500	1000 years	The <i>Mahā-Māyā</i> or the <i>Yueh-tsang ching</i>
2.	1000	500	The <i>Karuṇā-puṇḍarīka</i>
3.	500	500	Kumarāṅgīva's Disciples
4.	1000	1000	The <i>Ta-pei ching</i> (sic) ²³

Since the *HFCIC* counted the true Dharma as lasting for 1,000 years, that should effectively exclude the first and the third option above. The choice falls on the second and not the fourth because (i) the fourth has not been verified as being textually correct,²⁴ and (ii) as we will see presently, the *HFCIC* has definite ideological ties with Dharmakṣema, the translator of the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*,²⁵ which was replaced (iii) only by the *Mahā-Māyā Sūtra* (*Sūtra Dedicated to Buddha's Mother, Māyā*) timetable at the end of the fifth century. We have good evidence for this when we turn to the other factor.

Dates for the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* varied even more. The most relevant

ones are listed below. The date is arrived at by adding 80 years to the Buddha's birthday.²⁶

Some Dates for the Parinirvāṇa

Date	Person Holding It	Source
607 B.C.	Hsieh Ch'eng	3rd. cent.
1085	Fa-hsien, the pilgrim	4th. cent.
949	T'an-wu-tsui	The 520 Debate
558	Kumārajīva as cited by	Tao-an in 570 ²⁷
609	Fei Ch'ang-fan	Cataloguer 597

Of these dates, the one in general use at the time is 607 B.C. (variant 609 B.C.).²⁸ Since the *HFCIC* dates its own time (sixth century A.D.) as falling into ca. 1,100 years after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, it has to be assuming the Buddha's passing away to be either in 607 or the more idiosyncratic 588 B.C. That 607 B.C. was the preferred one at the Northern court is attested to by an edict issued in A.D. 493 by Emperor Kao-tsu (r. 472-499). Noting abuses in the *sangha* and calling for a nationwide adoption of a clerical code, the emperor also on that occasion referred to his time, i.e. 493, as "coming (some time) after the midpoint of a 1,000 years-long Semblance Dharma." This part of the edict has been preserved intact by Tao-hsuan.²⁹

Now it just happens that by the 607 B.C. count, the A.D. 493 edict would fall exactly 1,100 years post *parinirvāṇa*.³⁰ Since the emperor referred to A.D. 493 as coming after the midway mark of a 1,000 years-long Semblance Dharma, he could not be using the "1,000 True, 500 Semblance" timetable but rather the *Mahā-Māyā Sūtra* sequence of 500 True, 1,000 Semblance. This work was

translated by T'an-ching (n. d.) between 479 and 502 but we can now narrow it to being between 479 and 493 since the edict apparently assumed its existence. This timetable, soon the standard for Far Eastern Buddhism, was reaffirmed in 566 by the *Yueh-tsang ching*. The adoption of the timetable by the emperor in 493 has to mean that those around the court—including the clerical elite that must have so instructed the king—were adopting it also. That the ruler should have so noticed the evils in the *sangha* 1,100 years post-*parinirvāṇa* probably led the *HFCIC* to come up with dating near evils every 100 years in the Semblance Dharma era. Such a subdivision is rather uncommon. Why the *HFCIC* would stick with an earlier *Karuṇāpundarika* timetable instead of the *Mahā-Māyā* one, we will see later. First, we have to take note as to why there were so many different dates set for the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, because that is crucial to our next bit of evidence for dating the *HFCIC*.

The many different datings of the *parinirvāṇa*—and all of the ones listed above exaggerates the Buddha's ancientness—came about as a result of discrepancies in the scriptures. However, it is also largely due to the long-running controversy between Buddhists and Taoists over who, Buddha or Lao-tzu, has the higher ancestry. The Taoists had offered the *Lao-tzu hua-hu* thesis which argues that Lao-tzu lived earlier and that the story of his last being seen leaving China and going west is really about him going off to India and appearing there as the Buddha (or as his teacher) to civilize (*hua*: teach) the barbarians (*hu*).³¹ In order to refute that, the Buddhists told their own version of what happened. Pushing the Buddha's life back so that it would predate Lao-tzu's, they contended that it was the Buddha who came East as Lao-tzu.³² The *parinirvāṇa* date thus suffered repeated revision and we see only a few of

those above.

History has a way of challenging myth—not just in our time, but also in late fifth-century China. In 492, but in the South, just one year before Kao-tzu's 493 edict, monks in Canton came across the famous *Chung-sheng tien chi* (*Dotted Record*). In substance, this is a Ceylonese-transmitted manuscript of Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Vinaya*, but it was so called because it includes a long list of "dots" penned at the end of the work. Each dot means an annual entry; the total number of dots is supposed to mark the number of years removed from the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. That record seems to be quite faithfully kept and scrupulously transmitted. We have here one of the most exacting means to dating the historic *parinirvāṇa*. It is what led Takakusu Junjiro in this century to reestablish it as being in 480 B.C. There is some room for disagreement; the possible range is actually between 480 to 486.³³ The implication of these dots for re-dating the life of the Buddha was however not immediately recognized in 492. It was only noticed some half century later.

Meanwhile, in a separate development in the North, a new round of debate between Buddhists and Taoists arose. In 520, the Taoist master Chiang Pin, using the apocryphal historiography of Lao-tzu as provided by the *Lao-tzu k'ai-t'ien ching* (*Scripture of Lao-tzu Initiating the Creation*) [a religious Taoist text taught supposedly by Lao-tzu himself], calculated that Lao-tzu was born on the fourteenth day of the ninth (lunar) month in what would be our 605 B.C. Chiang surmised that Lao-tzu then, at age 85 (i. e., the year 519 B.C.) went west to teach or convert the Buddha.³⁴ This, naturally, offended the Buddhists and the pro-Buddhist court. These forces joined and rallied behind the foreign monk T'an-wu-tsui who, by citing equally obscure Chinese chronicles, countered by

dating the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* in 949 B.C. instead.³⁵

The emperor then ordered one hundred and seventy scholars to seek verifications on the rival claims. They looked into the alleged works of Lao-tzu and the outcome was that all these apocryphal texts (i.e. religious Taoist scriptures attributed to Lao-tzu) were found to be fabrications and thus proscribed. Only the *Tao-te-ching* (*Lao-tzu*) could be said to be Lao-tzu's words.³⁶ The Buddhist scored a resounding victory. Until in our time, when Takakusu used the *Dotted Record* again to come up with a more historic *parinirvāṇa* date, T'an-wu-ts'ui's choice of 949 B.C. was the standard assumed in Far Eastern Buddhism. The Buddhist calendar still uses that as the first year of its lord. In 566, the Narendrayaśas-translated *Yueh-tsang ching* won wide acceptance and its eschatological timetable (500 True, 1000 Semblance) was conjoined with that new dating of the *parinirvāṇa* (595 B.C.). This then caused widespread anxiety, for it appeared that the Age of the Degenerate Dharma (to last 10,000 years)—beginning 1500 years post-*parinirvāṇa*—had already dawned in 550 A.D.³⁷ This is soon confirmed by the great Chou Wu persecution of the Buddhists in 574-576.

But to return to our story. The *HFCIC* should be placed before the 520 debate, because, given the public acclaim of the much publicized "defense of the Dharma" by T'an-wu-ts'ui and the imperial seal of approval set upon it in 520, it is almost unimaginable that that *HFCIC* could have remained silent about it. The 949 B.C. date for the demise of the Buddha would put the *HFCIC*'s own 1100 post-*parinirvāṇa* self-dating into the first instead of the sixth century A.D. Furthermore, 520 happens to be a fateful year. Others events were taking place. Loyang was sacked by the nomadic clique under the

leadership of the rebel Erh-chu Jung; its ruling class was eventually massacred at Ho-yin *en masse*. In fact, in the same month (seventh lunar month) as the debate, Emperor Dowager Ling, the patron of Buddhism, was imprisoned. The grandest of Loyang temples, the Yung-ning-ssu, was desecrated by soldiers. These are well-known facts of Northern Wei history. Yet there is not one single hint in the *HFCIC* that it witnessed any of these. For an author who clearly was acquainted with the prosperity of temples but who also decried its superficiality to be totally silent on such mass destruction—so citable signs too of the weakness innate in outward temple piety—there can only be one explanation. The text predated these events.³⁸

This argument that the *HFCIC* was composed before the events of A.D. 520 based on omission faces a challenge. The *HFCIC* is equally silent on the earlier anti-Buddhist persecution under T'ai-wu in 446-452. We can only attribute this to a shortness of memory induced by the success of the post-452 Buddhist revival. But something else of Loyang is notably absent in the *HFCIC*. This text totally ignores the new and important translations of Bodhiruci and Ratnamati made at Loyang between 508 and 533. Even by 520, their works should be known to informed Buddhists, so the silence cannot be due so much to ignorance. The reason must lie elsewhere. We have to take a closer look at the structure of the work—and delay somewhat our major proof for dating it even more narrowly to being between 517 and 520.

The Two Tiers in the HFCIC

The consistency of style shows that the *HFCIC* was composed by one hand, but within the work, there are nevertheless two distinct ideological tiers.

The preamble and the main body draw on the Liang-chou legacy of Dharmakṣema while the final sermon transmits the Southern heritage of Kumārajīva that was enjoying a recent vogue in Kao-tsu's Loyang.

In the preamble, the *HFCIC* offers itself as a teaching supposedly taught by the Buddha on his last day on earth. The Buddha's remark on that occasion includes this:

At the time, the World Honored One told the various multitude, "I have already so taught the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* and have furthered instructed you, through the Bodhisattva Universal-and-Wide, matters concerning the fields of the Buddhas of the Ten Quarters. Now if there is anyone among you who still harbor any doubts, let him speak now, for the supreme Dharma would soon be eroded and disappear...."³⁹

Because of the explicit reference to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, Chinese Buddhists have traditionally classified the *HFCIC* under the so-called *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* corpus which are *sūtras* the Buddha supposedly taught just prior to his *parinirvāṇa*.⁴⁰ The (Mahayana) *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, from which this notion of a *Nirvāṇa* corpus was derived, was translated fully by Dharmakṣema in 421 in Liang-chou. We usually associate it with the doctrine of the universality of Buddha-nature, but that was largely how the text was received in the South and propagated by the Southern *Nirvāṇa* school. Hui-kuan and others even reworded in 430 Dharmakṣema's translation into a more polished "southern text."⁴¹

The *HFCIC*, however, belongs more to the Northern *Nirvāṇa (Sūtra)* tradition, which did not highlight so exclusively the doctrine of Buddha-nature. The *HFCIC*, for example, made no mention of this concept. Instead,

more in keeping with the Northern style, it underlined the eschatological element instead. I say “more” because there are Southern eschatological texts that also used the same scenario and did not mention Buddha-nature. However, significantly, our text stays conscientiously with Dharmakṣema’s original when making use of that text and avoids quoting the southern version.⁴² For the compiler of this text to do so around 520 in Loyang when the southern text already was gaining northern adherents has to indicate a loyalty to Liang-chou Buddhism. Indeed, in its eschatological timetable, the *HFCIC* kept to the one provided by the Dharmakṣema-translated *Kaṣṣapapūṇḍarīka* and avoided the *Mahā-Māyā-sūtra* that the “vicar of the *sangha*,” Emperor Kao-tsu, adopted for his 493 edict.

The northern *Nirvāṇa* School is also different from its southern counterpart in that it was tied to a Pure Land tradition. In the above quote, the *HFCIC* places its own teaching specifically after a teaching said to be delivered on the Buddha’s behalf by a Bodhisattva called Universal-and-Wise. This is in reference to the a Pure Land text called the *Sui-yuan wang-sheng shih-fang fo-t’u ching* (*Sūtra on Birth in the Buddha-Lands of the Ten Quarters in accordance with the Vows*) attributed to that *bodhisattva*.⁴³ This *Sui-yuan ching* is a *hsiang-fa* text similar to the *HFCIC* and belongs to the same *Nirvāṇa* corpus with similarly visible ties to Dharmakṣema. It is an early Pure Land text, possibly even compiled in China, one basically cataloguing the Buddhas of the various Buddha-Lands without giving Amitabha of the West or the notion of deliverance by faithful *nien-fo* any special coverage. It is not dated and remains undatable at the moment, but it would appear to be one of the Pure Land texts T’an-yao and his circle of Liang-chou monks allegedly translated between 452

and 500 at or near P'ing-cheng, the Wei capital where the Liang-chou population had been held captive since 439.⁴⁴

All these support our contention that the *HFCIC* was rooted in the northern Liang-chou *Nirvāna* tradition of Dharmakṣema. That tradition had been transposed to P'ing-cheng after 439 and on to Loyang after 494. More indication of a Liang-chou tie comes in its central message. To continue: the Buddha in the text then asked those attending if there was anything needing clarification before his departure. Responding, the Bodhisattva Ch'eng-ssu ("Always Charitable" or "Perpetual Donation")—a namesake to characterize the central teaching of this *sūtra*—asked what would be the best practice in the uncertain age of the Semblance Dharma. The answer is "Donate generously." The work thus "resolves the doubts (concerning the proper practice) in the Semblance Dharma era," i.e. *Hsiang-fa chueh-i (ching)*. The main body is devoted to a description of the evils of the era, as well as the proper and the improper practices therein.

The teaching of "be charitable" or practice *dāna* is ancient. The *HFCIC* knew it. *Dāna* is the "foremost (the first) of the (six) *pāramitās*." It is "what the Buddhas of the Three Times all respect" etc., etc. In Buddhism, it can cover many types of charitable actions, but any reader should soon realize that by charity the *HFCIC* meant primarily material donations, that is, *dāna* in the sense of the first of the Four [modes of] Conversions (*she-fa*), the donation of goods.⁴⁵ Since traditionally the monk has no property and can offer only the *dāna* of the Teaching (Dharma), this donation of goods (*tsai-ssu*) is the lot of the layman. In that sense, the *HFCIC* is a lay, kammatic gospel and was probably inspired by the *Upāsaka-prātimokṣa* which says,

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The *bodhisattva* donates to the poor because he wants to increase his own merits;... because he has empathy and pity for the suffering; because by so doing, he acquires merits; because he may so terminate the cause of pain.⁴⁶

The standard reward for such lay donative good deeds is not *nirvāṇa* but the lot of higher rebirths in the realm of men or gods (*devas*). Indeed, we find that to be the exclusivse concern in the main body of the *HFCIC*. This is recognized when the *HFCIC* is rewritten into the *Yu-ch'ia Fa-chien ching* (*Yogācāra Dharma Mirror Sūtra: YCFCC*) and the latter calls itself:

This scripture is called *Semblance Dharma (HF)*, also *Allayer of Doubts (CIC)*; also *Aiding, Uplifting, Comforting and Nurturing the Poor, the Destitute, the Widowed and the Orphaned*; also *The Supreme Teaching of the Field of Compassion in the Lowest of the Three Realms*; also the *YCFCC*.⁴⁷

The “lowest of the three realms” are the six paths of rebirth, so the *HFCIC* indeed teaches what Spiro calls “kammatic Buddhism.”⁴⁸ That class of teaching the Chinese called then *Jen-t'ien-chiao*, the teaching concerning [good deeds leading to rebirth in the higher paths of] man, *jen* and gods, *t'ien*. The term is taken from Liu ch'iu's (436-495) famous *pan-chiao* (tenet classification) system.⁴⁹ For reference, here is a tabulation of that scheme:

*The Five Teachings of the Buddha in Temporal Sequence*⁵⁰

	Doctrines	Key Scripture
1	Man and Gods	<i>T'i-wei Po-li ching</i>
2	Three Vehicles	From the <i>Āgamas</i> on
3	Emptiness	<i>Prajñā-pāramitā sūtra</i>
4	Ekayāna	<i>Saddharmapūṇḍarika sūtra</i>
5	Permanence	<i>Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra</i>

This places the *HFCIC* in the company of the *T'i-wei Po-li ching* (*Trapuṣa Bhallika Sūtra*).⁵¹ This tie to the *T'i-wei Po-li ching* is not insignificant. This other work was composed in 460 by the monk T'an-ching, a Liang-chou monk in the entourage of T'an-yao. The reason given for doing so was that there was a dearth of such didactic materials for laymen because earlier, in the 446-452 persecution of the Buddhists, Emperor T'ai-wu had supposedly destroyed many such scriptures. Best remembered for its alignment of the five Buddhist lay precepts with the Confucian list of five virtues ("five permanents"), the text should however first be seen as a *ch'iai-ching*. In other words, it is a *pañcaśīla* functioning as the lay *pratimokṣa* which peasants belonging to the T'i-wei cult would, gathering every fortnight in the fields, chant, one to another, in emulation of the monks' fortnight confessionals.⁵² The *HFCIC* belongs to that same pedagogical tradition perfected by these actively evangelical Liang-chou monks eager to spread, in this case, the *dānavāda* teaching among the people. Composed clearly later than the *T'i-wei Po-li ching*, it is also more sophisticated. The former is modeled on Hinayana text and uses Hinayana scenarios (it is after all supposedly pre-*Āgama*, level 2 in Liu's scheme of the five teachings). However, the *HFCIC* borrows the Mahayana *Parinirvāṇa* in its preamble, gauges itself by *hsiang-fa* eschatology and includes, within its dominantly kammatic message and promises of samsaric rewards, some bodhisattvic motifs (levels 3, 4 and 5 in Liu's scheme). In the main body though, these bodhisattvic poetics were more decorative than substantive.

The concluding sermon of the Buddha, however, introduces a new tone. The Buddha suddenly shifts to praising the *paramārtha* of Mahayana emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and wisdom (*prajñā*). Karma and rewards are now declared illusions.

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Samsāra and *nirvāṇa* are found nondual. The donor, the gift and the recipient are all ultimately unreal. A second tier in the structure of this text has so revealed itself.

The kammatic *dānāvada* realism and the new Mahayanist *prajñāvāda* would not be so incongruous,⁵³ were it not for the fact that this concluding section taps a different legacy, the works of Kumārajīva. The following table shows the two rather discrete strata of this text:

<i>Scriptural Sources for the Two Tiers</i>	
Preamble & Main Body	The Concluding Section
<i>Mahāpārinirvāṇa sūtra</i>	<i>Larger Prajñā-pāramitā</i>
<i>Karuṇāpūṇḍarīka sūtra</i>	<i>Ta-chih-tu-lun</i>
<i>Upāsakaśīla-sūtra</i>	<i>Vimalakīrti</i>
	<i>Fan-wang ching</i>
[all Dharmakṣema's works representing a Northern tradition]	[all Kumārajīva's works, except for the last, which is compiled in the South around 500]

We cannot analyze the more specific passages to prove this point here but this syncretism of a Dharmakṣema gospel with a Kumārajīva postscript should point to a belated confluence of two ideo-geographical streams of thought. We can only note this below.

Both Dharmakṣema and Kumārajīva were early fifth-century figures. Because of their different places of residence, these two translators headed two separate traditions. Dharmakṣema arrived in Liang-chou in the northwest after Kumārajīva had left there for Ch'ang-an in the central plains. As the resident

monk in this northwest frontier, then under a new local ruler who was not involved in the political strife affecting the central plains, Dharmakṣema founded a distinct form of Buddhist piety there. Departing from the overemphasis on wisdom attributable to Kumārajīva and his circle, Dharmakṣema focused equally on popular teaching, wider coverage of the precepts, meditation practice and rites and liturgies. In the end, Liang-chou Buddhism had a larger communal base, and its leaders were more active in politics than the more refined and individualistic monks of Ch'ang-an. The latter style was later inherited by the Southern dynasties.

We have already noted in passing the difference in the Northern and Southern readings of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*. These two styles evolved fairly independently of each other for some time. The early Wei was dominated more by the tradition of Fo-t'u-teng and Tao-an than by any representative offshoots of either streams. In 439 though, Liang-chou was brought under Wei rule. For the rest of the fifth century, Northern Wei was dominated by this Liang-chou Buddhist heritage. Many original *sūtras* appeared in the North under its auspices. Only under the sinicized rule of Emperor Kao-tsu (lovingly remembered by the Chinese as Hsiao-wen ti) who moved the capital to Loyang in 494, did Southern Buddhist scholarship begin to gain a following. In that process, Kumārajīva's legacy met up with the earlier tradition of Dharmakṣema.

The *HFCIC* is one hybrid result of that confluence. In the preamble and the main body, it stayed faithful to Dharmakṣema to the extent that it even ignores the "Southern text" of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*. However at the end, it adopted the Kumārajīva legacy—not so much Kumārajīva directly but Kumārajīva as filtered through the gnostic readings of the Southerners of the

past century or so. All that happened prior to the new vogue of Ratnamati and Bodhiruci, the resident translators in Loyang itself.

The Final Clue to Dating the HFCIC to Between 517 and 520

We have to cut short a long story on how the *HFCIC* was related to changes in the economic structure of the *sangha*. Briefly, the *HFCIC* produced in sixth-century Loyang was harping back to the social welfare ideal of T'an-yao when he founded the "merit-field of compassion" that was the rural *sangha*-household. The success of that program in accumulating wealth under the monastery-run manors (primarily located in the countryside), however, courted abuses. The monks, once "poor men of the way," were no longer that poor—or as public-spirited as before now that monkhood became materially rewarding. At the same time, the urban renaissance in Loyang brought along, in a quantitatively significant way, a new style of piety focused on the Buddha Jewel (instead of on the *sangha* Jewel). The extravagance of these temples dedicated to the "merit-field of reverence" were then draining the *sangha*-grain, the basic resources for the original charity program at the countryside.

By 493, the signs of corruption were so evident that Emperor Kao-tsu called for a review of the clerical code in order to purify the *sangha*. In the heydays of Loyang temple prosperity, i.e. roughly the second decade of the sixth century, this is how the *HFCIC* lists the increasing ills:

Sons of good families, one thousand years after my *parinirvāṇa*, evil *dharma* will slowly flourish. Another 100 years, and various evil monks and nuns will populate Jambudvīpa, filling every corner. They will not practice religious virtue but will seek after wealth and property, engaging

in unrighteous conduct. They would often keep the “eight impure goods,”⁵⁴ never once possessing themselves the Ten Virtues.⁵⁵ They will have two novices initiated as *śramaṇas* before the monks themselves had ten years of full precepts behind them. Consequently, lay people [witnessing such corruptions] will slight the three jewels. Afterwards all laymen and monks will compete in building *stūpas* and temples all over the land. Pagodas, shrines, images and statues may be found everywhere: in mountains, forests, and open fields; in temple compounds, and even in alleys not fit because of the odor and filth.⁵⁶

The *HFCIC* is not just repeating a standard list of eschatological woes here. None of the more mythological evils or natural calamities which we find in the Southern eschatological texts can be found in the *HFCIC*’s list of very concrete social evil. There is no shinking of life span, fire, flood, plague, or devilish bewitchments. Not even evil kings or the chaos of persecution or war are mentioned. The list follows very closely the specific complaints of actual abuses aired in its time in imperial decrees and princely petitions. These we cannot cite in full here.

For purpose of dating this text, it is most significant that the *HFCIC* apparently paraphrased certain lines of a famous 517 memorial to the throne. We see this best through this lacuna in the very last line cited above. As it stand, the *HFCIC* never fully explains what exactly are the odor and filth in that narrow alleys that are not fit for putting up *stūpas*. Most of us would assume that such uncleanness refers to common dirt or refuse. Not exactly. The citizens of Loyang at the time knew it was more than that. This is because there was a recent imperial edict which said:

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If a (Buddhist) shrine or statute is found standing solemnly close to a butcher shop, then the business must be closed down so that the holy residence would not be polluted.⁵⁷

It is the incompatibility of Buddhist *ahimsā* (nonviolence to life) and the bloodshed of slaughterhouses that the *HFCIC* condemned.

That edicted prohibition came about as a result of a long memorial submitted to the throne by the most able of Emperor Kao-tsu's brothers, the "ssu-k'ung" and Chief Secretary, Prince Ch'eng of Jen-ch'eng.⁵⁸ Note the almost exact choice of wording in this original, from which the passage from the *HFCIC* cited earlier on clearly paraphrased:

Nowadays the monasteries are found everywhere, in groups within the city walls or in series overflowing into wineries and butcher shops. Three or five monks banding together would claim to constitute a monastic fellowship. Indian chants and the sounds of slaughter are found side by side, their echoes resonating one with the other. Sacred images and *stūpas* are enveloped in the stench of rancid meat. The spiritual quest is steeped in lust and craving. The true and the false are mingled together; the goings on are all entangled.... In the past, when the Tathāgata initiated the teaching, [monks] used to dwell primarily in mountains and forests. Now they are entranced by city and town. But are narrow alleys the proper place for religious practice? And should frivolity and turmoil be the abode of the contemplative life?⁵⁹

This has great relevance for our dating of the *HFCIC*. Not only should the *HFCIC* predate the 520 debate when the *parinirvāṇa* was officially back-dated to 949 B.C. It should also be put after this 517 memorial. And because its

contents had to do with the observed ills of temple piety, this work should be placed in Loyang itself.

Thus our conclusion. This text was most likely compiled in the three years between 517 and 520. This can account for the reason why it was not listed in Seng-ju's *Chu san-tsang chi-chi* catalogue of *sūtras* in 518. A well-received text like the *HFCIC* would have made its way to the South within the year had it existed in Loyang before 517. The author should have ideological ties to Liang-chou Buddhism. He must have arrived in Loyang fairly recently to take in the imported teachings of Kumārajīva which was then in vogue, but must not have resided there long enough to be appreciative of Ratnamati or Bodhiruci. And since the author had an enlightened mind (the *HFCIC* is notable for the absence of magic) and since he apparently had access not just to the imperial edict to ban slaughterhouses next to temples but also the full 517 memorial itself (such memorials, even when approved by the throne, were not always publicly posted in the capital or the countryside for everyone to view), this means that the author might even belong to a circle very close to the court. His sympathy with the Prince's critique of the times—a pious but very moral critique of the heartless, secular city—even suggests that he is from the Prince's entourage. Now it has been suggested that P'u Hui, an advisor to the Prince, could well be the ghost writer for the 517 memorial.⁶⁰ If so, one might then even venture suggesting him or someone like him to be the actual author of this rather important, native, Buddhist scripture.

NOTES

¹ *HFCIC*, T. 85, p. 1338a. This “family of men” idea is derived in part from

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the doctrine of *karma* and rebirth (though just as well, for the more sophisticated, from *pratityasamutpada*, interdependent causation), namely that given the many rebirths we have had, all beings could have been once related to us. This forms the basis of Buddhist ethics of universal *pao-en* (repaying of grace received [in prior lives]).

² Yabuki Keiki, *Sangaikyo no Kenkyu*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1927); reissued in 1973.

³ Makita Tairyō, *Gikyo no Kenkyu* (Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyusho, 1976), pp. 304-319.

⁴ Kimura Kiyotaka, *Shoki Chugoku Kego Shiso no Kenkyu* (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1977), pp. 113-131.

⁵ See T'ang Yung-t'ung, *Han-Wei Liang-Chin Nan-Chin Nan-pei-chao Fo-chiao-shih* (Peking: Chung-hua reissue, 1955), p. 599. T'ang might have drawn on Japanese scholarship here, but I have not been able to trace it in Tsukamoto Zenryū's *Shina Bukkyo no Kenkyu. Hokugi hen* (Tokyo: Kobundo, 1942). This work has been reissued (with certain chapter changes) in *Tsukamoto Zenryū Chosakushu* II: "Hokucho Bukkyoshi Kenkyu" (Tokyo: Daito Shuppan, 1974).

⁶ Naba Toshisada, "Ryokoko," now reprinted in his *Todai Shakai Bunkashi Kenkyu* (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1974), pp. 264-394.

⁷ Chikusa Masaaki, "Tonko no jiko ni tsūite," *Shirin* 44:5 (1961), 40-73, reprinted in his *Chugoku Bukkyo Shakaishi Kenkyu* (Kyoto: Dobokai, 1982). The preface contains a review of the history of this research.

⁸ Jacques Gernet, *Les aspects économiques du bouddhisme dans la société chinoise du Ve au Xe siècle* (Saigon: L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1956).

⁹ See works listed by Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 524-526. They have laid the foundation for understanding the socio-economic impact of Buddhism in China.

¹⁰Tomomatsu Entai, *Bukkyo ni okeru Bunpai no Riron to Jissai, I: Bukkyo Keizai Shiso Kenkyu, II (The Rationale and the Reality of Distribution in Buddhism, I: A Study in Buddhist Economics, II)* (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1965).

¹¹The shorter version here incorporated editorial comments given by Robert Buswell, now with UCLA.

¹²Tentative because Seng-ju had missed listing extent texts; on his limitations, see Makita's remarks, *Gikyo*, p. 306.

¹³The characterization noted by Makita, *ibid*. I cannot locate.

¹⁴T 2147.55. 172c4. The characterization for that class of work is in 172b25.

¹⁵Makita, *Gikyo*, pp. 305-306.

¹⁶Kimura, *Kegon Shiso*, p. 118.

¹⁷See T'ang, *Fo-chiao-shih*, pp. 598-600.

¹⁸T 2874.55. 1358c-9b.

¹⁹This is T'ang's opinion, see *ibid*. I have however recently been convinced that the *Hsiao fa-tsang mieh ching* could be earlier than the *HFCIC* because it was a Southern text drawing on a southern Buddho-Taoist eschatology. See also Zurcher's essay to be cited below.

²⁰*HFCIC*, T 2870.85. 1338a.26-27; hereafter cited only by page, register, and line.

²¹See Yabuki on the two uses of the partial and the full scheme in his *Sangaikyo*, p. 201.

²²We are not assuming a consensus of the eschatological timetable among

all Chinese Buddhists at any one time in the sixth century. Such consensus did not exist. Chi-tsang in Sui and Tao-hsuan in T'ang still rejected *mo-fa* (though they were actually reacting to the majority opinion, partly because Chi-tsang of the San-lun or Madhyamika school had reasons to trust in the invariable *paramārtha* Dharma and Tao-hsuan of the Lu or Vinaya school was wary of contemporary excesses). It is only that it is more likely that an eschatological text produced after 566 would respond to the popular assumptions then about *mo-fa*. We find neither endorsement nor critique of that in the *HFCIC*. Furthermore, in 565, a year before, Wei Yuan-sung had petitioned the Emperor Wu of Chou to dismantle the *sangha* as a means to offset the advent of *mo-fa* (see part three below), and we have reasons to believe that Wei might have had knowledge of the *HFCIC*. On that, see the full version of this study.

²³On these major options, their source and problems, see the discussion in Yabuki, *Sangaikyo*, pp. 215-218; For a thorough English study of these, see David Chappell, "Early Forebodings of the Death of Buddhism," *Numen* 27.1 (1980), pp. 122-154.

²⁴It is supposed to be based on the *Ta-pei ching* (*Great Compassion Sūtra*); but this is not corroboration by the extent text itself. See Yabuki, *ibid.* or Chappell, *ibid.*

²⁵He also translated the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* which had its own timetable, but that one would not fit the pattern noted here.

²⁶The dates are arrived at by adding 80 years to the time of the Buddha's birth following the tradition which places his enlightenment at age twenty-nine and his death fifth-one years later.

²⁷Not the early Tao-an but the one involved in the Buddho-Taoist debate

under Emperor Wu of Chou prior to the 574 persecution.

²⁸See Eric Zurcher, "Prince Moonlight," *Young Pao* 68, no. 1-3 (1983), pp. 1-75. "Till the end of the fifth century, it was generally held that the Buddha had been born in the tenth year of the Zhou king Zhuang (686 B.C.) according to which the *parinirvāṇa* would have taken place in 607 B.C." (p. 19).

²⁹See his *Kuang hung-ming-chi* 14, T 2103.52. 272b.28-29.

³⁰It will be fifty years over if he is using 558 B.C. for the *parinirvāṇa* date. But again, we can rule this out for reasons already stated.

³¹Including teaching celibacy (which is contrary to the Taoist love of life) so that the Indians would kill themselves off.

³²Or reincarnating as Lao-tzu, as well as making Confucius a manifestation of a Buddhist bodhisattva and Prince Moonlight; on the latter, see Zurcher's article cited above.

³³The text actually might set it at 486 or 485, or, as Pachow argued, 483. See W. Pachow, "A Study of the *Dotted Record*," in his *Chinese Buddhism: Aspects of Interaction and Reinterpretation* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1980), pp. 69-86.

³⁴Not the best choice, for if we follow the contemporary Buddhist dating of the Buddha's life, Lao-tzu would arrive years after his enlightenment.

³⁵This puts the Buddha much, much earlier than Lao-tzu, but this is to ensure that Buddhism could arrive to China during the golden era of Chou. This is so that Buddhism would not be blamed for shortening the life span of dynasties—a Taoist allegation and one Confucians would also use in discouraging the throne from supporting this inauspicious faith.

³⁶T 2104.52, 369c20-370a.2. On the whole debate, see T'an-wu-tsui's

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biography in *Hsu Kao-seng-chuan*, T 2060.50. 624b-625a; or another account in T 2104.52. 369.b12-c19. A summary can be found in Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, pp. 184-186.

³⁷Not everyone accepted this scheme; see Yabuki, *Sangaikyo*, pp. 199-213. In 558, Hui-ssu made his famous bodhisattvic vow, considering his own time to be "125 years into the Last Age" by using a 1067 B.C. date for the *parinirvāna* instead.

³⁸The text did mention "abandoned *stūpas*" but these were never said to be abandoned because of war, i.e. they are not the so-called "abandoned residences" of the massacred Loyang elite of 520, homes turned into private chapels to mourn the dead. Rather, these *stūpas* were "unattended" because people only cared to build new ones in their own names instead of refurbishing fallen ones built by others.

³⁹*HFCIC*, p. 1335c17-19.

⁴⁰See Pen-shun (n.d.) in his *HFCIC yuan-t' an (Zokuzokyo)*. Taipei reissue, vol. 100, p. 799b, appended to the *HFCIC*). The modern *Taisho Daizokyo* uses a more critical standard, and put it in Vol. 85 under the "suspected fabricated" heading.

⁴¹On this, see Fuse Kogaku, *Nehanshu no Kenkyu*, vols. I and II (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankoki, 1973).

⁴²Well proven by Kimura, *Shoki Kegon*, p. 119.

⁴³T 21. 528c-532b. See Kimura, *Shoki Kegon*, p. 759, note 29, which further notes its ties with the *Kuan-ting-ching (Abhiseka-sūtra)*.

⁴⁴On the problems of this text, see Kimura, *Shoki Kegon*, pp. 116-118.

⁴⁵*HFCIC*, p. 1336b21-c2.

⁴⁶T. 24. 1045c. We have more to say about this Dharmakṣema-translated “*bodhisattva-śīla*” text in the fuller study. We cannot do so here.

⁴⁷YCFCC, p. 1421c-21-23. Again, on this rewrite, only the fuller study can cover.

⁴⁸As distinct from “nibbanic Buddhism” of the monk striving for the other shore. Medford Spiro, *Buddhism and Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970); first chapter and *passim*.

⁴⁹Liu Ch’iu was a revered Buddhist lay recluse in Chiang-ning, the capital of the southern Ch’i dynasty. On his tenet classification, see Ito Giken, “Tendai izen no kyohan ni tsuite,” *Ryukoku Daigaku Ronso*, 284 (1929), pp. 46-77 and 285 (1929), pp. 71-91; Fuse Kogaku, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 283-301; or Leon Hurvitz, *Chih-i (538-593): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk* (Brussels: l’Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1962), pp. 214-229.

⁵⁰For a more complete but concise table of the five teachings, further subdivided into the seven periods, see Leon Hurvitz trans., *Wei Shou: Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism* (Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyusho, 1956), p. 27.

⁵¹Trapuṣa and Bhallika, along with five hundred merchants, were the first group of laymen the Buddha supposedly converted soon after his own enlightenment. That instruction having occurred before the famous sermon directed to the five ascetics or monks at the Deer Park, it was taken to be the first teachings of the Buddha preceding even the *Āgamas*. On Trapuṣa and Bhallika, see I. B. Horner, *The Book of Discipline* (London: Pali Text Society, 1970), and 1.5-6. the *Lalitavistara*, 381,4; in Chinese texts, see *Ssu-fen lu*, T 22, 103a; *Jui-ying pen-ch’i ching*, T 2. 479a; *Pen-hsing chi ching*, T 3. 801a; and *P’u-yao*

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ching, T 3, 526b. This Chinese text has nothing to do with the *Trapuśa sūtra* in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya*; for the latter, see E.M. Hare, *The Book of Gradual Sayings* (London: Pali Text Society, 1965), 4.293-295.

⁵²*Hsu Kao-seng chuan*, T 50. 428a.10-12, within T'ao-yao's biography. Tsukamoto, *Hokugi hen*, pp. 293-352 has collected fragments of this last text; since then, much of the text has been recovered from the Stein and Pelliot collection of Tun-huang manuscripts and edited by Makita Tairyō, in his *Gikyo Kenkyu*.

⁵³After all, the *Diamond Sūtra* knew and endorsed both in the same breath as the *bodhisattva* should perfect *dāna-pāramitā* while realizing there and then how ultimately there is "neither donor, gift nor recipient." See Edward Conze comp. *Buddhist Scriptures* (Middesex: Penguin, 1959), pp. 165. The *Upāsaka-śīla sūtra*, on which the teaching of the main body of the *HFCIC* is based, would say as much.

⁵⁴These are (1) land, (2) orchids, (3) cereal or cloth, (4) servants, (5) domestic animals, (6) gold and silver, (7) metal tools, and (8) inlaid bed and other heavy objects.

⁵⁵These are refraining from (1) killing, (2) theft, (3) adultery, (4) lies, (5) immoral language, (6) slander, (7) equivocation, (8) greed, (9) anger, and (10) false views.

⁵⁶*HFCIC*, p. 1337b3-10.

⁵⁷Translation mine; see Hurvitz' trans., *Wei Shou*, p. 98.

⁵⁸On this prince, see Hurvitz' trans., *Wei Shou*, p. 93, n. 3. The most able of Kao-tsu's advisors and the major supporter of his decision to move the capital to Loyang who smoothed out many conflicts, he was regrettably not

enthroned. Otherwise, he might have saved the empire from the corruption and pious extravagance of Empress Dowager Ling and in his moderation, averted the schism and the civil war of 420. But he died a year before that.

⁵⁹The full memorial is in Hurvitz trans., *Wei Shou*, pp. 92-99. The citation above is from p. 94 and p. 96; translation mine.

⁶⁰By Fan Yang-yung in the preface to his annotated, *Lo-yang chieh-lan chi hao-chu* (1958; reissue, Shanghai: Ku-chi, 1978), p. 10. P'u Hui's biography in the dynastic record however does not depict him as monk, or even as a pious lay Buddhist of Liang-chou background, but then such Confucian recall does not so remember the Prince in those terms either.