All people have within them the medicine of long life, 
Yet self-assured, stupid, and deluded, they vainly toss it away. 
When the sweet dew descends, Heaven and Earth unite; 
At the place where the Yellow Sprouts grow, kan and li interact. 
The well frog responds by saying that there is no dragon’s lair; 
How can a fence quail know that there is a phoenix nest? 
Once the elixir is cooked, the room is filled with gold. 
Why bother seeking herbs and learning how to cook water mallows?¹

For now let us speak no more of Han Qing climbing down out of the tree, but instead tell you about Minister Lin in Chang’an.

Because Mme. Dou and Luying had been sent back to the Han family’s native district due to the memorial Cui Qun submitted to Emperor Xianzong, Lin Gui had not seen his daughter Luying in a long time and missed her very much. One day, he was about to send a man to Changli County to seek news of Luying when a messenger arrived and reported, “The Han family's houses and farms in Changli County have all been destroyed by a flood. Not a single beam or an inch of earth was left. Mme. Dou has no roof over her head and is suffering grievously.”

When Minister Lin heard this report, tears sprang to his eyes and he said, “Han Yu was straightforward and blunt; throughout his career he was loyal and incor-
ruptible. His only wish was to protect his descendants and preserve his reputation for a hundred generations. He wanted to live and die in honor. Yet as a result of the one memorial against the Buddha bone, he was separated from his family and died in a foreign place. That his family has now been struck by a flood is a perfect example of the fact that blessings never come in pairs, while calamities never walk alone. Who has eyes in his back so that he can see what goes on behind him? Under these circumstances, my attachment to my office is meaningless.” Immediately he submitted his resignation and expressed his wish to return to Changli County.

Fortunately Emperor Xianzong approved his resignation and allowed him to return to his native district via the official courier service. Lin Gui set out on his journey right away. As illustration, here is a lyric:

Yellow flowers grow all over the ground.
People half raise their door bars to peer at the traveler,
But hear only his horse neighing as it canterst along the flowery path.
Listening to the cries of a sorrowful monkey,
He traverses a wilderness with few villages.
He sees herdboys in groups of two or three,
Riding calves with the light of the declining sun among the flowers.
As he passes post stations and wayside pavilions
His tears fall like rain,
His grief beyond measure.

Traveling on the road, Minister Lin became sadder day by day as he contemplated the fickle ways of the world. He often thought of Xiangzi, but never encountered him on the way. One day when he arrived at a place by the Grand Canal, he saw a bustling crowd of people by the water, coming and going, all striving for fame and profit. Among them was a young Daoist, his hair disheveled, his clothes tattered. Over his right shoulder he had slung a bottle gourd and a flower basket; in his right hand he raised a fisher drum and a clapper. Looking toward Minister Lin he sang:

“You don’t follow the example of Tao Qian, who was reluctant to bow to his superior.
You don’t follow the example of Fan Li, who went wandering among the five lakes.
You don’t follow the example of Zhang Zifang, who followed Master Red Pine.
You don’t follow the example of Yan Ziling, who fished at Seven Mile
Beach.
You don’t follow the example of Lu Guimeng, who packed up his brush
holder and tea stove and went to roam the rivers and lakes.
And you don’t follow the example of the Marquis of East Mount, who
abandoned fame and profit.
How can you equal me, who has tied a hempen cord to his cotton robe
And beats on the fisher drum?’’

After listening for a while, Minister Lin said, “Once, on Han Tuizhi’s birthday, a
Daoist came and urged him to leave the family. Tuizhi, however, was obstinate
and wouldn’t listen, and ultimately this led to the present misfortune. My resig-
nation from office and return home show that good and bad fortune are not pre-
destined, but are brought by human beings upon themselves.2 Time passes
quickly; life and death are difficult to know. The song sung by this young Daoist
seems to fit me word for word. Perhaps I have met him before? I shall call him to
me and question him.’’

Forthwith he called, “Young Daoist, step on board. I want to ask you something.’’

When the passersby saw Minister Lin calling in person to the Daoist, they won-
dered what the reason might be and pushed towards the boat in a thick crowd.
When the Daoist heard that he was being called, he struggled through to the front
of the crowd, supporting himself with both hands on people’s shoulders, and said,
“Sir, I knock my head.’’

Minister Lin returned the courtesy with a half bow. The onlookers and Min-
ister Lin’s servants gesticulated and chattered, saying, “On the way we came through
many jurisdictions, circuits, prefectures, and counties, and there were those who
repeatedly requested an audience with the minister, yet he refused to see them.
What’s so special about this filthy Daoist that the minister himself calls him and
even gives him a half bow in return? How strange!’’

Although Lin heard these whispers among the crowd, he pretended not to
notice them and called, “Young Daoist, please take a seat.’’ Without further cour-
tesies, the Daoist youth stepped forward and sat down facing south.

“Where is your home?’’ Minister Lin asked. “Why did you leave the family to
cultivate yourself?’’

The youth sang,

“My home is the Zhongnan Mountains,
Where I have a hut with three rooms.

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The roof tiles covering it are the blue sky;
There are no walls around it, and there is nothing to impede me.
The ten thousand phenomena in their majesty all bow to the dipper;
Sun and moon I carry on my shoulders.
When I sleep,
I turn over only very carefully,
For fear I might push over Mount Buzhou.
Not to leak one’s essence for several thousand years
Is possible only by previous affinity.
Once your merit reaches three thousand,
You can look forward to your deliverance.”

“If you are a divine immortal, I am willing to honor you as my teacher,” Minis-
ter Lin said.
“If you want me to deliver you, that’s not difficult,” said the youth. “How-
ever, I fear that your mind is not steadfast and your spirit not firmly settled, so
that my efforts would be in vain.”
“I have abandoned my honors of office like garbage, gold and silver like sand
and mud,” Minister Lin said. “I regard my body as stinking and rotten, wife and
children as cast-off shells. I will single-mindedly cultivate the Dao and have no
other sentiments.”
“In that case, this is not the place to discuss it,” the Daoist said. “Come with
me.” Lin followed him. As the crowd opened before them, they made a run for
it. Members of Lin’s household pursued, but when they caught hold of him, he
drew his sword, cut off his sleeve, and kept running. The onlookers all said that
Minister Lin had met an immortal and left.
Reader, shall I tell you who the young Daoist was, and why Scholar Lin agreed
to follow him?
Well, the Daoist was Han Xiangzi. Minister Lin was originally Yunyangzi, who
had been banished to earth. Now that Chonghezi had resumed his post, Yunyangzi
also was to return to his position. This is why Xiangzi played the role of the Daoist
to instruct him. Once Lin saw Xiangzi, he recognized him as an immortal, and
consequently, giving no further thought to his family and relatives, followed him
to the grotto on Mount Zhuowei.

After bowing eight times toward Xiangzi, Minister Lin said, “Your disciple Lin
Gui has met his Master. Please instruct me.”
“South and north accord with the Source through the inversion of the signs of
the trigrams,” Xiangzi said. “At dawn and dusk the Fire Phases harmonize with the
Celestial Pivot. You must seal the Earth Cauldron firmly and let the flowing Pearl make a pair with it. Your emotions must be adjusted, your nature unified, the Tiger crouching, the Dragon coiling. In the Token for the Agreement of the Three it is said, ‘The pneuma of li gives nourishment from the inside. When one is empty there is no need for a keen sense of hearing. When understanding meets mind, there is no need for oral exchange of thought—and the fewer the spoken words, the surer and greater the success.’ The Elixir Formula says, ‘The metal man was originally the eastern family’s son, but was sent to lodge with the western neighbor. Having been recognized, he is invited home to be nourished. He is then matched with a lovely maid, and they are brought together in intimacy.’ Do you understand?”

“I am dumb and confused. Please instruct me again,” Minister Lin said.

Xiangzi sang,

“The aperture of the Mysterious Pass  
Was first joined in Former Heaven,  
When Metal and Wood invited each other.  
Mercury of yin can fly and travel;  
Lead of yang can submit and adjust.  
Control the obstinate Monkey and the evil Horse;  
Don’t give them the least room to move.  
Let the mind be like stagnant water,  
And the emotions like the Nine Empyreans.  
Be firm and nourish warmth,  
Hold fast as you apply boiling heat,  
And you shall behold the radiance of the precious pearl.”

“Thanks to your teachings I have become aware of my previous existences—I will submit to your instruction!” said Minister Lin. And he sang:

“The mysterious marvel of the Golden Pill  
Has been transmitted to me by my Master’s teachings.  
Having been stirred from my dumb confusion,  
How would I dare shirk hard work?  
I love the life of the immortals,  
The clear loftiness of the golden palaces.  
The incense dissipates in precious seal script characters,  
Its smoke dissolving into the Nine Empyreans;  
From now on I shall be free and roam at ease.”
Xiangzi said, “Since you are now awakened, you must struggle onward and not allow yourself a single moment of slackness. If you let your thoughts roam far afield while sitting still, you will fall back into your evil ways.”

“I may not be intelligent, but how could I waste this opportunity?” said Minister Lin. From then on he cultivated himself at Zhuowei Grotto from morning to evening.

But now let’s speak again of that day when Han Qing climbed down from the tree. He was just going to set out southward when suddenly he saw a bear-man. His whole body and face were covered with hair, and only a pair of gleaming red eyes were visible underneath. When he saw that Han Qing was about to leave, he came running over so fast that his feet barely seemed to touch the ground.

When Han Qing caught sight of the creature he was so frightened that he collapsed in a trembling heap, unable to open his mouth or move his limbs. His eyes closed, he cowered on the ground. Sensing Han Qing’s fear, the bear-man broke out into bellowing and terrifying laughter. Han Qing kept his eyes closed and didn’t dare look at him. The creature patted and kneaded Han Qing’s body all over, all the while making mumbling sounds as if he were speaking.

Han Qing did not dare move, and when the bear-man realized that Han Qing was not heeding him, he dragged him up, threw him over his shoulder, and strode away across one of the mountains. At first Han Qing feared that the beast would devour him alive, and was scared out his wits. Later he noticed that the bear-man just kept carrying him on, and he recovered somewhat. He broke into tears and told his captor, “Bear-man! You have a numinous nature, consciousness, and perception; you’re not a stupid and unconscious beast. I am a stricken man, without father or mother, relatives or friends who would care for me. Where are you carrying me? Is there perhaps a country for stricken men at the end of the sky?”

The bear-man kept going, while at the same time mumbling incessantly, as if he were answering him. When Han Qing saw that the creature seemed to have some human understanding, he told him, “My elder brother is called Han Xiangzi. He is a divine immortal in Great Veil Heaven. My mother and sister-in-law have both been delivered and transformed thanks to him, but me alone he didn’t deliver; instead he abandoned me with no place to go. If you really possess a numinous nature, then carry me to Xiangzi.”

The bear-man rocked and shook his head as if he were responding to Han Qing, but just kept walking on, with Han Qing on his back. They traversed heights and crossed torrents, went across mountain ranges and through forests—nothing hindered their progress. When they were hungry, they ate, when thirsty, they drank, resting at night and walking during the day. However, as there was no wine or
rice available, they ate mountain fruits and drank spring water. At night Han Qing shared the same sleeping place with the bear-man, sometimes by a cliff, sometimes in a cave.

Having traveled for several weeks, they saw in the distance a high mountain. Its walls rose thousands of feet, with huge boulders balanced precariously on them. Anyone who approached this mountain would feel his eyes going blurry and his heart beating wildly, because there were no footholds, and manifold dangers lurked. It was a place that both humans and ghosts would find difficult to cross.

But the bear-man, carrying Han Qing, scaled the mountain and crossed the brooks, passing through many difficult places as if he were treading on level ground or walking on an even road, without ever stumbling. On his back, Han Qing thought to himself, “In the extremity of my loneliness and suffering, I met this bear-man. I was destined to die, yet he carried me over such a great distance. I wonder where he is taking me. I imagine I was supposed to die earlier, yet now I have been given a new lease on life. So I’ll just let him carry me to wherever it may be!”

They had passed a few more places when all at once a group of woodcutters came along. When the bear-man saw the woodcutters, he was not at all flustered, but just kept on carrying Han Qing. When the woodcutters saw that he was carrying a man, they didn’t come hurrying over either, but just sang a Daoist song.

When Han Qing called for help, one of the woodcutters pulled him off the bear-man’s shoulder and asked, “Where do you come from? Where did you meet this creature, that you got carried here by him?”

Han Qing was just going to reply when another woodcutter put down his load and said, “Are you Han Qing? Why have you been brought here? Where are the old lady and Miss Lin?”

“You are Zhang Qian, aren’t you?” Han Qing said.
“I am the Daoist Qian,” the woodcutter said.
“Daoist Qian my foot! You did recognize me, didn’t you?”
“All right, I am Zhang Qian.”

“Once you accompanied my father to Chaozhou with Li Wan,” Han Qing said. “I heard that you were dragged off by a tiger on the way. How did you manage to escape and hide on this mountain?”

“This place is called Mount Zhuowei,” Zhang Qian said. “A Perfected Man called Mumu lives in a hermitage on this mountain. He is an immortal from Great Veil Heaven whose sole purpose is to deliver suffering people. When the tigers carried the two of us here he allowed us to stay, cut wood and grass, and avoid Death. As for the master, thanks to young Master Xiangzi he also was led here.
A bear-man carries Han Qing across the mountain ranges.
He honored the Perfected Man as his master, and learned from him the marvelous Dao. Therefore he realized his rewards and ascended to the Primordial Center. Now he lives at ease and happily in Great Veil Heaven. This bear-man is a servant of the Perfected Man Mumu. You are fortunate that he carried you here. Quickly put your clothes in order and follow us to the hermitage to honor the Perfected Man and become his disciple. He will transmit to you mysterious formulae of the golden elixir, which will allow you to avoid death.”

Han Qing thanked the woodcutters for their advice and the bear-man for saving his life. Complacently he followed them to the hermitage for an audience with the Perfected Man. He said, “Your disciple Han Qing knocks his head.”

“So you are Han Qing,” the Perfected Man said. “What do you want?”
Han Qing bowed again and said, “To take you as my master and be your disciple.”
“Where are your mother and sister-in-law?” the Perfected Man asked.
“They encountered two divine immortals who delivered them so that they ascended to Heaven.”

“Divine immortals? Didn’t you say they were pimps?”
These words frightened Han Qing so much that he prostrated himself on the floor and did not dare raise his head. He called out, “I have committed a mortal sin!”

“In Chang’an, you played the young gentleman Han and wanted to beat up that singing Daoist. Now you are maligning divine immortals behind my back. How can someone like you become my disciple?”

“Standing in front of Mount Tai, I didn’t see it. I hope for your compassion, Master!” Han Qing said.

The Perfected Man shook his head briefly, and the bear-man stepped before him. The Perfected Man whispered some orders, and the bear-man carried Han Qing off again. He carried him straight to Chang’an, dropped him in front of the Tower of Five Phoenixes, and left.

When the servants at the Tower of Five Phoenixes saw that a bear-man had brought this person, they hurried to report it to Emperor Xianzong. Emperor Xianzong summoned Han Qing and asked, “Who are you? Where do you live? Where did you meet the bear-man who carried you here?”

“My name is Han Qing, my father was the Minister of Rites Han Yu.”
When Xianzong heard the name Han Yu, he inquired, “Where is Han Yu now?”
“He died in his office in Chaozhou.”
“Who else is there in your family?” Xianzong asked.
“Only I,” said Han Qing.
“Your father was straightforward and blunt all his life and We often think of
him. Since you are his descendant, We shall appoint you Erudite of the Five Classics to express Our appreciation of your father’s loyalty.”

Han Qing thanked the emperor and withdrew. I will speak no further about how he followed in Tuizhi’s footsteps. Instead I shall tell you how Xiangzi sent Mme. Dou and Lin Luying on two clouds to the hermitage of the Hemp Maiden. On their arrival, they saw an immortal sitting in the hermitage, her skin like ice and snow, her aspect graceful and virginal. They prostrated themselves, knocked their foreheads, and earnestly requested her instruction. The immortal said, “Those who would study immortality first must efface the seven sins and keep the five prohibitions and the three refuges. Only then will they make their minds bright and behold their original nature, restore their life-force and return to their roots.”

“What are the seven sins?” Mme. Dou asked. “Would the Master please enlighten us?”

The immortal said,

“First, a master who presents the heterodox as orthodox, who follows that which is not the true transmission, who transmits false teachings to those of a believing mind—such a master will fall into the Tongue-Tearing Hell, and when her punishment there is full, she shall be reborn as a wolf for a hundred eons.

“Second, a master who transmits the orthodox methods to the wrong person, who is careless and disrespectful so that she does not engender belief in people’s minds—such a master shall receive her punishment in the Hell of Iron Staffs.

“Third, a disciple who, having received the orthodox methods from her master, does not engage in cultivation, but slights the methods and her master—such a disciple shall receive her punishment in the Hell of Incessant Tortures.

“Fourth, a disciple who, having received the orthodox methods from her master, backslides and regrets, breaks her fast and violates the prohibitions—such a disciple shall receive her punishment in the Hell of Iron Weights.

“Fifth, a disciple who, having received the orthodox methods from her master, knows the orthodox, but practices the heterodox—
such a disciple shall receive her punishment in the Hell of Iron Bedsteads.

“Sixth, a disciple who maligns the scriptures and canons and scolds the Buddhas and patriarchs shall be reborn as a limbless insect.

“Seventh, a disciple who makes no diligent effort in advancing in the orthodox method, who is close to material wealth, but far from the Dao, who squanders the days and months, who is orthodox on the outside, but heterodox in her heart, who is shining bright on the outside, but dark inside, whose sins are so serious that they implicate all her relatives—such a disciple will fall into hell.”

When the immortal had spoken, Mme. Dou and Luying again knocked their heads before her and said, “It is due to our affinity that we got to meet you, Master. We will no longer dare to speak of the right while harboring the wrong in our hearts. We only hope that the Master will lecture and instruct us. What are the three refuges and the five prohibitions?”

“The three refuges and five prohibitions all have to do with unifying the mind,” the immortal said. “I shall describe them to you:

“Refuge in the Dao: Looking at it one does not see it and listening to it one does not hear it—that is the marvelous Dao.

“Refuge in the scriptures: The wheel of the methods needs to be turned constantly, without resting day or night.

“Refuge in the master: Morning and evening consider and examine her teachings, be careful to serve her, take pride in nourishing the orthodox, and do not fall into heterodoxy.

“The prohibition against killing: Embody the Lord on High’s mind, which loves all living beings. Grasses, trees, insects, and ants all have life.

“The prohibition against greed: Cultivate your body and your self; don’t allow greed to arise in your mind.
“The prohibition against lust: Dislike lust and license; make your primordial pneuma, essence, and spirit constantly firm. Regard splendor and luxuries as empty, and do not give rise to desires.

“The prohibition against gossip: Do not speak recklessly; cut off all banter and mocking.

“The prohibition against meat: Drink no wine; eat no meat. Do not let your will become disoriented; do not salivate for food.

“If you fail to follow any one of the eight items, spirits and ghosts will scold you, and the great Dao will be difficult to complete.

“Although you may exhaust a thousand schemes, All will be empty clamor and foolish efforts of the mind.”

Mme. Dou and Luying said, “We will obey each and every one of them. Master, we hope that in your compassion you will soon bestow instruction on us.”

The immortal touched a fisher drum and sang a song to the tune “Pacing the Moon”:

“Kan, li, kun, and dui separate zi and wu;
You need to recognize your own origin.
When thunder shakes the earth, rain falls on the peak,
Cleanse yourself and let the Yellow Sprouts emerge from Earth.
Grasp the Metal Essence and close it up firmly,
Refine geng and shen and give rise again to Dragon and Tiger.
Open the Double Spinal Passes and traverse Kunlun;
When you obtain pneumatic strength, think of me.”

Having heard this, Luying stepped forward and said, “By nature I am dull and confused and cannot free myself. I request the Master to give me one more instruction.”

The immortal said, “Essence, pneuma, and spirit are the rulers of the body; the body is the habitation of spirit and pneuma. If the form did not obtain spirit, pneuma would not come into being. If the spirit did not obtain pneuma, the essence would not come into being. If spirit, pneuma and essence did not obtain form, then they could not be established. You must refine the form and make it return
to the unified pneuma. By refining the pneuma, in turn you will enter into empti-
ess and nonbeing. Only then will you attain perfection in union with the Dao and experience limitless transformations. The method for men to cultivate immortality is called ‘refining pneuma,’ the method for women, ‘refining form.’ You first need to accumulate pneuma in your breasts before setting up a stove, establishing the tripod cauldron, and practicing the Great Yin method of refin-
ing form.”

Then she sang,

“Listen to what I tell you:
The immortals’ elixir is not far;
The Eight Trigrams can be encountered everywhere.
By the strength of the well-protected Child,
And the beauty of the following Maiden,
Ask for and obtain the Yellow Matron as matchmaker.
Unite li and kan,
Exchange their central lines,
Toward the southwest pluck the young medicinal shoots.
You need to adjust the Fire Phases,
The Fire Phases need to be adjusted,
To nourish with warmth Mercury and Lead in the elixir stove.”

Mme. Dou stepped forward and said, “I am advanced in years and my strength is failing. I cannot compete with a young girl like Luying. I request the Master to give me one more instruction.”

The immortal sang again,

“Mercury and Lead in the elixir oven
Can fly and are easily dissipated;
The fire phases are extremely difficult to adjust.
Even if you entice the Mind Monkey to behave itself,
And guard against the arrogance of the Will Horse,
If you do not switch the central line of li with that of kan,
How can qian and kun then be linked?
If you make the slightest mistake,
The effort was in vain.
You need to use great care,
With great care apply heat,
Until the marvelous mystery of the Golden Elixir manifests itself.”
When the immortal had finished singing, she said, “Have you awakened yet?”
“I request further instruction,” Luying said.
The immortal said,

“Immortality is the highest good,
To cultivate perfection the most valiant endeavor.
For a thousand years you will attend the immortality peach banquets.
When metal is broken, it needs to be fixed with metal.
When a brick is cracked, it needs to be coated with clay.
If you do not comprehend this message,
All I said was empty clamor.
Then to preserve the spirit and circulate the pneuma
Was a useless effort of body and mind.
Metal is smelted, rock refined;
Rock is melted, metal burned.
In your futility you will be ridiculed by the immortals.”

Mme. Dou and Luying immediately experienced a great awakening. They knocked their heads and said,

“As we are not intelligent by nature,
We did not understand the principles of the mysterious marvels.
Fortunately, you, Master, opened up our dullness.
You gave us directions
How to enter the secrets of the Dao,
And comprehend the unified pneuma of Former Heaven.
Leaving the circle of birth and death,
We free ourselves from our mortal bodies.
This message,
How many know it?
In the empty sky and the wide sea,
We fly and dance free as kites and fish.”

“Now that you are enlightened, you must on no account be lax,” the immortal said. “I will travel for a short while to the Penglai Isles beyond the sea. When I return I shall lead you to an audience with the Queen Mother of the West.” Having spoken, she rose into the air and left.

Mme. Dou and her daughter-in-law had obtained the immortal’s secret and
mysterious words, her profound and marvelous Dao. They knew how to circulate the Firing Phases, how to employ withdrawal and supplementation. To retain the Mercury within the Vermillion inside the Golden Tripod, they first let the Silver within the water descend into the Jade Pond. Thus they obtained a bright golden radiance that filled their bodies, and the Millet-Rice Pearl was complete. It was only because they had not yet been instructed in the proto-elixir that they could not fly up to the celestial realm.

In no time at all two years went by. One evening the moon shone as brightly as daylight, the stars and constellations were scattered majestically across the sky, all sounds were hushed, and nothing moved. When Mme. Dou and Luying stepped out into the courtyard they looked up to Heaven and pleaded, “Master, you have been gone a long time. Why haven’t you returned yet?”

Suddenly they saw Xiangzi and Master Lü descend on a cloud and stand before them. “Masters, why haven’t you come for so long?” Mme. Dou asked. “There wasn’t a day that the two of us weren’t thinking of you.”

“Your faces have changed and taken on an extraordinary appearance,” Master Lü said. “The great elixir is already completed. The only thing not yet fulfilled is the practice of the Nine Transmutations and Seven Cycles.”

“Although this practice is not yet fulfilled, if you, Master, will agree in your compassion to give them this already refined transmuted elixir, they will forthwith fly and ascend to Heaven,” Xiangzi suggested.

“It is difficult to get hold of the great elixir. I am afraid that their destiny does not provide for such a blessing,” said Master Lü.

“Everyone has such an utmost treasure, if only common mortals would look for it attentively,” Xiangzi replied. “Master, be compassionate so that they may ascend the shore of the Dao.”

Master Lü tipped over his bottle gourd. Two red and three white elixir pills came rolling out. He held them in his hand. “Master, didn’t you just say that one pill is hard to get?” Xiangzi said. “Yet now there are two red and three white pills. How are they used?”

“The two red ones and three white ones differ in their use,” Master Lü said. “Red and white seem to distinguish some secret of the immortals,” Xiangzi said. “This is something that I don’t know. Please instruct me, Master.”

Master Lü sang,

“Immortality is the highest good;
To cultivate perfection the most valiant endeavor.”
The one formula of the immortal pass is truly mysterious and marvelous.
The eyes perceive the Penglai Isles as remote,
But when the elixir is completed, the road is not long.
The cave in the white clouds is sealed,
A feather submerges in the Weak Water,
But with a light body you fly across and proceed to the immortality peach banquet.
Filling your cup with immortals’ wine,
The flaming light by itself rises to the empyrean.”

“I have talked too much. Please forgive me,” Xiangzi said.
If you don’t know how the two kinds of elixir, red and white, differed, please listen to the explanations in the next chapter.

Decocting lead and refining mercury is not done literally;
Ingesting pneuma and eating clouds—all of this happens in the mind.
When your ancestors transcend and rise to the golden palaces,
They roam at ease and enjoy eternal spring.