

Qiyuan Gives Birth
China, 17th c.

Master Shiche asked his student, the nun Qiyuan Xinggang, “Buddha nature is not illusory. What was it like when you were nourishing the spiritual embryo?”

Qiyuan replied, “It felt congealed, deep and solitary.”

Shiche said, “When you gave birth to the embryo, what was it like?”

Qiyuan replied, “It was like being completely stripped bare.”

Shiche said, “When you met with the Buddha, what was it like?”

Qiyuan said, “I took advantage of the opportunity to meet him face-to-face.”

Shiche said, “Good! Good! You will be a model for those in the future.”

Qiyuan’s enlightenment poem:

“Before my mother and father were born:
Emptiness congealed silent and complete.
Originally there has been nothing lacking;
The clouds disperse, revealing the blue sky.”

(the poem is not in *The Hidden Lamp*, but is in the original text)